Citing Sources in Public Presentations
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Much of the unease speakers have about citing sources in speeches revolves around legitimate concerns about style, i.e., how citations might hurt the sound and "flow" of the speech. Putting in a complete citation of author, title, date, and publisher, as one would do in academic writing, can sound pedestrian and dull. A better model might be what is customary practice in other forms of responsible writing, such as good magazine journalism and other forms of nonfiction. Here it seems to be generally accepted practice to acknowledge, at a minimum, the author of borrowed material. More information is included to the extent that the writer or speaker considers it useful for the purposes of the piece and the interests of the audience. Sometimes, for instance, the date of a cited source is crucial; sometimes it is not. Crediting the author at least satisfies the basic requirement that a speaker let the listeners know what has been borrowed from someone else.

This fundamental concern is captured with economy and force in Sprague and Stuart's injunction to "be especially clear about what is yours and what is not. Give credit not only for direct quotations, but also for ideas that you paraphrase. Avoid the slightest hint of plagiarism" (*The Speaker's Handbook*, 4th ed. Fort Worth TX: Harcourt Brace & Co. 1996).

Questions still may arise over how, lacking the graphic devices used in writing, a speaker should identify borrowed material. There are many ways of citing sources in a speech, some more effective than others. Consider first the options a speaker has for indicating direct quotations. Some speakers like to precede a quotation with "quote" and follow it with "unquote" or "close quote." But that may sound stilted to some listeners. There are many other language choices that are more natural-sounding. Try phrases like these:

> President Wilson said it best when he noted that "Blah, blah, blah."
> In Senator Smith's words, "the legislation…blah, blah, blah"
> Professor Wiseman offered a different view: "Blah, blah, " he said, "and blah."

Notice how it's done in the following two examples (from S. Lucas, *The Art of Public Speaking*, 7th ed. Boston: McGraw-Hill. 2001.):

President Reagan, in his tribute to the astronauts lost in the *Challenger* explosion, compared them with the explorer Sir Francis Drake, who had died on a ship off the coast of Panama exactly 390 years earlier. Mr. Reagan said this: "In his lifetime the great frontiers were the oceans, and an historian later said, 'He lived by the sea, died on it, was buried in it.' Well, today we can say of the *Challenger* crew: Their dedication was, like Drake's, complete."

A student honoring Holocaust survivors observed that it was important to continue to tell their stories, and quoted Elie Wiesel: "As the Holocaust survivor and writer Elie Wiesel once said, 'Not to transmit an experience is to deny it.'"

And here's another example: "Albert Einstein had some thoughts on surveys and statistics. Einstein said, 'Not everything that counts can be counted. And not everything that can be counted counts.'"

Attributing a paraphrased passage is even easier. The speaker simply needs to work in a phrase that indicates whom the idea is borrowed from. And if, as sometimes happens, the speaker can't recall exactly from where or whom an idea or expression came, he or she can always fall back on "someone once said…" or "someone has written…" or even "I don't know exactly whom to credit for this, but it applies to our current situation…" As imprecise as these methods are, they at least satisfy the basic ethical requirement to let your listeners know what is and is *not* yours.