

# CITING SOURCES IN A SPEECH

Being versed in academic discourse means citing your sources, whether you are quoting directly or paraphrasing, in a way sounds natural to listeners and opens up a conversation. This means you must become a responsible and critical researcher, and also that you must be clear and organized when it comes to using sources. As you well know, plagiarism is defined as using other people's ideas or words without acknowledgment. According to the *St. Martin's Handbook*, "The rule for avoiding plagiarism as a public speaker is straightforward: Any source that requires credit in written form should be acknowledged in oral form."

## Academic Honesty:

The key to a successful presentation is having support material for your points—in other words, knowing your stuff. It is essential to let your audience know *exactly where* you got your information. You do not have to include entire references in your oral presentations, but you must refer to your sources while speaking.

- Give your audience enough information about your sources such that they can track down the information on their own.
- Generally you need source titles, authors, and dates. Check with your instructor's requirements that you do not need more information for the grading rubric.
- *Not* page numbers, volume numbers, web addresses, etc.

## How to Incorrectly and Correctly Cite Common Sources:

Direct Quotations: These should be acknowledged in your speech or presentation either as "And I quote..." or "As [source] recommends..."

Book: include title and author

- *Incorrect*: "According to Burke, the principle of persuasion..."
- **Correct**: "According to Kenneth Burke, author of *Grammar of Motives*..."

Periodical (magazine): include title and date

- *Incorrect*: "Atlantic magazine wrote..."
- **Correct**: "A July 15, 2017 article in the *Atlantic* suggested..."
- **Correct**: "An editorial in *The New York Times*, May 31, 2017, argued..."

Academic Journal: include journal title, date, and author

- *Incorrect*: "Gewin writes..."
- **Correct**: "Virginia Gewin writes in the July 2017 issue of *Science*..."

Web site (organization site or other longstanding site): include title

- *Incorrect*: "I found this information on the internet" or "At [www.bls.gov/ooh/media-and-communication/public-relations-specialists](http://www.bls.gov/ooh/media-and-communication/public-relations-specialists), it states that..."
- **Correct**: "The Bureau of Labor Statistics web site includes information..."

Website (news/magazine): include title and date

- *Incorrect:* “www.npr.org states....” Or “NPR.org writes...” (without date)
- **Correct:** “In an interview with NPR on January 18, 2017, former President George H.W. Bush stated...”

Interviews, lecture notes, or personal communication: include name and credentials of source

- *Incorrect:* “Robert McChesney said...”
- **Correct:** “Robert McChesney, Professor of Communication at the University of Illinois, had this to say about rural internet access...”  
or “According to junior Economics major, Siddhartha Raja...”

### **Other Citation Tips:**

- Try for variation: Keep in mind that it's easy to start falling into the "According to..." broken record. In order to avoid this routine try to change it up a bit each time with phrases like, "This is also supported by..." "Cheryl Strayed, author of the book *Wild... says,*" etc. You can also note when large sections of your presentation come from one source (as long as it is clear to the audience).
- When in doubt, cite: If you are unsure whether or not to cite something, go ahead and cite it. You are never in danger of plagiarism from citing too much. This also applies to information in citations, if you are unsure of whether or not to include information, include it.
- Paraphrase rather than quote: You should only be using quotes when there is no better way to say what the quote states. Your speech should only be about 10-15% quotes at most.
- Use plagiarism software. Things like Turnitin or SafeAssign can help you catch citations and check that you are using are paraphrasing correctly.