

## WHY DO IT?

One challenge of writing a research paper can be including and citing information from outside sources without disrupting your own writing and ideas. *Integrating* your sources avoids this disruption and strengthens your argument. In addition to the recommendations below, consult the Writing Center's [MEAL Plan](#) handout for further suggestions.

## HOW TO DO IT

- Think of writing a research paper like having a *conversation* about your topic. Obviously, others have already discussed the topic (that's the existing research), but *you* will now add to that ongoing conversation with your essay.
- Join this written "conversation" much like you do a real one. You *don't* just walk up to someone, state an idea, and walk away! Instead you acknowledge the existing conversation/speakers, introduce your idea, and then continue the discussion. In an essay, you must frame your sources and borrowed material this same way (see example below).

### EXAMPLE

Sherlock Holmes' ability to tap into human curiosity makes him relevant a century after Sir Arthur Conan Doyle wrote the first Holmes story. As noted Doyle scholar Alana Smith asserts in her analysis of current adaptations, **Holmes' outlook on events and people intrigues and broadens his audience's perspective** (172). This unique outlook makes Holmes' name synonymous with reasoned, insightful investigation, and it ensures that his popularity will continue for years to come.

signal phrase introducing source/source material	This signal phrase 1) names the source, 2) strengthens the writer's argument by providing source credentials, and 3) introduces the [paraphrased] source material.
source	The actual source material (whether quoted, summarized, or paraphrased) should be only a small portion of the paragraph; <i>your</i> own words/ideas should dominate.
discussion of source	Explaining and analyzing the source material shows readers how it supports your thesis. Don't assume readers will automatically make those connections on their own.

## STRATEGIES

In addition to integrating research smoothly into your writing, a carefully worded signal phrase alerts readers to *how* you will use that information to support your thesis. Sources that agree with you are certainly valuable, but including other perspectives shows that you thoroughly understand and have thought critically about your topic. Consider the following strategies when creating a signal phrase to introduce a source:

PURPOSE	STRATEGY
Inform	In [source (book, article, etc.)], [author], states that [claim from source].
Explain	A number of [relevant experts (e.g., psychologists, researchers, etc.)] have recently described [claim from source].
Expand	In their recent work, [authors] offer critiques/praise for [claim/finding from <i>another</i> source].
Challenge	[Author]'s argument that [claim from source] rests on the faulty assumption that [why you question the claim].
Complicate	Despite widespread acceptance of [author A's] finding that [claim from author A], [author B] recommends [claim from author B].
Qualify	While [author] is probably wrong when she contends [claim from source], she is correct in her assertion that [claim from source].

## COMMON SIGNAL PHRASE VERBS

acknowledge	claim	contend	describe	insist	point out	reject	state
agree	concede	declare	emphasize	note	question	remark	suggest
assert	confirm	deny	illustrate	observe	recommend	respond	write