

Journalism Style

Placement of Attributions

In the Chapter 5 *Journalism Style*, you learned about attributions. However, it is not enough to know when to include an attribution, journalists also need to know where to place the attribution.

While the default position is to put an attribution after the quotation, sometimes the attribution should be placed before the quotation or within it. Skillful placement of attributions can help provide emphasis or break up long quotes.

The attribution should go first if you want to emphasize the person who spoke or if you need to signal a new speaker.

Family and consumer sciences teacher Abby Murikami said, "It is good to see students eating so many fresh fruits and vegetables."

However, cafeteria worker Jolie King said, "I see a lot of apples and oranges in the trash."

Attributions may go in the middle of a long quotation, usually one that is more than one sentence long.

"It's great to have more choices. I'm a vegan, so the salad bar allows me to eat school food," Seth Dockwiler said. "But just salad and fruit can get pretty boring. They should try offering hummus or bean soup or tofu burgers sometimes, too."

Avoid inserting the attribution where it may break up the thought or the flow of the quotation.

NOT: "I'm at school from zero period until after volleyball practice. Everything," Annie Quach said, "that I eat before dinner comes from school."

But wherever you put the attribution, note that it is *person said* and only rarely *said person*.

Try It!

Improve these paragraphs containing quotations and attributions.

1. "Homecoming," Archuleta said, "will be less formal than in previous years."
2. "We are asking everyone to come in school colors or dressed in team warm-up suits or other spirit wear," added co-chair Suzanne Tadros.
3. "That's not going to save us any money! We turn our team uniforms in at the end of the season, so we don't have warm-up suits now," said Ibrahim Ezzat.

Try It!

Your audio sound file and your notes say Donlu Prewitt said the following: "No matter what you say, I just don't wanna leave all of my friends."

1. Remove nonstandard spelling and the five introductory words that add little to the quotation. Write the quotation with the attribution at the end.
2. Now rewrite the same quotation with the attribution at the beginning.
3. Now return the attribution to the beginning and write the quotation and attribution eliminating *all of* and ending the quotation with an exclamation mark.

How did each of these changes in placement affect how the quotation might be interpreted by the audience?