



Acknowledging Your Sources

Regardless of the type of speaking you're doing, it always is important to acknowledge the source(s) from which your information came. Failure to do so implies that the ideas and pieces information you are presenting are your own, which is considered *plagiarism*.

- When researching, keep all source-related information with the excerpts you might be using. That way, when you decide to use that great statistic you found, you don't have to try to hunt down the source later. (Also see the handout on "Researching Your Presentation.")
- Decide what source-related details your audience will want to know. For example, the volume number may not be as crucial as the date of publication. Likewise, the individual author (unless s/he is a known expert) may be less important than the source (e.g., publication, website, organization) where you found the author's words. If you want to name the author, you might also briefly explain the author's expertise (e.g., Dr. Brian Spitzberg, an internationally renowned researcher on negative relational communication, published a book with a colleague in 2007 entitled, *The Dark Side of Communication*. In it he explains that...). The point is to enable the audience to evaluate the quality of your sources and locate them if needed.
- In your speaking notes, give yourself reminders about who to cite and when. It should be clear to your audience which piece(s) of information came from whom, so keep the citation as close to the cited information as possible. If you will be presenting a lot of information from a single source, you may want to indicate that in advance (e.g., "The following statistics all come from a 2007 immunization summary report by the World Health Organization, which is available on their website.")
- When speaking, try to work in your sources as smoothly as possible. Phrases like "According to ..." will help your audience know that a source is coming. Also, make it clear whether you are paraphrasing or quoting. The vast majority of the time, you should paraphrase the information you find. Of course, you still need to cite it, but putting the ideas in your own words will help your speaking flow more smoothly. On the rare occasions that you deem a direct quotation is warranted, make it known that you are doing so (e.g., "Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., once stated, and I quote, ...")