

Integrating Research: How To Credit Sources

After gathering a range of sources on a given topic, strong writers will synthesize the diversity of scholarly voices into a coherent summary. Before taking a position of your own, you must accurately convey the views of others. (See the BU Writing Centre handout on *Quotation, Paraphrase, and Summary* for a comparison of these techniques.) In other words, you should aim to fairly represent others' arguments by temporarily adopting their worldview such that your reader is unable to tell whether you agree or disagree with the source you are summarizing.

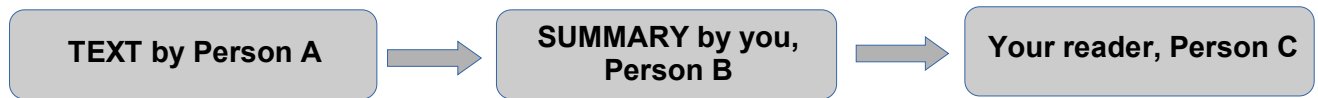
Verbs of attribution

Doing justice to the opinions of the authors you cite involves using vivid and precise verbs of attribution as often as possible. Therefore, when summarizing, paraphrasing, or introducing a quotation, avoid the overuse of *he says* or *the authors think* because such weak verbs may lead you to summarize the topic instead of the argument. For example, author and outspoken critic of the fast food industry, David Zinczenko, does not just *say* that such companies contribute to obesity, he *laments* that they do. The following table provides examples of strong verbs of attribution.

Verbs for making a claim				
argue assert	believe claim	emphasize insist	observe remind us	report suggest
Verbs for expressing agreement				
acknowledge admire admit	agree celebrate concede	corroborate do not deny endorse	echo extol praise	reaffirm support verify
Verbs for questioning or disagreeing				
challenge complain	contradict criticize	deny lament	question refute	reject renounce
Verbs for making recommendations				
advocate for call for	demand encourage	implore plead	propose recommend	urge warn

Two types of attribution

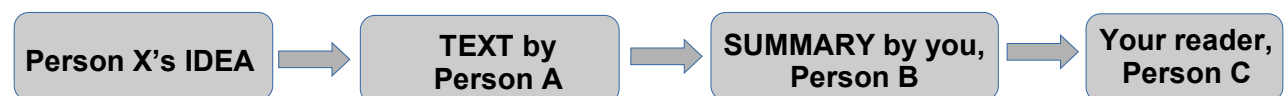
1) In academic writing, you must remind the reader that you are the one integrating perspectives from a variety of sources. You must create an identity as the understander, the messenger, or the interpreter of the original text(s), passing on the important information to the reader through your own lens. The chain of communicating such information often looks like this:



Modifying the following template may help you summarize a text by Person A:

In Person A's article about _____, they argue that _____. Their research, which demonstrates that _____, challenges the idea that _____. They use _____ to show _____. Their argument speaks to the _____ about the larger issue of _____.
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2) However, sometimes the author of a text you have read draws from the work of others, which requires you to not only attribute what you are borrowing from the author, but also what they are borrowing from others. The chain of communicating these secondary citations often looks like this:



Templates to indicate secondary citations include the following:

Person A explains that Person X's argument is...
Person A interviewed Person X, who claimed that...
Person A refers to Person X's concept/theory to show how...

Referring to an author

It is wise to qualify the scholars whose work you are citing for a reader who may not be familiar with them. This requires some knowledge of the author's credentials and how their claims compare to other voices. The first time you mention an author, include some descriptors.

Vague	According to Nilsson (2023), peasant farming is the backbone of rural economies.
Descriptive	According to renowned Norwegian anthropologist Marie Nilsson (2023), peasant farming is the backbone of rural economies.

Material adapted from:

Hartse, J. H. (2023). *TL;DR: A very brief guide to reading and writing in university*. UBC Press.

Birkenstein, C., & Graff, G. (2021). *They say/I say: The moves that matter in academic writing* (5th ed.). W.W. Norton & Company, Inc.

