

Integrating Sources

Readers need to move from your own words to the words of a source without feeling a jolt. Avoid dropping quotations into the text without warning. Instead, provide clear signal phrases, usually including the author's name, to prepare readers for a quotation.

Dropped quotation

California law prevents the killing of mountain lions except for specific lions that have been proved to be a threat to humans or livestock. "Fish and Game is even blocked from keeping mountain lions from killing the endangered desert bighorn sheep" (Perry 54).

Quotation with signal phrase

California law prevents the killing of mountain lions except for specific lions that have been proved to be a threat to humans or livestock. Tony Perry points out that, ironically, "Fish and Game is even blocked from keeping mountain lions from killing the endangered desert bighorn sheep" (54).

Varying signal phrases

To avoid monotony, try to vary both the language and the placement of your signal phrases. When your signal phrase includes a verb, choose one that is appropriate in the context. Is your source arguing a point, making an observation, reporting a fact, drawing a conclusion, refuting an argument, or stating a belief? By choosing an appropriate verb, you can make your source's stance clear.

Verbs in signal phrases

acknowledges	comments	endorses	reasons
adds	compares	grants	refutes
admits	confirms	illustrates	rejects
agrees	contends	implies	reports
argues	declares	insists	responds
asserts	denies	notes	suggests
believes	disputes	observes	thinks
claims	emphasizes	points out	writes

Using signal phrases to introduce summaries and paraphrases

Without the signal phrase in the following example, readers might think that only the last sentence is being cited, when in fact the whole paragraph is based on the source.

For much of this century, the U.S. government has encouraged the extermination of mountains lions and other wild animals. Sketching a brief history, Kevin Hansen reports that in 1915 Congress appropriated funds to wipe out animals that were attacking cattle, and the U.S. Biological survey hired hunters and trappers to accomplish the mission. Then, in 1931, the government stepped up its efforts with the passage of the Animal Damage Control Act, nicknamed "All Dead Critters" by its critics. Between 1937 and 1970, Hansen notes, over seven thousand mountain lions were killed by Animal Damage Control (57).