

Oral Citations

What Makes Citing Orally Special

In an oral presentation, your audience can't flip back and forth between in-text citations and a reference list, nor can they look for a footnote or an endnote: **you need to tell them where the information, idea, or words come from as you say it.** Since listening to a live presentation is a linear process (you can't skim or jump around and hear it out of chronological order), it's best to **introduce the source before you present the information**, so your audience members are ready to evaluate the information with the source (and your view of it) in mind when they hear the material from the source. **The citation needs to be brief**, because it's hard to digest the citation while evaluating the information, both of which are given within a few seconds' time.

Technical How-To

1. Use an introductory phrase such as one of the following:

- According to Joseph X, a professor of Genetics and Harvard University,...
- Farooq Y, author of the well-researched 2010 study, *Early American Nutrition and Politics*, argues that...
- Katherine Z, a journalist writing for the prestigious *New York Times*, offers this example....
- In a 2015 CNN article Amanda X, a mother of four was quoted as saying...

Note: Avoid acronyms or abbreviations: Do NOT say, According to rfa.org... (this is worthless for establishing ethos, because no one knows who rfa is)

2. Give your audience just enough detail to help them understand who provided the idea or information and how credible the source is.

3. Clearly tell the audience what is quoted by marking the beginning and end of the quotes using one of the following options:

- Pause slightly after the introductory phrase, then read the quote expressively so that the quote sounds like a second voice. Pause slightly again after the quote to indicate switching back to your own voice. This is the best method, but not easy to master quickly. The two methods below, while not preferable, are also acceptable.
- Say "Quote" immediately before you start reading the quote, and then say "End quote" immediately after the last words of the quote.
- If people can see you clearly, you can use "air quotes" by holding up one or both of your hands and moving your pointer and index fingers up and down, as if you were drawing quotation marks in the air.