

Attributions

The expectation for college writing assignments, directed by a thesis, is that students will read, consider, and reference the ideas of other people. A student's thesis or central idea should be strengthened by bringing in evidence from others who add support. A literature essay or research assignment is, therefore, like a written discussion between an author of a book, story, or article, one or more critics or experts, and the student. Each person's ideas are integrated into the student's assigned paper, so it is important to indicate who said what.

Attributions identify and give credit to the original source of the supplemental ideas, facts, statistics, opinions, statements, and visual or musical components. Establishing the source of an idea with attributions prevents plagiarism, which is the intentional or inadvertent use of another person's intellectual ideas or creative property without appropriate citation. Without attributions to signal ownership of ideas, the information appears to come directly from the student. Writers and speakers are required to properly acknowledge the ownership of ideas that originate in all forms of literature, photography, art, music, video, web graphics, and film.

Direct quotes are offset from the writer's ideas by identifying the name of the source by using a verb tag such as **says, said, states, reported**, etc. and by using a comma and quotation marks at the beginning and end of the quote.

- **Mark Zuckerberg said**, "People have really gotten comfortable not only sharing more information and different kinds, but more openly and with more people - and that social norm is just something that has evolved over time."

Paraphrases are often indicated with the word **that**.

- Regarding social networking, Mark Zuckerberg thinks **that** when people have the power to share their ideas and personal stories they make the world transparent.

<p style="text-align: center;">Attributions Are Developed in the Third Person. Some examples are:</p>
<p>The author, John Grisham, says...</p> <p>The author states that...</p> <p>The literary critic, Sharon Hall asserts...</p> <p>The famous biologist, Rachel Carson theorized that...</p> <p>Emily Dickenson, the 19th century American poet expresses themes of...</p> <p>According to art critic Harold Rosenberg....</p> <p>References made to Rene Descartes' famous idea...demonstrate that...</p> <p>President Obama defends his point of view on...by arguing that...</p> <p>Many disagree with Freud about his ideas on...because of...</p>

Additionally, attributions help to develop a smooth connection between the writer's ideas and the supporting material credited to someone else. To avoid weak and disjointed use of supporting material do not begin or end a body paragraph with a quote. Avoid inserting the evidence into the essay without first setting it up with your own idea. Many students simply shoot supporting details into the paper like a dart on a dartboard. The quote just hangs on in the body of the paragraph without any connection to a point made by the student. The quoted or paraphrased material must connect logically to the student's main idea. It must build support for that point and must indicate the original source.

For example:

According to the May 2011 Pew Internet and American Life Project Report "half of all adults (50%) use social networking sites" suggesting that increasing numbers of Baby Boomers are becoming more computer literate.

Attribution= According to the May 2011 Pew Internet and American Life Project Report

Quoted Material= "half of all adults (50%) use social networking sites"

Student's Idea= suggesting that increasing numbers of Baby Boomers are becoming more computer literate.

Practice Exercise

Identify the attributions, quoted or paraphrased material, and the student's idea in the following paragraph.

Baby boomers are changing the way they get their information which used to come solely from customary sources. In the past, this generation got its news of the world by reading a morning newspaper or by watching an evening broadcast on TV. However, according to the Pew Research Center's 2010 Internet and American Life Project, "76% of internet users aged 50-64 get their news online." Boomers may also have shared news from the home front with family and friends through their handwritten cards and letters before, but now the techno-savvy seniors send cyber notes across the internet. Pew statistics support this shift, indicating that as many as 92% of this demographic group now communicate by email. The middle-aged group may feel comfortable getting news and staying in touch by using current media modes, but they are still hesitant to trust their financial matters to cyber space. The research organization's study confirms that only 22% of this group is ready to conduct their banking online. Despite these small numbers, the evidence still suggests that baby boomers are at least receptive to experimenting with new possibilities for getting and receiving both personal and global information.