

Giving Credit to Authors and Acknowledging Sources

Every time you discuss an idea or information that is not your own or use a quote from one of your sources, you need to attribute that idea, information, or quote to the author or source. To do this properly, you need to do three things:

1. The author or source needs to appear in the text before the idea, information or quote.
2. Use quotation marks for any groups of words or sentences borrowed from a source.
3. Put a footnote at the end with proper citation style in the footnote, e.g. author, title, publication information, and page number(s).

Verbs to attribute information to a source:

accepts	considers	says
acknowledges	contends	sees
adds	contradicts	shows
affirms	criticizes	speculates
agrees	declares	states
answers	defends	stresses
argues	demonstrates	suggests
asks	questions	supports
asserts	refutes	summarizes
believes	rejects	thinks
cautions	relates	understands
claims	remarks	urges
comments	reminds	verifies
compares	replies	warns
concedes	reports	writes
concludes	responds	
condemns	reveals	

Normally, when referring to sources' ideas, use present tense. Use the past only when you want to stress that an idea has changed.

Examples:

- Eric Law, in his book *The Wolf Shall Dwell with the Lamb*, asserts that the most important cultural differences are “internal, unconscious” differences in “perceptions and

feelings.”¹

- Reinhold Niebuhr maintains “The Christian Faith is the apprehension of the divine love and power which bears the whole human pilgrimage...”²
- According to Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, a feminist hermeneutics “must critically evaluate [the Bible and tradition] as patriarchal articulations.”³

Usually the first time that a source is mentioned, the full name(s), i.e. first and last name(s), are included in the text. For subsequent mentions, only the last name(s) are used. The footnote for the first time a source is cited needs to be complete. Subsequent footnotes of the same source include only the author’s last name or authors’ last names and the page number, unless there is more than one source by the same author(s), in which case the title must also be included.

Examples: ⁴Law, 8. or ⁴Law, *The Wolf Shall Dwell with the Lamb*, 8.

In a longer summary, you may want to remind readers that you are summarizing.

- Niebuhr further states that ...
- Calvin goes on to say that...

¹Eric Law, *The Wolf Shall Dwell with the Lamb* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 1993), 7. 2 3

²Reinhold Niebuhr, *Faith and History* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1951), 233-234.

³Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Bread Not Stone: The Challenge of Feminist Biblical Interpretation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984), x-xi.