

INTEGRATING SOURCES

Overview:

Formatting sources correctly—both in-text and on your works cited or reference page—is important when working with outside sources in a written assignment. However, working with sources involves much more than correct formatting! For many students, the biggest challenge is **integrating outside sources** into a paper smoothly and clearly, while still maintaining their own voice and ideas. Below is a step-by-step guide for integrating sources into your text.

Step 1: Introducing your evidence

- Use **signal phrases**: these phrases let your readers know that you are presenting evidence from a primary or secondary source
 - Ex.: “According to Author”; “In 2022, Author wrote,”; or “A recent study by Author shows”
- Provide the **qualifications** of the author(s) or study: who is the author, why are they credible, what kind of source is it and where did it come from?
 - Ex.: “Author McAuthorson, professor of Biology at UTC, writes in her article that...”; “Studies conducted at NASA’s test laboratory reveal...”
- Include any **additional information or context** needed: you may want to draw your reader’s attention to another aspect of your source, such as its medium, publication date or location, etc.
 - Ex.: “In a recent *New York Times* article,...”; “During the opening scene of *Frozen*, Elsa tells Anna...”

Step 2: Presenting your evidence

There are four main ways to present your evidence within a written assignment. These are quoting directly from a source, paraphrasing a source, summarizing a source, or synthesizing information from multiple sources.

- Direct Quoting
 - **Why it’s useful:** It’s clear where author’s ideas end and yours begin, and it conveys the direct meaning of original source
 - **When to do it:** If you want to analyze the *way* a writer has expressed an idea, or if the passage is heavy with technical language and/or jargon
 - **Tips for effective quoting:** Include a gloss where you explain anything unclear about the quote, and always use signal phrases to clearly introduce the quote and distinguish it from your own thoughts
- Paraphrasing:
 - **Why it’s useful:** It allows you to articulate an author’s argument in your own words
 - **When to do it:** If you’re writing in STEM or social science fields
 - **Tips for effective paraphrasing:** Use synonyms to replace specific words and rearrange the order of ideas when possible
- Summarizing:

- **Why it's useful:** Allows you to preview a condensed version of an author's points or argument in a way that is easy to understand
- **When to do it:** If you want to capture a source's ideas as a whole rather than pointing to a specific passage
- **Tips for effective summarizing:** Take notes on the original source and be sure you know the content well so you can reproduce its main points
- Synthesizing:
 - **Why it's useful:** Helps you demonstrate connections between your sources and allows you to write about information contained in multiple sources at once
 - **When to do it:** When you have multiple sources that convey similar or connected ideas, and you want to show how multiple authors have discussed the same topic
 - **Tips for effective synthesizing:** Use keywords from your sources to make connections as clear as possible

Step 3: Analyzing your evidence

When conducting analysis of your sources, be sure to both explain your evidence, including your own opinion of the source's meaning, and connect your argument and ideas to the evidence, whether by agreeing, refuting, or adding to the author's claims.

- Questions to ask yourself when analyzing your sources:
 - How does this source **support my argument?**
 - How does this source **counter an opposing argument?**
 - What does this information **actually mean?**

Final tips:

Before you write...

- Make sure the sources you locate are credible, relevant, and timely
- Develop a system or organization for your sources, such as a Lit Review Matrix
- Determine the purpose or main takeaways of each source and take notes or underline key points

As you draft...

- Organize your paper around **your** argument, not your sources
- When you know what the main idea of your paragraph will be, decide where your source will be located and how it connects to your overarching argument
- Make sure that you are paraphrasing, quoting, summarizing, and synthesizing sources correctly