

## Citing Sources Orally

In your speeches, you should provide “oral footnotes.” These footnotes should indicate where you found a particular fact, quote, statistic, etc. Usually, this can be done smoothly by saying the name of the source (person and/or organization), and the credentials or background information that explains the credibility of that source. If the date of that information will help establish credibility, you should include that information as well.

What should I do?

- Put the citation at the beginning of the sentence. “According to so and so...”
- Paraphrase rather than quote directly to aid extemporaneous delivery unless the direct quotation is really important or really snappy and should be recited word for word.
- Distinguish between paraphrasing and direct quotation with delivery. For a direct quotation, pause briefly before the quoted words, turn focus of eye contact, and slightly change the tone.

Paraphrase: Science News of last January explains that when the mandarins divide, glucose is produced by the glottal stinger.

Direct quotation: In the words of Dr. George LaMaster, “If it walks like a duck and sings like a giraffe, it’s a bad day to play golf.”

**Examples:** You may choose to use information or direct quotes gathered from several types of sources. Here are some examples of proper oral footnote for source types you might decide to use:

Book: According to historian Dan Howe, South Carolina's two senators resigned their seats in the United States Senate on November 10, 1860.

- **Note:** You can often discover the credibility of the source by reading the dust jacket or the short bibliography of the author at the back of the book. However, if this information is not available, you should do research to discover more about the author and his or her credentials.

Newspaper Article: The New York Times of October 6th, 2004 reports that current volcanic activity at Mount St. Helens is less threatening than the activity prior to its 1980 eruption.

- **Note:** Since newspaper provide information that is time-sensitive, it is often important to include the date of the article in your oral footnote. If the newspaper is a credible one, and the article is not an editorial, you usually don’t have to include the name of the author in the oral footnote. However, you should almost always include the name of the newspaper in the oral footnote and the name of the person quoted.

Television Program: As was reported on a June 2002 CNN special broadcast called “Salmon on the Brink,” the salmon population of Washington has decreased continuously since 1984.

- **Note**: Include the name and date of the broadcast, and the name of the network.

Journal or Magazine Article: Northwestern University professor and rhetorical critic Michael Leff said it best in the 1988 edition of *Communication Repots* when he concluded, “Lincoln’s purpose in the speech is to develop a frame of passive acceptance, a perspective capable of accounting for the horrors of the war and of justifying a conciliatory post-war policy.”

- **Note**: As with newspaper articles and television programs, it is often a good idea to include the date of the magazine or journal article in your oral footnote. If it is a general interest magazine article, the name of the author may not be important. If it is an academic journal, the name and credentials of the author probably is important.

Web Page: On their website, last updated on October 6<sup>th</sup> of this year, Human Rights Watch, an international organization devoted to exposing human rights violations, calls for an end to detention of immigrants in facilities designed to hold accused or convicted criminals. They point out that these detainees are not being held for criminal sentences nor are they awaiting criminal trial, but are often held in local jails where they are forced to mix with the general population of criminal prisoners.

- **Note**: Do not cite the URL; instead, cite the organization or author. To find out who the author of information on a web page is, and whether or not that author is credible, you are often going to have to do some research. Often, the best way of starting is to go to the home page that is linked to the page you have discovered. If the update information is not available on the webpage, state when you last accessed the page.

Interviews: In an interview I conducted with Bill Smith, the director of Undergraduate Housing at Boston College, I discovered that no one is getting rich off of the dorm food service. The income from student food contracts barely covers the cost of the utilities, the labor, and the food itself.

- **Note**: Make sure to include the interviewee’s credentials, so the audience can judge their credibility to speak on a certain topic. If citing expert testimony, include that person’s name and some description of that person as well as where the interview was found. “As the University of Washington’s Biology professor Dr. Jones told the New York Times of October 12, 2004,...