

MLA In-Text Citations for Personal or Telephone Interviews (8th edition)

Handout by Angela Gulick, Parkland College Writing Lab, July 2016

Citing and Citation: To “cite” a source is to tell where you found the original information. A **citation** is the collection of details about where you found your information. The details of a personal interview citation include **1) a signal phrase, 2) an action verb, and 3) a parenthetical citation.**

1. **Signal Phrase:** A signal phrase is a formal way you alert your reader to the source of your borrowed information. The signal phrase is also an opportunity to give credibility to your source, by providing details such as the source’s name, job title, years of employment, and employer. Provide the full name of the person you interview the first time you cite the source. After the first time, just provide the source’s last name in your signal phrase.
2. **An action verb** is a word such as stated, commented, questioned, argued, claimed, mentioned, said. Another option is to begin your signal phrase with **According to...**
3. **A parenthetical citation:** Put (personal interview or telephone interview) at the end of the uninterrupted chunk of information from your interview. You don’t need to put (personal/telephone interview) after every single sentence; just put (personal/telephone interview) once at the end of an **uninterrupted portion of information.**

Here are some sample signal phrases the first time a source is cited:

Janet Saylor, a registered nurse at Carle Clinic for eleven years, stated ____ (personal interview).
As a Carle Clinic registered nurse for eleven years, Janet Saylor stated ____ (personal interview).
According to Janet Saylor, a registered nurse at Carle Clinic for eleven years, ____ (personal interview).

Here are some signal phrases after that source has been cited at least once:

Saylor also stated _____ (personal interview).
As Saylor stated _____ (personal interview).
According to Saylor, _____ (personal interview).

Now that you understand signal phrases, here is a sample paragraph using a signal phrase.

The way a nurse communicates verbally will vary depending on what audience is being targeted. **Janet E. Saylor, a licensed practical nurse at Carle Clinic for eleven years**, speaks to a doctor in a very formal manner being as clear and concise as possible. Doctors are busy people and require the nurses to get the information to them in an efficient manner. Saylor considers the doctors she works under as her bosses, and she communicates with them in that context. Saylor is a little less formal around her fellow nurses; she considers them her peers. Patients are another group of people with whom a nurse has to communicate verbally. Saylor has to be compassionate and understanding with her patients, often repeating herself or speaking at a slower rate. Sometimes nurses and patients do not speak the same language, so Saylor calls a translator to assist in communicating with the patients (**personal interview**). I also experienced this diversity of audiences when I was in high school. I worked in a law firm making photocopies and answering the telephone. Each attorney had his/her own way of being addressed. Some had people call them by their first names, and some wished to be called Mr. Doe or Attorney Doe. The secretaries were all called by their first names, and at times, a particular attorney who never could remember my name called me “the kid,” as in, “Have the kid run this to the courthouse.” I learned very early on what was appropriate and inappropriate to say in front of the attorneys, that their statuses required more formal language to be used even though they were “allowed” to use very informal language when referring to the secretaries or to me.