

Signal Phrases

Signal phrases are clear and short sentences used to integrate in a paper the words, ideas, and facts that have been borrowed from other authors. On top of indicating the presence of material borrowed from the literature, they ensure flow in a text that contains quotations, paraphrases, and summaries. When choosing a signal phrase, make sure that it relates the author's message without wrongfully changing its meaning.

Even if signal phrases allow the reader to distinguish your ideas from the ideas of others, their use alone is not enough to avoid plagiarism—all borrowed material must be followed by an accurate reference done according to the right referencing style.

Comparison

To compare ideas presented in two or more sources, use signal phrases like:

the author alludes to	the author draws on	the author objects to
the author cites	the author elaborates on	the author refers to
the author discusses	the author expresses	the author reflects on

Debate

To specify the position of the author that you are quoting, use signal phrases like:

the author argues	the author considers	this study justifies
the author believes	this study denounces	the author maintains
the author claims that	the author insists	the author stresses

Explanation

To present the theories or concepts on which your paper is based, use signal phrases like:

the author clarifies	the author establishes	the author presents
the author defines	this study indicates	the author proposes
the author describes	the author mentions	the author specifies

Results

To present the conclusions reached by the author that you are quoting, use signal phrases like:

the author concludes	this study emphasizes	the author recommends
this study confirms	this study points to	this study reveals
the author determines	this study proves	this study shows

Summary

To describe a study, use signal phrases like:

the author analyzes	the author examines	this study is about
this study concentrates on	the author explores	the author is interested in
the author evaluates	this study focuses on	the author studies

To know more about academic integrity and academic fraud, consult the University of Ottawa's academic regulations (available online).