

***They Say, I Say* Chapter 2: "The Art of Summarizing"**

As the authors of *They Say, I Say* write, "[t]o do justice to the authors you cite, we recommend that when summarizing -- or even when introducing a quotation -- you use vivid and precise signal verbs as often as possible" (38-39).

Signal Verbs To Choose From

Verbs For Making A Claim

argue	remind us
insist	claim
assert	report
observe	emphasize
believe	suggest

Verbs For Expressing Agreement

acknowledge	celebrate the fact that
endorse	concur
admire	reaffirm
extol	corroborate
agree	support
praise	do not deny verify

Verbs For Questioning Or Disagreeing

complain	celebrate the fact that
disavow	reaffirm
complicate	corroborate
question	support
contend	do not deny
refute	verify

Verbs For Making Recommendations

advocate	recommend
implore	encourage
call for	urge
plead	exhort
demand	warn

How to write a good signal phrase

A signal phrase is a phrase you write in order to introduce a direct quotation from one of your sources.

What a signal phrase should do

You need to accomplish several things with your signal phrase:

1. **Identify the source** of the information you're integrating into your argument. The first time you use information from a particular source, provide as much information as necessary: full name plus credentials. After the first time use only the last name.
2. **Establish the credentials** of your source. The more authority your source has, the more persuasive your argument is.
3. **Vary your signal verb**, because a sophisticated writer avoids always using "writes" or "says." The *Norton* provides a long list of common signal verbs to choose from (418).
4. **Establish your attitude towards your source**. The signal verb you choose will imply whether or not you think a source is reliable or authoritative.

Examples of signal phrases (underlined)

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In the preface to his book *How Does It Feel To Be a Problem?*, Moustafa Bayoumi, a professor of English at Brooklyn College, claims that "Brooklyn is the concentrated, unedited, twenty-first-century answer to who we, as Americans, are as a people" (9).

Moustafa Bayoumi, an author who teaches English at Brooklyn College, wants us to believe that "Brooklyn is the concentrated, unedited, twenty-first-century answer to who we, as Americans, are as a people" (9).