Citations in oral presentations

We must always acknowledge the ideas, opinions, words, data, and visual elements that we are using, but that were developed by others. Unless your instructor requires a particular format, you have more flexibility in a citation within a presentation. Note, however, that some instructors require outlines or handouts with full citations as they would be used in a written paper. Be sure to ask how you should handle citations.

Start by taking careful notes on the sources of ideas, opinions, words, data, photos, graphs, and tables as you gather information. In your presentation, you should acknowledge the person (or organization) that created the work initially and where you found the material.

In an oral presentation, don’t use direct quotations for anything that can be explained in your own words. Direct quotations within an oral presentation should be reserved for unique phrasing or opinions. So, you might say “As Martin Luther King, Jr. said in his famous 1963 ‘I Have a Dream Speech . . .” Or, “In his 2017 Inaugural address, Donald Trump claimed . . .” A quotation from a book or magazine should be acknowledged with the names of the author and publication.

It is far more challenging to provide a full citation to a journal article in an oral format. Many speakers will place the full citation on a Power Point slide or on a handout if used. If this case, a very simple oral acknowledgement is sufficient. For example, you might say “As Li and co-workers have shown, . . .” The Power Point slide then shows the full citation to this work as it would appear on a Works Cited page of a paper. The preferred format varies with discipline, so be sure to

All visual elements—photographs, charts, graphs, cartoons, and similar visuals—included in a PowerPoint slide or handout must include a source citation unless you have created them yourself.