

## Writing Your Own Academic Conversation: How to tell your readers who said what to whom

*Consider the following paragraph:*

Smith's article (2002) outlines the importance of citing your sources. Citing sources can save the reader a lot of time if he or she is hoping to build on your research. However, citing sources is also important for establishing the credibility of the writer. If a writer presents factual information that is not linked to a source, the reader may wonder if the writer really understands the citation methods of the academic discipline in which the work is being written. The article talks about many different kinds of citations. Psychology uses APA, the format endorsed by the American Psychological Association. Using APA citation makes the writing experience much easier as the writer can 'write in' information about the sources by using dates and page numbers instead of having to spell out every element of a citation in written words. Therefore, citation, while difficult to learn, offers many benefits both for the readers and the writer.

*Notice that the source is cited in the opening sentence, but the citations stop there. The article is not mentioned again until the fifth sentence, and then, no page or paragraph number tells us where the information can be found. And where does the information in sentences two through four come from? Whose ideas are they?*

*In a paper that demonstrates this kind of uncertainty due to citation, your instructors might respond by trying to show where they are confused about who is speaking—the source or the author. Your job, as the author, is to make clear who says what to whom.*

Smith's article (2002) outlines the importance of citing your sources.

**\*ok...I see that you have attributed this information to Smith, but who is talking in the following sentence?**

**If this idea comes from the article, a citation is necessary to let the reader find the information easily.**

**Also: if this comes from Smith, try using a 'signal phrase' to help the reader. For example: Smith continues by noting that citing sources can save the reader a lot of time... (p 3).**

Citing sources can save the reader a lot of time if he or she is hoping to build on your research. However, citing sources is also important for establishing the credibility of the writer.

**Is this Smith or you speaking? If it is Smith, can you offer a page or paragraph number?**

If a writer presents factual information that is not linked to a source, the reader may wonder if the writer really understands the citation methods of the academic discipline in which the work is being written.

**Again, who is speaking?**

The article talks about many different kinds of citations. **A page number? Paragraph number?**

Psychology uses APA style, the format endorsed by the American Psychological Association.

**This sentence offers information that is common knowledge and doesn't need citation, but does it really fit best here? You are talking about citation, but you only offer one fact about one of many different styles.**

**Can you a) include more examples to demonstrate your point, or b) consider moving these sentences to another place in the paper when you can develop more?**

Using APA style makes the writing experience much easier as the writer can 'write in' information about the sources by using dates and page numbers instead of having to spell out every element of a citation in written words. **Who is speaking here?**

Therefore, citation, while difficult to learn, offers many benefits both for the readers and the writer. **This sounds like your voice here and is a logical place for you to speak as you seem to be summing up what you have presented in your own words. Adding the citations to let the reader track what you have cited from Smith places you in a position to comment as a trusted and well-researched speaker.**