

Signal Phrases & Titles

Spring 2017



Signal Phrases to Integrate Quotations

- ◆ Effective use of source material requires that you include quotations in your paper in a way that allows the reader to understand the relevance of the quoted material to your own argument.
- ◆ You should NEVER drop a quotation into your paper unannounced and apparently unrelated to the ideas around it.
- ◆ The quotations MUST ALWAYS be embedded into one of your own sentences.

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- ❖ A signal phrase incorporates the quotation smoothly into your writing and **provides context** for the material.
 - ❖ Often the signal phrase will name the author and the title of the quoted material.
 - ❖ Vary the signal phrases you use to integrate quotations.
 - ❖ Use active verbs.

EXAMPLES:

- ❖ *In his essay “The Principles of Poor Writing” author Paul W. Merrill uses satire to make significant points about writing. He writes, “Ignore the reader wherever possible. If the proposed title, for example, means something to you, stop right there; think no further” (431).*
- ❖ *As Divakaruni notes in her discussion of Maslow’s pyramid of needs, “Looking down from the heights of Maslow’s pyramid, it seems inconceivable to us that someone could actually prefer bread to freedom” (352).*
- ❖ *Eduardo Porter in “What Happiness Is,” reflects on the various definitions and on the lack of a precise definition. Porter explains, “Most psychologists and economists who study happiness agree that what they prefer to call ‘subjective well-being’ comprises three parts: satisfaction . . . ; positive feelings like joy; and the absence of negative feelings like anger” (459).*

Signal Verbs

acknowledges	comments	describes	maintains	reports
adds	compares	disputes	notes	responds
admits	concedes	emphasizes	observes	shows
agrees	confirms	endorses	points out	states
argues	contends	illustrates	reasons	suggests
asserts	declares	implies	refutes	summarizes
claims	denies	insists	rejects	writes

Grammar & Punctuation

- ◆ A quotation must be made to fit the syntax and grammar of your sentence, so take care as you experiment with signal phrases to introduce quotations. Make sure the result is a grammatically correct sentence.
- ◆ Quotations may be introduced by two—and only two—marks marks of punctuation: the **comma** and the **colon**. Never introduce a quotation with a semicolon.

Your turn . . .

- ◆ Create appropriate signal phrases and context for the following quotations.
- ◆ **From “The American Man: Age Ten” by Susan Orlean**
 - ◆ “He says that getting to be a police officer involves tons of hard work, but working for the FBI will be a cinch, because all you have to do is fill out one form, which he has already gotten from the head FBI office” (134).
 - ◆ “His plan is to buy land there and have some sort of ranch that would definitely include horses” (135).

Titles in Essays & Research Papers

MLA



Capitalization & Punctuation

- ◆ Whenever you cite the title of a published work in your research paper,
 - ◆ Take the title from the title page, example, not from the cover or from a running head at the top of a page.
 - ◆ Do not reproduce any unusual typographic characteristics, such as special capitalization or lowercasing of all letters.
 - ◆ A title page may present a title designed like one of the following examples:

MODERNISM & NEGRITUDE

READING SITES
Social Difference and Reader Response

Turner's early sketchbooks

These titles should appear as follows:

Modernism and Negritude

Reading Sites: Social Difference and Reader Response

Turner's Early Sketchbooks

Capitalization Rules

- **In a title or a subtitle, capitalize the first word, the last word, and all principal words, including those that follow hyphens in compound terms.**
- **Capitalize** the following parts of speech:
 - Nouns** (e.g., *flowers*, as in *The Flowers of Europe*)
 - Pronouns** (e.g., *our*, as in *Save Our Children*; *that*, as in *The Mouse That Roared*)
 - Verbs** (e.g., *watches*, as in *America Watches Television*; *is*, as in *What Is Literature?*)
 - Adjectives** (e.g., *ugly*, as in *The Ugly Duckling*; *that*, as in *Who Said That Phrase?*)
 - Adverbs** (e.g., *slightly*, as in *Only Slightly Corrupt*; *down*, as in *Go Down, Moses*)
 - Subordinating conjunctions** (e.g., *after*, *although*, *as if*, *as soon as*, *because*, *before*, *if*, *that*, *unless*, *until*, *when*, *where*, *while*, as in *One If by Land and Anywhere That Chance Leads*)

Capitalization Cont'd

- ◆ **DO NOT capitalize** the following parts of speech when they fall in the middle of a title:
 - ◆ Articles (*a, an, the*, as in *Under the Bamboo Tree*)
 - ◆ Prepositions (e.g., *against, as, between, in, of, to*, as in *The Merchant of Venice* and “A Dialogue between the Soul and Body”)
 - ◆ Coordinating conjunctions (*and, but, for, nor, or, so, yet*, as in *Romeo and Juliet*)
 - ◆ The *to* in infinitives (as in *How to Play Chess*)
- ◆ Use a colon and a space to separate a title from a subtitle, unless the title ends in a question mark or an exclamation point. Include other punctuation only if it is part of the title or subtitle.

Italicized Titles

- ◆ *Italicize* the names of books, plays, poems published as books, pamphlets, periodicals (newspapers, magazines, and journals), Web sites, online databases, films, television and radio broadcasts, compact discs, audiocassettes, record albums, dance performances, operas and other long musical compositions, works of visual art, ships, aircraft, and spacecraft.

EXAMPLES

The Awakening (book)

The Importance of Being Earnest (play)

The Waste Land (poem published as a book)

New Jersey Driver Manual (pamphlet)

Wall Street Journal (newspaper)

Time (magazine)

PMLA (journal)

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Web site)

LexisNexis Academic (online database)

It's a Wonderful Life (film)

Star Trek (television broadcast)

What's the Word? (radio broadcast)

Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band (compact disc, audiocassette, record album)

Titles in Quotation Marks

- ◆ **Use quotation marks** for the titles of articles, essays, stories and poems published within larger works, chapters of books, pages in Web sites, individual episodes of television and radio broadcasts, and short musical compositions (e.g., songs). Also use quotation marks for unpublished works, such as lectures and speeches.
 - ◆ “Literary History and Sociology” (journal article)
 - ◆ “Sources of Energy in the Next Decade” (magazine article)
 - ◆ “Etruscan” (encyclopedia article)
 - ◆ “The Fiction of Langston Hughes” (essay in a book)
 - ◆ “The Lottery” (story)
 - ◆ “Kubla Khan” (poem)
 - ◆ “The American Economy before the Civil War” (chapter in a book)
 - ◆ “Philosophy of Economics” (page in a Web site)
 - ◆ “The Trouble with Tribbles” (episode of the television broadcast *Star Trek*)
 - ◆ “Mood Indigo” (song)

Your turn . . .

- ◆ Format the following titles correctly. The type of source is given in parenthesis after the title.
 - ◆ Correct the capitalization
 - ◆ Correct the punctuation, such as quotation marks, colons, italics, etc.
 - ◆ For this exercise underline any titles that should be in *italics*.

1. a man in uniform [book]
2. crossfire [t.v. episode]
3. homeland [t.v. show]
4. night club royale
can las vegas make more money from dance music than from gambling?
[article in a periodical]
5. the bakersfield californian [periodical]
6. the purloined letter [short story]
7. buried strangers [e-book]

Answers

1. *A Man in Uniform*
2. “Crossfire”
3. *Homeland*
4. “Night Club Royale: Can Las Vegas Make More Money from Dance Music than from Gambling?”
5. *The Bakersfield Californian*
6. “The Purloined Letter”
7. *Buried Strangers*