

# Citing Sources in a Speech

## What is plagiarism?

According to the *St. Martin's Handbook*, "To plagiarize is to use other people's ideas or words without acknowledging the source. The rule for avoiding plagiarism as a public speaker is straightforward: Any source that requires credit in written form should be acknowledged in oral form." In general, you should cite your sources whether you are quoting directly or paraphrasing.

## How do I avoid plagiarism?

One of the keys to a successful presentation is having support material for your points. However, it is equally essential to let your audience know *exactly where* you got your information. You do not have to include entire references in your oral presentations, but you must refer to your sources while speaking. As a rule, give your audience enough information about your sources such that they can track down the information on their own. That generally means that you need source titles, authors, and dates—not page numbers, volume numbers, web addresses, etc.

## How do I cite sources in my speech?

Here is a small list of the common errors that are made and how to avoid them.

**Direct Quotations:** These should be acknowledged in your speech or presentation either as "And I quote..." or "As [the source] put it..."

**Book:** include title and author

Incorrect: "According to Jones, the best way to..."

Correct: "According to April Jones, author of *Readings on Gender...*"

**Periodical** (magazine): include title and date

Incorrect: "*Time* magazine wrote..."

Correct: "*Time*, March 28, 2005, explains..."

Correct: "*The New York Times*, June 5, 2006, explained it this way..."

**Journal:** include journal title, date, and author

Incorrect: "Smith writes..."

Correct: "Morgan Smith writes in the Fall 2005 issue of *Science...*"

**Web site** (organization site or other longstanding site): include title

Incorrect: "I found this information on the internet" or "At [www.incrediblylongaddress.com/article.htm](http://www.incrediblylongaddress.com/article.htm), they argue that..."

Correct: "The Center for Disease Control web site includes information..."

**Website** (news/magazine): include title and date

Incorrect: "www.CNN.com states..." Or "CNN.com writes..." (without date)

Correct: "CNN.com, on March 28, 2005, states..." (note that CNN is an exception to the "don't use address rule" because the site is known by that name)

**Interviews, lecture notes, or personal communication:** include name and credentials of source

Incorrect: "Alice Smith said..."

Correct: "Alice Smith, Professor of Economics at USM, had this to say about the growth plan..."

or "According to junior Speech Communication major, Susan Wallace..."

### **Remember...**

Keep in mind that it's easy to start falling into the "According to..." broken record. In order to avoid this routine try to change it up a bit each time with phrases like, "This is also supported by..." "April Smith, founder of ... says," etc. You can also note when large sections of your presentation come from one source (as long as it is clear to the audience).

Also, it might be helpful to include a bibliography at the end of your PowerPoint presentation or in a handout if you feel that the audience should see the full citation. If you use this option, leave that screen up long enough for the audience to read.

Finally, citations are important to make your speech sound credible and just like in the case of your paper, it is better to over cite than to under cite.

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