

## Using Signal Phrases in APA Papers

When using direct quotations in a research report or documented essay, **use signal phrases to identify the source and type of information** (facts, opinions, observations, etc.) **and to help readers distinguish the author's information from your own.** This prevents you from *dropping* quotations, which can confuse readers and make them think a specific idea or opinion is yours. Effective signal phrases include the author's name and an action verb that characterizes the information. Try varying the placement and language of the signal phrase to avoid repetition. Also, be consistent with verb tenses; APA uses the simple past tense (e.g., "compared") or present perfect tense (e.g., "has compared").

### Model Signal Phrases

In the words of researchers Serrano and Coronado (2002), "..."  
(p. 87).

As Joe Molina (2006) noted, "..."

The mother of a child killed by a teen driver, Patti Buensrostro  
(personal communication, September 3, 2003), pointed  
out that "..."

"..." yet Carlos Fuentes (2001) has written, "..."  
(p. 141).

"..." claimed TAMIU President Dr. Ray Keck.



### Verbs to Use in Signal Phrases

|              |            |            |             |           |
|--------------|------------|------------|-------------|-----------|
| acknowledged | charged    | denied     | noted       | rejected  |
| admitted     | claimed    | described  | observed    | remarked  |
| advised      | compared   | diagnosed  | opposed     | reported  |
| agreed       | confirmed  | disagreed  | pointed out | responded |
| analyzed     | considered | emphasized | promoted    | stated    |
| argued       | contended  | implied    | proposed    | suggested |
| asserted     | criticized | insisted   | reasoned    | supported |
| believed     | declared   | introduced | refuted     | thought   |

Choose appropriate verbs so the reader knows if the source is refuting a claim, illustrating a point, or comparing points of view.