

## Signal Phrases (a.k.a. Attributive Tags)

### What is the Significance of a Signal Phrase?

In order to avoid an improperly cited quote, excerpt, or paraphrase, a writer must include a signal phrase (or attributive tag) when inserting research material into writing. A signal phrase is a critical element, and it has three essential purposes. A signal phrase:

- ✓ introduces source material,
- ✓ indicates where source material came from, and
- ✓ shapes the reader’s response to a source through appropriate word choice.

Methods to writing a signal phrase include:

- Using a single word, phrase, or sentence
- Placing the signal phrase before or after a quote, paraphrase, or summary
- Including proper verbs by ensuring the word choice fits the context of the sentence

### Examples

According to Strunk and White, “...”

Dr. Dan Hunter **claims**, “...”

It is noted that Freud **speculated**, “...”

### More Signal Phrase Verbs

Acknowledges	Confirms	Describes	Finds	Maintains	Questions	Remarks	States
Adds	Connects	Discloses	Grants	Narrates	Recognizes	Replies	Submits
Admits	Contends	Discovers	Highlights	Negates	Recommends	Reports	Suggests
Affirms	Contradicts	Documents	Hypothesizes	Notes	Recounts	Responds	Supports
Analyzes	Contrasts	Emphasizes	Illustrates	Observes	Refers	Reveals	Supposes
Argues	Creates	Endorses	Implies	Offers	Reflects	Says	Theorizes
Asserts	Declares	Establishes	Indicates	Promises	Refutes	Shows	Thinks
Characterizes	Defines	Estimates	Informs	Proposes	Reiterates	Signals	Verifies
Claims	Delineates	Explains	Insists	Proves	Rejects	Specifies	Wishes
Concludes	Demonstrates	Expresses	Introduces	Purports	Relates	Speculates	Writes

📖 **Signal phrases** or attributive tags are simple enough, but they do important work because they provide a connection between the writer’s thinking and that of others. The connection helps readers follow reasoning and demonstrates that the writer has done work as a researcher.

📖 **Quotation marks** are required around direct quotes, and appropriate parenthetical citations must be present for all quotations, paraphrases, and summaries.