Purdue OWL defines a signal phrase as:

> A word or words that introduce information from someone else. A signal phrase or a lead-in phrase comes before a quotation, paraphrase, or summary, and it includes citation information, like the author's name, title of the source, the year the source was published. The word or words "signal" to the reader that the writer is using someone else's ideas, and it "leads in" to the new information.

So, signal phrases:

- Avoid quotations put between your words, or "dropped quotations."
  - *Example (no signal phrase)*: Some have argued that these personality traits are pre-existing, not brought on by their partner. "Individuals who have impulsive or aggressive personality traits will be likely to engage in dating aggression" (Ray).
  - *Example (signal phrase)*: Some have argued that these personality traits are pre-existing, not brought on by their partner. Northern Illinois University psychologists Amy L. Ray and Steven R. Gold point out, "Individuals who have impulsive or aggressive personality traits will be likely to engage in dating aggression" (Ray).
- Often include background on the source being used, such as credentials.
  - *Example*: Catherine M. Soussloff, University of California Professor of History of Art and Visual Culture, discusses the ritual of Pollock's technique…

Also:

When using a phrase like "In the article" or "According to", words like "states, says, notes, etc." are often unnecessary.

> Example: According to *PC World* columnist Daniel Tynan, "Employees could accidentally…"