



MLA Signal Phrases for Quotes/Paraphrases

Citing Sources: MLA uses an author–location (page #, paragraph #) system of citation.

You can cite in 2 ways:

With a signal phrase: Stevens claims modern poetry “has to find what will suffice” (132).

In a parenthetical: Modern poetry “has to find what will suffice” (Stevens 132).

Basic Signal Phrase: **Author’s name + verb (present/present perfect)**

Elizabeth Warren **claims** “...” or Elizabeth Warren **has claimed** “...”

“...” **claims** Elizabeth Warren.

The first time you introduce an author, include their first and last name.

Every time after you can include just their last name.

Optional information you can add to a signal phrase the first time you mention an author:

Title of the work:

Elizabeth Warren, **in her article “What’s Hurting the Middle Class?”**, claims “...”

Author’s credentials: helps establish author’s credibility/provides useful background.

Elizabeth Warren, **an advocate for tax reform**, claims “...”

Elizabeth Warren, **a former Harvard Law professor and US Senator**, claims “...”

Signal Phrases: Verbs to give context

Select verbs that will give readers more context for a quote or paraphrase

<p>Verbs to introduce a fact/statement: states, writes, mentions, adds, points out, notes, comments, finds, observes, discusses, expresses, considers, explores, illustrates</p>	<p>Verbs to introduce views the author disagrees with: refutes, denies, contradicts, critiques, rejects, calls into question, disputes, challenges, negates</p>
<p>Verbs to introduce a claim: claims, argues, posits, reasons, asserts, proposes</p>	<p>Verbs to introduce views the author agrees with: endorses, confirms, agrees, supports, echoes, affirms</p>
<p>Verbs to introduce what the author focuses on or excludes: emphasizes, stresses, highlights, focuses on, centers their argument around, overlooks, ignores, downplays, omits, excludes</p>	<p>Verbs to introduce the author’s qualified agreement: acknowledges, admits, grants, concedes</p>

Phrases to place the author’s work in the larger academic conversation:

<p>--- is credited with ... --- conceived the idea that ... --- clearly elucidated ...</p>	<p>A recent article by --- contrasts/compared ... --- promotes the idea that ... --- has written extensively about ...</p>
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Use longer phrases to signal your view of a quote/paraphrase:

Phrases to show that you agree with an author's claims:

Warren The article	offers presents	a useful/timely/thorough/important ... an effective counterargument/interpretation ... ample evidence of ...
Warren's	interpretation analysis argument	is incisive/cogent/persuasive/effective because ... is relevant to/has significant practical applications for ... effectively proves/integrates/challenges/explains ...

Phrases to show that you disagree with an author's claims:

Warren	ignores/overlooks ... oversimplifies/downplays ... incorrectly assumes ...	
Warren The study The article	fails to makes no attempt to	acknowledge/address/consider ... distinguish between ... provide evidence for ...
Warren's	interpretation analysis argument	is problematic because/assumes that ... does not/fails to ... overlooks the deeper problem ... rests upon the questionable claim/assumption ...

Phrases for Concessions & Rebuttals:

Concession Admit that the other side has some merit.	Refutation Phrases Point out the flaws in the other side, and return to your claim.
It is true that ... Certainly... Admittedly... Of course... Obviously... It may seem that ... Although X is right that ... X is right to argue that ...	But more careful analysis shows that... However, ... therefore, ... On the other hand, ... so... Nevertheless, ... as a result... However, it is less certain that ... Therefore, ... Nonetheless, ... Thus, ... However, the conclusion that ... is questionable because... But it does not necessary follow that. In fact, ...