

UNIT 4: RESEARCH SKILLS

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APA FORMATTING

Introduction

This module demonstrates the application of citation conventions and the concepts of intellectual property that underpin documentation conventions. You will review the essential knowledge and skills required to use proper citation practices, ensuring that your work remains respectful, credible, and free from plagiarism. The American Psychological Association (APA), also known as the author-date system, stands as a cornerstone of academic citation. You will gain a comprehensive understanding of how to seamlessly integrate in-text citations to support your arguments, bolster your credibility, and acknowledge the contributions of others.

You will learn the pieces of a reference list and how each match any in-text citations used in your essay. By adhering to a consistent and precise format, you will ensure that your writing remains the central focus, free from distracting formatting features. By acknowledging the original authors and giving credit where it is due, you show your commitment to ethical scholarship and academic honesty. Plagiarism, a serious offense in most colleges, can be mitigated through the meticulous application of citation conventions. This module will equip you with the knowledge and skills necessary to avoid plagiarism pitfalls, safeguarding your academic reputation and ensuring the authenticity and originality of your work.

Learning Objectives

- Learn why citing our sources increases communication and gives credit to the original writer, and also avoids plagiarism.
- Implement consistent formatting to create continuity and clarity in your papers.
- Create a reference list containing all the necessary information to find the original source.
- Use in-text citations to show where the information came from originally and match your references.

To Do List

- Read and review “Why Cite our Sources and Integrating Sources” in *APA Style Citation Tutorial*.
- Review the APA Documentation PowerPoint in Blackboard.
- Watch the accompanying videos for this module.
- Complete the Check Your Understanding: Explore the Georgian College Library – APA Guide
- Complete the Check Your Understanding: Explore the Official APA Website – Cover Page
- Complete the APA Referencing Assignment in Blackboard.

Attribution & References

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WHY DO WE CITE?

Why Cite our Sources

It is important to understand why citations are a fundamental part of any research assignment, aside from being a requirement. A citation is a reference to a source that contains key pieces of information about that source in order to find them. The following are three key reasons why citing is important.

Reason 1: For Scholarly Communication

By reading, analyzing, and including scholarly sources in your assignments, you are contributing to and participating in scholarly communication.

You grow in your understanding of a field of study by learning from its subject experts.

Reason 2: To Give Credit and Show Professionalism

This is key for showing professionalism and evidence in your paper.

You will mainly use scholarly and professional sources as evidence to support your research and give credit to their findings.

Citations allow others (and you) to find the sources used in your paper to learn more about them.

Reason 3: To Avoid Plagiarism

Watch these short videos to learn about plagiarism and how to avoid it.

Check your Understanding: APA Citation Style

Georgian College APA Videos (Text Version)

Watch What is APA? (2:30 minutes) on YouTube (<https://youtu.be/1oj3ngPYBRU>)

Watch APA title page and paper format (2:45 minutes) on YouTube (https://youtu.be/Ed09_TC5CcA)

Watch APA references (10 minutes) on YouTube (<https://youtu.be/blgCu104UE0>)

Watch APA in-text citations (9 minutes) on YouTube (<https://youtu.be/BNv44tAt9PA>)

Watch Introduction to APA citation style workshop (24 minutes) on YouTube (<https://youtu.be/z7O5-5gpGss>)

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Attribution & References

Except where otherwise noted, this section is adapted from “8.1 – Why Do We Cite?” In *Communication Essentials for College* by Emily Cramer & Amanda Quibell, licensed under [CC BY-NC 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/). / An adaptation (images, text & video) of “Why do we cite? (<https://openeducationalberta.ca/introapatutorial7/chapter/chapter-1/>)” In *APA Style Citation Tutorial* by Sarah Adams and Debbie Feisst, University of Alberta Library, licensed under [CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/)

INTEGRATING SOURCE EVIDENCE INTO YOUR WRITING

Writing in an academic context often entails engaging with the words and ideas of other authors. Therefore, being able to correctly and fluently incorporate and engage with other writers' words and ideas in your own writing is a critical academic skill. There are three main ways to integrate evidence from sources into your writing: quoting, paraphrasing, and summarizing. Each form requires a citation because you are using another person's words and/or ideas. Even if you do not quote directly, but paraphrase source content and express it in your own words, you still must give credit to the original authors for their ideas. Similarly, if you quote someone who says something that is "common knowledge," you still must cite this quotation, as you are using their sentence structure, organizational logic, and/or syntax.

Integrating Quotations

WHY: Using direct quotations in your argument has several benefits:

- Integrating quotations provides direct evidence from reliable sources to support your argument.
- Using the words of credible sources conveys your credibility by showing you have done research into the area you are writing about and consulted relevant and authoritative sources.
- Selecting effective quotations illustrates that you can extract the important aspects of the information and use them effectively in your own argument.

WHEN: Be careful not to over-quote. Quotations should be used sparingly because too many quotations can interfere with the flow of ideas and make it seem like you don't have ideas of your own. Paraphrasing can be more effective in some cases.

So when should you use quotations?

- If the language of the original source uses the best possible phrasing or imagery, and no paraphrase or summary could be as effective; or
- If the use of language in the quotation is itself the focus of your analysis (*e.g.*, if you are analyzing the author's use of a particular phrasing, imagery, metaphor, or rhetorical strategy).

How to Integrate Quotations Correctly

Integrating quotations into your writing happens on two levels: argumentative and grammatical. At the argument level, the quotation is being used to illustrate or support a point that you have made, and you will follow it with some analysis, explanation, comment, or interpretation that ties that quote to your argument. **Never quote and run:** don't leave your reader to determine the relevance of the quotation. A quotation, statistic or bit of data generally does not speak for itself; you must provide context and an explanation for quotations you use. Essentially, you should create a "quotation sandwich" (see **Figure 1**). Remember the acronym I.C.E.: Introduce–Cite–Explain.

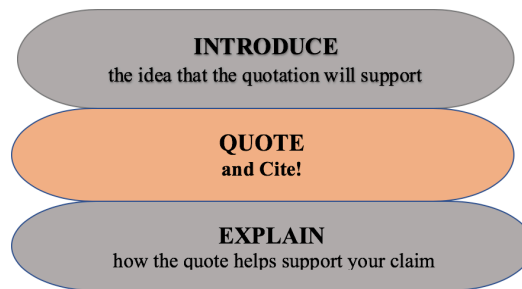


Figure 1: *Quotation sandwich.*

The second level of integration is grammatical. This involves integrating the quotation into your own sentences so that it flows smoothly and fits logically and syntactically. There are three main methods to integrate quotations grammatically:

1. **Seamless Integration Method:** embed the quoted words as if they were an organic part of your sentence (if you read the sentence aloud, your listeners would not know there was a quotation).
2. **Signal Phrase Method:** use a signal phrase (Author + Verb) to introduce the quotation, clearly indicating that the quotation comes from a specific source
3. **Colon Method:** introduce the quotation with a complete sentence ending in a colon.

Consider the following opening sentence (and famous comma splice) from *A Tale of Two Cities* by Charles Dickens, as an example:

“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times.”

1. **Seamless Integration:** embed the quotation, or excerpts from the quotation, as a seamless part of your sentence.

Charles Dickens begins his novel with the paradoxical observation that the eighteenth century was both “the best of times” and “the worst of times” (Dickens, 1859, p. 4).

2. **Signal Phrase:** introduce the author and then the quote using a signal verb (scroll down to see a list of common verbs that signal you are about to quote someone).

Describing the eighteenth century, Charles Dickens (1859) observes, “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times” (p. 4).

3. **Colon:** if your own introductory words form a complete sentence, you can use a colon to introduce and set off the quotation. This can give the quotation added emphasis.

Dickens defines the eighteenth century as a time of paradox: “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times” (Dickens, 1859, p. 4).

The eighteenth century was a time of paradox: “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times”(Dickens, 1859, p. 4).

Editing Quotations

When you use quotation marks around material, this indicates that you have used the *exact* words of the original author. However, sometimes the text you want to quote will not fit grammatically or clearly into your sentence without making some changes. Perhaps you need to replace a pronoun in the quote with the actual noun to make the context clear, or perhaps the verb tense does not fit. There are two key ways to edit a quotation to make it fit grammatically with your own sentence:

- **Use square brackets:** to reflect changes or additions to a quote, place square brackets around any words that you have changed or added.
- **Use ellipses** (three dots): to show that some text has been removed, use the ellipses. Three dots indicate that some words have been removed from the sentence; Four dots indicate that a substantial amount of text has been deleted, including the period at the end of a sentence.

Sample Quotation, Citation, and Reference

“Engineers are always striving for success, but failure is seldom far from their minds. In the case of Canadian engineers, this focus on potentially catastrophic flaws in a design is rooted in a failure that occurred over a century ago. In 1907 a bridge of enormous proportions collapsed while still under construction in Quebec. Planners expected that when completed, the 1,800-foot main span of the cantilever bridge would set a world record for long-span bridges of all types, many of which had come to be realized at a great price. According to one superstition, a bridge would claim one life for every million dollars spent on it. In fact, by the time the Quebec Bridge would finally be completed, in 1917, almost ninety construction workers would have been killed in the course of building the \$25 million structure” (Petroski, 2014, p. 175).

Reference

Petroski, H. (2014). The obligation of an engineer In *To Forgive Design*. Belknap Press.

You are allowed to change the original words, to shorten the quoted material or integrate material grammatically, but only if you signal those changes appropriately with square brackets or ellipses:

Example 1: Petroski (2014) observed that “[e]ngineers are always striving for success, but failure is seldom far from their minds” (p. 175).

Example 2: Petroski (2014) recounts the story of a large bridge that was constructed at the beginning of the twentieth century in Quebec, saying that “by the time [it was done], in 1917, almost ninety construction workers [were] killed in the course of building the \$25 million structure” (Petroski, 2014, p. 175).

Example 3: “Planners expected that when completed the ... bridge would set a world record for long-span bridges of all types” (Petroski, 2014, p. 175).

Integrating Paraphrases and Summaries

Instead of using direct quotations, you can paraphrase and summarize evidence to integrate it into your argument more succinctly. Both paraphrase and summary requires you to read the source carefully, understand it, and then rewrite the idea in your own words. Using these forms of integration demonstrates your understanding of the source, because rephrasing requires a good grasp of the core ideas. Paraphrasing and summarizing also makes integrating someone else’s ideas into your own sentences and paragraphs a little

easier, as you do not have to merge grammar and writing style—you don't need to worry about grammatical integration of someone else's language.

Paraphrase and summary differ in that paraphrases focuses on a smaller, specific section of text that when paraphrased may be close to the length of the original. Summaries, on the other hand, are condensations of large chunks of text, so they are much shorter than the original and capture only the main ideas.

Sample Paraphrase

At the end of its construction, the large cantilever bridge cost \$25 million dollars, but the cost in lives lost far exceeded the prediction of one death for each million spent. While the planners hoped that the bridge would set a global record, in fact its claim to fame was much more grim (Petroski, 2014).

Reference

Petroski, H. (2014). The obligation of an engineer In *To Forgive Design*. Belknap Press.

Sample Summary

According to Petroski, a large bridge built in Quebec during the early part of the twentieth century claimed the lives of dozens of workers during its construction. The collapse of the bridge early in its construction represented a pivotal design failure for Canadian engineers that shaped the profession (Petroski, 2014).

Reference

Petroski, H. (2014). The obligation of an engineer In *To Forgive Design*. Belknap Press.

Regardless of whether you are quoting, paraphrasing or summarizing, you must cite your source any time you use someone else's intellectual property—whether in the form of words, ideas, language structures, images, statistics, data, or formulas—in your document.

Using Signal Verbs

Verbs like “says,” “writes” or “discusses” tend to be commonly over-used to signal a quotation and are rather vague. In very informal situations, people use “talks about” (avoid “talks about” in formal writing). These verbs, however, do not provide much information about the *rhetorical purpose* of the author.

The list of signal verbs below offers suggestions for introducing quoted, paraphrased, and summarized material that convey more information than verbs like “says” or “writes” or “discusses.” When choosing a signal verb, try to indicate the author’s rhetorical purpose: what is the author **doing** in the quoted passage? Is the author *describing* something? *Explaining* something? *Arguing*? *Giving examples*? *Estimating*? *Recommending*? *Warning*? *Urging*? Be sure the verb you choose accurately represents the intention of the source text. For example, don’t use “concedes” if the writer isn’t actually conceding a point. Look up any words you don’t know and add ones that you like to use.

Table C.1: Commonly used signal verbs

Making a claim	Recommending	Disagreeing or Questioning	Showing	Expressing Agreement	Additional Signal Verbs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • argue • assert • believe • claim • emphasize • insist • remind • suggest • hypothesize • maintains 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • advocate • call for • demand • encourage • exhort • implore • plead • recommend • urge • warn 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • challenge • complicate • criticize • qualify • counter • contradict • refute • reject • deny • question 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • illustrates • conveys • reveals • demonstrates • proposes • points out • exemplifies • indicates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • agree • admire • endorse • support • affirm • corroborate • verify • reaffirm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • responds • assumes • speculates • debates • estimates • explains • implies • uses

Be careful with the phrasing after your signal verb. In some cases, you will use the word “that” to join the signal phrase to the quotation:

*Smith argues **that** “bottled water should be banned from campus”* (fictional quote).

But not all signal verbs can be followed by “that.”

We can use clauses with **that** after these verbs related to thinking:

Think	I think that you have an excellent point.
Believe	He believes that unicorns exist.
Expect	She expects that things will get better.
Decide	He decided that it would be best to buy the red car.
Hope	I hope that you know what you are doing.

Know I know **that** you will listen carefully

Understand She understood **that** this would be complicated.

And after verbs related to saying:

Say She said **that** she would be here by 6:00 pm.
 Admit He admits **that** the study had limitations.
 Argue She argues **that** bottled water should be banned on campus.
 Agree He agrees **that** carbon taxes are effective.
 Claim They claim **that** their methods are valid.
 Explain He explained **that** the rules are complicated.
 Suggest They suggest **that** you follow instructions carefully.

But some verbs require an **object** (a person or thing) before you can use “that”:

Tell tell **a person** that... tell **a story**... tell **the truth**
 Describe describe **the mechanism**
 Convince convince **an audience** that you are credible
 Persuade persuade **a reader** that this is a worthwhile idea
 Inform inform **a colleague** that their proposal has been accepted
 Remind remind **the client** that ...
 Analyze analyze **a process**; analyze **a text**; analyze **the problem**
 Summarize summarize **a text**; summarize **an idea**
 Support I support **the idea** that all people are created equal

It would be **incorrect** to write the following:

- The author persuades **that** ...x
- The writers convince **that** ... x
- The speaker expressed **that** ...x
- He analyzes **that** ...x
- She informs **that** ... x
- They described **that** ...x
- I support **that** ... x

Check Your Understanding: Integrating Quotations

Using the following excerpt from William Zinsser’s “Simplicity”, practice the three integration methods.

“But the secret of good writing is to strip every sentence to its cleanest components. Every word that serves no function, every long word that could be a short word, every adverb which carries the same meaning that is already in the verb, every passive construction that leaves the reader unsure of who is doing what – these are the thousand and one adulterants that weaken the strength of a sentence. And they usually occur, ironically, in proportion to education and rank.” (Zinsser, 1980, p. 7-8)

Integrate portions of this quotation correctly and effectively into your own sentences. If you want to leave out or change words slightly to fit your sentence structure, make sure to follow the rules (using ellipses and square brackets). Also, make sure you are saying something interesting and useful about the words you are quoting (don’t just write “Zinsser says “insert quote”) – make sure your sentence expresses your own idea, and use the quotations to support or develop your idea.

Write your sentences below, using each of the three methods:

1. Seamless Integration
2. Signal Phrase
3. Introduce with a Colon

Summary

In this module, you learned about plagiarism and how to integrate credible sources in your writing using paraphrasing, summarizing, and quoting. The Georgian College Writing Centre and Library

Website has many resources to help you with your writing assignments. Use these skills in the following modules and units.

Attribution & References

Except where otherwise noted, this section is adapted from “Appendix C: Integrating Source Evidence into Your Writing” In *Technical Writing Essentials* by Suzan Last and Candice Neveu, licensed under CC BY 4.0.

References

Dickens, C. (1859). *A tale of two cities*. Project Gutenberg. <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/98/old/2city12p.pdf>

Petroski, H. (2014). The obligation of an engineer In *To Forgive Design*. Belknap Press.

Zinsser, W. (1980). Simplicity In *On Writing Well: An Informal Guide to Writing Nonfiction* (pp. 7-13). Harper & Row.

APA TITLE PAGE GUIDELINES

Georgian College, like all educational institutes, uses a standard format for the submission of assignments. The format/style used is called **APA 7**. You will use this format from this point on when submitting assignments at Georgian. Unless otherwise specified, the utilization of APA 7 is expected.

You will learn more detailed information in the next unit in EDE Prep, [Research Skills](#).

Below is a poster that summarizes general guidelines and shows a sample cover page. Observe the different elements and read the notes in the margin.

Sample Title Page in APA Format

APA 7 Student Cover page Sample (Text version)

General guidelines

- Double spaced on standard 8.5" x 11" paper with 1" margins on all sides
- Page number on the top right corner starting with the cover page
- Check with the instructor for preferred font style and size, but generally Calibri and Arial (11pt); Lucida (10pt); and serif fonts (12pt) are acceptable

1

EDE Prep Sample Cover Page:

What Should Be Included

Young Joon

Academic and Career Preparation, Georgian College

LABS 6000: EDE Prep

Professor Shakira Ramos

September 22, 2022

1. Use upper and lower case for the title and subtitle. Center and bold it in the top half of the paper. Do not use abbreviations and keep it succinct.
2. Student name (without titles).
3. Institutional affiliation (program and institute)
4. Course code and name
5. Professor's name
6. Date of submission

Source: "Sample APA Title Page" by Joanne Pineda, licensed under [CC BY 4.0](#).

Summary

In this module you learned about why we need to cite, and how to incorporate source materials into your writing. You also learned some introductory information about APA 7 like how to create a cover page and some formatting basics. In the next module, you will learn how to put paragraphs together to create an essay.

Attribution & References

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FINDING CREDIBLE SOURCES

Introduction

In this module, you will learn how to navigate information sources ethically and efficiently, particularly scholarly information. You will begin to understand how to choose relevant information and why it holds significance. You will also establish a vital link between your experiences as a student, the broader scholarly realm, and the practical applications of learning in the post-academic, real world, and professional domains. Drawing upon this understanding, you will learn key concepts for analyzing internet sources—a skillset indispensable for both assignments and everyday life. Armed with this knowledge, you will be equipped to conduct superior research, ensuring the highest quality outcomes in your academic endeavors and beyond.

Course Objectives

- Explore how to find scholarly sources using the Georgian College Library.
- Evaluate sources for credibility.
- Identify key components to evaluating information.
- Evaluate information, to identify the ‘right’ kind of information, and discard the non-useful or irrelevant information.

To Do List

- Read “Working with Information” in *Academic Success*.
- Read “Exploring Source Types” in *Communication Essentials for College*.
- Read “Source Type: Trade Publications Cues in *Communication Essentials for College*.
- Read “Source Type: Journal Article Cues in *Communication Essentials for College*.
- Read “The Research Process” in *Writing Guide with Handbook*.
- Watch Videos Research Help Process from the Georgian College library website.
- Read “Finding and Evaluating Sources” in *Teaching Writing Essentials*.
- Complete the Research Skills Assignment in Blackboard.

Attribution & References

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WORKING WITH INFORMATION

Introduction

Working effectively with information is key to successful study and research. The effective and ethical use of information, especially scholarly information, will form the basis for writing essays, assignments, reports and examinations, and constructing visual and oral presentations. It is important to learn how to find information that ‘matters’ and why it matters. Information and information literacy will provide a link between your life experiences as a student, the wider academic world of scholarship, and the post-academic, real world, and professional applications of learning.

This chapter will help you develop your *Information Literacy*, or the knowledge, skills, and understanding underpinning the *when, what, where, why, and how* of finding, using, and referring to information. As an information-literate person, you will be able to:

- Understand your information needs (*When do I need information? What type(s) of information do I need?*)
- Determine where information is kept (*Where is the best place to find this? Where should I search for the information?*)
- Develop the skills to find the information where it is stored (*What tools are available to help me find the information? How do I use these tools?*)
- Evaluate information, to identify the ‘right’ kind of information, and discard the non-useful or irrelevant information (*Why is this information useful? Why do I trust this source of information?*)
- Record, manage, and reference information effectively (*How will I use the information? How will I reference the source?*)



Figure 5.1 Working effectively with information is key to successful study and research. **Source:** Image by Zen Chung, used under [CCO license](#).

Table 1 outlines the importance of information and information skills for study and for life.

Table 1: Finding and Using Information: Skills for study and life

The 5 W's & H	Question	Other options
When	do you need to use information?	Would facts, data, scholarly research or examples support your writing?
What	type or types of information do you need?	Does the format (text, data, visual, audio-visual); purpose (research, advertising, general information); and timeliness, or currency matter?
Where	(and how) do you find and retrieve information?	Can you find scholarly sources (library searches; databases; Google scholar); facts and figures; news sources; expert opinions and guides (trade publications; handbooks; 'expert' social media)? Are your search skills sufficient to find the 'best information' for your needs?
Why	do you call some information trustworthy?	Can you tell if information is credible, reliable, timely and authoritative? Does the information support your learning and writing? Can you recognise 'fake news?'
How	do you demonstrate care, honesty and respect when using information?	Can you manage information sources carefully? How do you acknowledge the real experts, and stay within legal guidelines? Can you judge the right amount of information to reflect your understanding?

Table source: Adapted to a text-based table from [Figure 5.2 Finding and using information](#) by Tahnya Bella in *Academic Success*, licensed under [CC BY-NC-SA 4.0](#)

While working with information, it will be helpful if you are willing to develop critical thinking or questioning. This critical approach is the core of developing critical information literacy skills, not just during academic study, but for the rest of your life.

What is information?

Information takes many forms. We tend to think of information as being published in books, journals, magazines and newspapers. However, there are many other types of information—pictures, photographs, videos, cartoons, podcasts, tweets, social media posts, web pages, blog posts, and... the list is endless. Not all information is written text, and not all information is 'officially' published.

It is important to note, however, that *all* information is considered the property of the owner or publisher, whether it is your course textbook, a blog post you found on Google, or a cartoon you found in Pinterest.

Therefore, academic integrity, or the honest, respectful, and ethical use of information sources applies equally to *all information*.

While you are studying, you may need to draw on many different types of information, depending on what you are creating, and how you will use it. Your lecturers will expect you to find relevant information sources, but they will also expect you to be careful and discerning to avoid ‘fake’ or invalid information in an academic context. It is important to recognise not only what types of information sources are, but also which ones are most appropriate for your needs. Following are some information types you will use in the university environment.

Scholarly information

Scholarly information is written by qualified experts (often academics) within a university setting for scholars in a particular field of study. The author is identified, and credentials are available. Sources are documented, and technical language is often used. Understanding this language requires some prior experience with the topic. Attending your lectures and tutorials and completing any assigned readings will help you to develop this understanding. Scholarly information has many forms. These forms include:

Books

Also known as a monograph, scholarly monograph, research monograph, or scholarly book, a book is written by one or more authors and published by a scholarly publisher. The book will discuss a specific topic and even if it was written by a small team, it will read as one cohesive text.



Figure 2: It is best to use your textbooks to develop your understanding and familiarity with the discipline-specific language, and use and cite other forms of scholarly literature in your work.

Source: Image by [Gerd Altmann](#), used under [CC0 license](#).

What about textbooks?

Strictly speaking, a textbook is a scholarly publication. However, textbooks tend to give a broad, general, and introductory overview of a topic rather than the specific information you will need to respond to your assessment tasks. It is best to use your textbooks to develop your understanding and familiarity with the discipline-specific language, and use and cite other forms of scholarly literature in your work.

Book chapter

Also known as a scholarly chapter, or scholarly book chapter, a book chapter appears in a book edited and written by many academics. A book chapter is a discrete entity. This means that although the book will discuss a shared topic, the chapters may present conflicting arguments and perspectives on that topic within the same book.

Peer-reviewed journal article

Also known as a peer-reviewed article, scholarly article, or research article, a peer-reviewed journal article is rigorously reviewed by one or more academics before publication. The review process ensures published articles are factually accurate, report scientifically validated results, and that biases or limitations are noted in the text. For these reasons, peer-reviewed articles are highly regarded by academics. You may sometimes be required to refer to peer-reviewed articles *only* when writing an assignment. There are two variants of peer-reviewed journal article.

Empirical article

Sometimes referred to as a primary article, an empirical article is a peer-reviewed journal article that reports the finding of a research project.

Literature review

The literature review is a peer-reviewed journal article that collates and reports on the research in the field. Some literature reviews attempt to include all of the relevant research that addresses a specific question or area of interest. These literature reviews are called: systematic reviews or systematic literature reviews.

Conference paper

Conference papers may be presented at academic or professional conferences. Although some conference papers are reviewed, the process is rarely as rigorous as that required for peer-reviewed journal articles.

Tip: If you find a relevant conference paper, check whether the authors also published the results in a peer-reviewed journal, as an article will generally be viewed by your markers as being more credible than a conference paper.

Note: However, in fast changing disciplines such as Information and Communication Technology, conferences are highly regarded as the time taken to publish other forms of scholarly information may make them obsolete before they are available to read.

Professional information

Professional information sources are written for professionals in a field. The author is most often identified, however, sources are not always documented by citations and a reference list. The language may or may not be technical. A trade magazine is a professional information source.

Popular literature

Popular information sources communicate a broad range of information to the general public. The author is often not identified and may not be an expert. Sources are often undocumented. It is therefore difficult to assess whether a popular source is reliable. The language used is not technical. Popular information may also be commercial; aimed at selling something (advertising) or persuading to a viewpoint (political or propaganda). Examples of popular information sources include news reports, social media posts, and websites.

Grey literature, also gray literature

Grey literature is authoritative information, often published by government bodies and non-government organisations (NGOs). Grey literature is usually published and made available on an organisation's website. The authors may be individual experts or a panel or committee. Reports, including research reports, literature reviews (not published elsewhere in a journal), policy documents, and standards are common forms of grey literature.

Primary sources

A primary source provides information collected and reported verbatim. Primary sources are often discipline-specific. In Law, primary sources include court reports and legislation. Historians may work with ancient texts. Sociologists may study policy documents. Social scientists in all disciplines often work with interview recordings and transcripts. Other scientists work with raw data and statistics collected in the field, such as weather recordings, or from national repositories: population statistics. A primary source is usually analysed, critiqued, or directly discussed in your work.

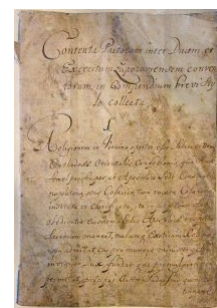


Figure 3: Historians may work with ancient texts. **Source:** Image by Håkan Henriksson, used under [CC-BY license](#).

Finding print and online information

resources

You will need to find a variety of information to complete your study and assessment tasks. It is tempting to read a task and immediately dive into searching. However, a strategic approach will save time and enable you to access the highest quality resources in your discipline. Clarifying the content you are looking for, the appropriate genre/format/type of information for the task, and the best place to look for this information will inform and power your search.

Identify what you need

Before you search, read an assignment task or question carefully. Take note of or highlight all words that indicate the topic of your search. These words will form the beginning of your list of keywords. Also note any instructions around the type of information recommended—or required—to complete the search. This may be general (e.g., scholarly sources) or specific (e.g., peer-reviewed journal articles published within the last five years). If you are unsure of any of the terms used to describe what you need to find, ask your tutor or relevant course contact person before you begin your search.

Identify where to search

Knowing what you are looking for will help you to decide where to search. Scholarly information, grey literature and primary sources are located in a variety of online collections and sites. Some of the places you can find these information sources are provided below.

Searching for scholarly information

Scholarly information is best found via a library search, a direct search of your university database, or via use of the search tool, *Google Scholar*. Library search and database searches have several advantages. These advantages are:

- Subscriptions to journals and other electronic items allow you to access and download most of the information you discover
- Powerful filters and tools to focus your search and reduce the number of unwanted materials in the search results



Figure 4: You will need to find a variety of information to complete your study and assessment tasks. **Source:** Image by RE...studio, used under [CCO](#) license.

Google Scholar, a Google tool that returns scholarly information, certainly has a place in your search strategy. Google Scholar will give an indication of what has been published on a topic. It can also be used to find additional keywords and phrases for your searches. Google Scholar can also be linked to your university library so you can directly access the resources available to you via your library subscription.

Note: Scholarly information is the most often required information for university study, therefore, the search techniques described later will focus on finding and retrieving scholarly information.

Searching for grey literature

Your library will likely have databases holding grey literature. These databases can usually be found by using the same techniques used to search for scholarly information. However, some specialist information is best accessed online via a *Google Advanced search*.

The Google Advanced search tool allows you to focus your search and restrict it to specific domains or websites. It is a two-part online search form. The top part of the form allows you to construct a search. Look carefully at the descriptors to each side of the various search boxes to create the most effective search. The bottom half of a Google Advanced search allows you to restrict your search by language, geographical region, date of last update, and via site or domain to search a specific website or for a publication available only on government websites. Please speak to a librarian for guidance on searching for grey literature.

Searching for primary sources

Primary sources are found in different places, according to genre/format/type of resource. Please speak to a librarian for guidance on searching for primary sources.

Newspapers

- Current and recent newspaper articles may be available via electronic databases from your university or national library
- Older newspaper articles may be available via national repositories provided by your national library. For instance, Australian newspapers can be accessed in the ‘TROVE’ collection.

Legal sources: Legislation and law

- Legal databases are provided by all university law libraries
- National and international legislation and laws can be found on the World Legal Information Institute (WorldLII) website
- Australia Legislation and law can be accessed on the Australasian Legal Information Institute (*AustLII*) website.
- The laws of your country, state, or territory are also available online on Court and Government websites



Figure 5: Legislation and law reports are primary sources.

Source: Image by cottonbro, used under [CCO license](#).

Data and statistics

- Discipline-specific databases, provided by your library, are a good source of statistics
- ‘World Statistics’: free and easy access to data provided by International Organisations, such as the World Bank, the United Nations and Eurostat
- Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) provides official statistics on economic, social, population and environmental matters of importance to Australia

Search strategies

The search techniques described here focus on finding and retrieving scholarly information. Once you have established what you are looking for and where to look, you are ready to create a search. Your goal now is to locate the information you need while keeping the number of irrelevant results to a minimum. To achieve this, you will need to create a list of keywords and combine these appropriately for your search. You will then apply *filters* to discard many irrelevant results. The final task is to export and save the resources you identify as being most suitable for your need. Some of the steps may need to be repeated as you develop your search strategy. Table 2: *Search flow chart* illustrates the steps. A more detailed description of the steps follows.

Table 2: Search flow chart

Phase	Process	Example
Define Term	Brainstorm and test keywords Look through results to find additional keywords	<i>Brainstorm:</i> handwashing, hand washing <i>Find:</i> hand hygiene in an article identified in the test search
Create search string	Use BOOLEAN Operators to create search string Test and refine search string	<i>Search string:</i> handwashing OR “hand washing” OR “hand hygiene”
Filter results	Use filters to reduce number of unwanted results	<i>Select:</i> Published since 2015, peer reviewed, search abstract only
Access information	Select, export, and save information in desired format	<i>Download and save:</i> PDF files to a folder named <i>handwashing assignment</i> on desktop

Table source: Adapted to a text-based table from [Figure 5.7 Search flow chart](#) by Tahnya Bella in *Academic Success*, licensed under [CC BY-NC-SA 4.0](#)

The first step is to define your terms. First look carefully at your task and highlight the content words—the words that describe the topic. Then brainstorm to create a list of all the synonyms, similar words and phrases that you think may be used to describe the topic in the scholarly literature. Test your list by searching in library search, a database, or Google Scholar. Add any additional words and phrases you discover to your list. In the example provided in Figure 5.7, I added the phrase “hand hygiene” as I saw this in an article retrieved in a test search. You may need to remove words bringing unwanted results. Keep track of your work in a table or list to avoid wasting time by repeating failed searches or losing effective searches.

The second step is to create a ‘search string.’ A search string lists the keywords in a way the databases or other resources you are searching will be able to ‘understand.’ Library search and most scholarly databases require you use language in a precise way. Table 3: *Library and database search strategies* explains this in detail.

Table 3: Library and database search strategies

Operator	Description	Example	Results
AND	focus results	equity AND justice	Results will contain the terms equity AND justice
OR	broaden results	curriculum OR framework	Results will contain either or both curriculum OR framework
NOT	excludes irrelevant results	therapy NOT medical	Results will not contain the term medical. Beware of excluding relevant results
” “	exact phrase	“early childhood”	Results will contain the exact phrase “early childhood”
*	terms that begin with	structur*	Results will contain terms that begin with ‘structur’ i.e., structure, structures, structural, structured...
()	define a concept/topic	biomedicine AND (disease OR infection)	Results will contain biomedicine AND either or both disease OR infection

Table source: Adapted to a text-based table from [Figure 5.8 Library and database search strategies](#) by Tahnya Bella in *Academic Success*, licensed under [CC BY-NC-SA 4.0](#)

Note: Library search and most databases do not understand natural language, so we need to use a logical framework to structure the search. All letters in the words AND, OR, and NOT must be capitalised or they will often be ignored or replaced with ‘AND.’ Exact phrases must be contained in double quotation marks. To find all associated words starting with the same ‘root’ add an asterisk after the root of the word. Finally, to search for a list of likely words, place the list within parentheses and separate them with OR. Test your search string and make any additions—or remove items—until you are satisfied that your search has captured the relevant resources.

The third step is to use filters to refine your search and remove unwanted results. Filters are a list of options you can select to remove results that are not suitable for your purpose. Filters vary according to the database but often include publication date, type of resource, and whether the resources are peer-reviewed. Filters are located to the left of the screen in most databases.

The fourth and final step is to access the information. Library search and databases will have a few options for exporting your search results. Select one or more items from the list and either save the list to your computer or email the list to yourself. A saved list is useful should you wish to retrieve the documents at a later time or collect the details you need for referencing from the list.

When you are ready to download and read the information you have retrieved, look for a PDF icon. Where available, the PDF will be the official version of the article, book, or book chapter. It will have the correct

pagination and publication details (required for referencing) and will be the fully edited and finished version of the work.

Evaluating information

The American Library Association notes the need to “recognise when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information” (Association of College and Research Libraries, 1989). We need information almost all the time, and with practise, you’ll become more and more efficient at knowing where to look for answers on certain topics. As information is increasingly available in multiple formats, not only in print and online versions but also through audio and visual means, users of this information must employ critical thinking skills to sift through it all.

You likely know how to find some sources when you conduct research. And remember—we think and research all the time, not just in school or on the job. If you’re out with friends and someone asks where to find the best Italian food, someone will probably consult a phone app to present choices. This quick phone search may suffice to provide an address, hours, and possibly even menu choices, but you’ll have to dig more deeply if you want to evaluate the restaurant by finding reviews, negative press, or personal testimonies.

Why is it important to verify sources? The words we write (or speak) and the sources we use to back up our ideas need to be true and honest, or we would not have any basis for distinguishing facts from opinions that may be, at the least damaging level, only uninformed musings but, at the worst level, intentionally misleading and distorted versions of the truth. Maintaining a strict adherence to verifiable facts is a hallmark of a strong thinker.

Many universities may use some kind of framework to help you evaluate the information you use. These frameworks focus on evaluation techniques and strategies, such as:

- The credibility or credentials of the author, and whether they are an expert on the topic;
- Looking for biases on why or how the information was published, for persuasive or propaganda purposes;
- The validity and reliability of the publisher, and how information is presented and packaged;
- The timeliness of the information, or whether it is still regarded as current; and
- The reliance on verifiable facts and evidence to support any claims or statistics.

This type of framework is a good place to start, especially when thinking about traditional published sources such as books, e-books, journal articles, and resources from library databases. Two examples of these

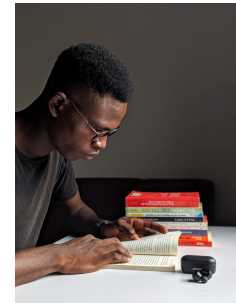


Figure 6: Maintaining a strict adherence to verifiable facts is a hallmark of a strong thinker.
Source: Image by [Oladimeji Ajegbile](#), used under [CCO license](#).

frameworks are called C.R.A.A.P. (Currency, Relevance, Authority, Accuracy, and Purpose) and R.E.V.I.E.W. (Relevance, Expertise, Viewpoint, Intended audience, Evidence and When published).

Although these frameworks provide you with a way to think carefully and evaluate information, they are not perfect, especially for web-based information sources which operate on different rules from traditional published sources (Wineburg et al., 2020). As Johnson (2018, p. 35) states, “No universal formula or checklist can replace the critical thinking needed to determine if information is credible, but checklists and formulas can be a starting point for many students”. You probably see information presented as fact on social media daily, but as a critical thinker, you must practise validating facts, especially if something you see or read in a post conveniently fits your perception. It is important to remember that the internet is also renowned for spreading rumors, fake news and scams. Digital misinformation has even been recognised as a threat to society (Del Vicario et al., 2016). Be diligent in your critical thinking to avoid misinformation!

An example of a contentious information source at university is Wikipedia. Wikipedia is a source that many of us use every week for quick and simple information. However, most lecturers will not appreciate if you rely on Wikipedia for your research, and some may even explicitly forbid it. Why? Wikipedia is widely regarded as being of questionable reliability, because it is a freely available source to which anyone can contribute and the authors cannot be identified (Angell & Tewell, 2017). So any facts presented in Wikipedia need to be explicitly verified in other sources before you can rely on them for academic research. In general, it may be better to rely on other sources for your academic research. A professional, government, or academic organisation that does not sell items related to the topic and provides its ethics policy for review is worthy of more consideration and research. This level of critical thinking and examined consideration is the only way to ensure you have all the information you need to make decisions.



Figure 7: Social media and news sources can be unreliable. **Source:** [Image by Pxhere, used under CCO license.](#)

Other social media and news sources can be equally unreliable. We have all heard of ‘fake news’. When someone publishes an opinion or rumor, a lot of people will read it, and may even believe it without evidence. People tend to rely more on information that reinforces their own beliefs, values and opinions, and will tend to form communities with like-minded others (Del Vicario et al., 2016). This may cause a phenomenon known as ‘confirmation bias’, where people will look for this

information to bolster their own perceptions and ignore any information that may discredit them. Part of critical thinking is striving to be objective and this is very important when it comes to recognising digital misinformation.

Some more questions and strategies to help you evaluate web-based and digital information include:

- Who is responsible for the site (i.e., who is the author)? Look up the author, and see if they have written anything else and if there are any obvious biases present in that writing. Is the topic within the expertise

of the person offering the information?

- Where does the site's information come from (e.g., opinions, facts, documents, quotes, excerpts)? What are the key concepts, issues, and 'facts' on the site?
- Can the key elements of the site be verified by another site or source? In other words, if you want to find some information online, you shouldn't just Google the topic and then depend on the first website that pops up.
- Can you find evidence that disputes what you are reading? If so, use this information. It is always useful to mention opposing ideas, and it may even strengthen your argument.
- Take into account the funding behind a website. You can check the 'About' section of a website, but remember that this is written by the people who are responsible for the website, so it may be somewhat biased.
- You may choose to trust information more when it is published on a government (.gov) or academic (.edu/.ac) website, but be careful about commercial (.com/.co) and non-profit (.org) websites, since these are mostly unregulated.

Managing information and resources

Once you have constructed a search and retrieved the appropriate and relevant information, you will want to manage the information so that it is easy to find, access and retrieve whenever you may need it. If you don't keep records of the information sources you find and use, it can be very difficult to find them again. At a minimum, you will need to record the referencing details and links to digital information. It is also important to manage a backup system, either on the cloud, or separate physical storage, so you don't lose all your own hard work.

Academic integrity

In the context of working with information, academic integrity refers to the honest, respectful, and ethical use of information sources in your assignment. You must be honest and indicate where and how often you used information created by others. You must be respectful of the work of others and communicate these ideas correctly. You must be ethical and not claim the work of others as your own, or present work that is merely a list of what others have said on the topic with no added critical or intellectual work of your own. Academic integrity is demonstrated by the accurate attribution of any ideas, direct and indirect quotes, images, or other information you used in your work to the correct information source. Directions on how to attribute correctly are provided by the referencing style guide (or guides) recommended by your university.

Referencing

Referencing is the consistent and structured attribution of all ideas, words, images, statistics, and other information to the source. There are thousands of referencing styles, most falling within the *author-date* or *numbered* families. Check your university website for guidance on the style to use and how to reference in that style. Following is a description of the two referencing ‘families.’

Author-date referencing styles

In these styles, the name of the author (or authors) and the year of publication must be provided as an *in-text citation* whenever you use someone’s words, ideas, images, or other works. Often this means several sentences within a paragraph will contain an in-text citation. The author name and date may be written as part of the sentence, for example: ‘Wang (2017) discovered...’ In-text citations can also be provided in brackets at the end of the sentence. This may look like ‘... (Wang, 2017).’

Author-date styles also include a *reference list*, usually on a separate page at the end of the assessment. The reference list contains everything mentioned as an in-text citation—and nothing else. Each entry in the reference list provides the name of the author/s or creator/s, the date of publication, the title of the work and where it was produced or available online. APA and Harvard are author-date referencing styles.

Numbered referencing styles

Numbered referencing styles require a number in each sentence where someone’s words, ideas, images, or other works have been used. The details of the work—names, dates, title, and location—are provided in *footnotes* (listed in numerical order at the bottom of every page) or *endnotes* (listed in numerical order at the end of your work). AGLC and Vancouver are numbered referencing styles.

Text matching software

Your post-secondary institute may subscribe to text matching (also called plagiarism detection) software, such as Turnitin. These tools search the internet and institute’s assessment repositories to find any text in your assignment that matches other sources, including websites, scholarly literature, grey literature, and other student assignments. If you have the opportunity to submit a draft assignment to such software before you submit your final assignment, please do so as this software generates a report and alert you to any matches.



Figure 8: Academic integrity is demonstrated by the accurate attribution of any ideas, direct and indirect quotes, images, or other information you used in your work to the correct information source. **Source:** Image by Nick Youngson, used under CC-BY-SA license.

Completing this step allows you to use your referencing and paraphrasing skills to correctly attribute all the ideas in your work and avoid plagiarism.

Turnitin and *iThenticate* are examples of software that match text to detect—and help students avoid—plagiarism.

Bibliographic software

Your post-secondary institute may make bibliographic software such as EndNote, Mendeley, RefWorks, Paperly, or others available to students to download to their personal computers and devices – refer to the apps that are available to students at your school. Such software can assist you with referencing. If you would like to use a bibliographic software program, please note that it takes time to learn how to use this software effectively and be able to recognize and correct any referencing errors these programs can create.

Conclusion

Working with information is a skill that can be developed. Information literacy is an important skill for study and also for later professional life. Remember that good information sources will always help you to demonstrate your understanding. However, information should always be used to support and enhance (not to replace) your own learning and ideas.

Summary

In this chapter you learned about how to work effectively with information and how it is key to academic success. You also learned about many types of information including scholarly literature, and grey literature and how to identify which one you need for the task. You have also learned that critical thinking skills are essential when discerning if information is relevant, so you use this information in an honest, respectful and ethical manner including citing and referencing any information from another source.

Attribution & References

Except where otherwise noted, this chapter is adapted from “Working with Information” by Rowena McGregor and Robyn Tweedale In *Academic Success*, licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 . / Adaptations include changing image-based charts to tables for improved accessibility.

EXPLORING SOURCE TYPES

To identify the correct APA citation elements needed for your reference list citation, you first need to know what type of source you have. Looking at a source’s visual cues and descriptions from a library catalogue or database can help you figure this out.

Now that so many sources are online, it can be a bit confusing figuring out a source’s type. To help, we will go through some examples of source types and cues to look for together.

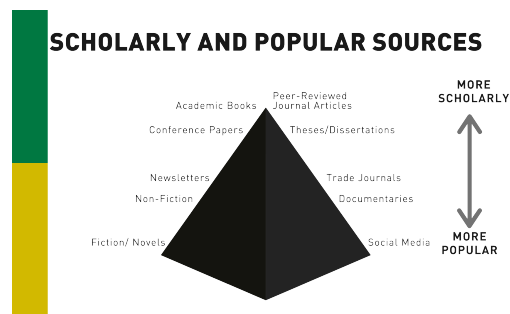



Image of pyramid titled “Scholarly and Popular Sources” “Pyramid of sources” by University of Alberta Library is licensed under [CC BY-NC-SA](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/)

Examples are displayed on either side of the pyramid and an arrow on the right-hand side is labelled more popular at the base of the pyramid and more scholarly at the top. Peer-reviewed journal articles, academic books, conference papers, and theses and dissertations are at the top; trade journals, newsletters, non-fiction, documentaries, fiction/novels and social media are at the bottom or widest part of the pyramid.

Attribution & References

Except where otherwise noted, this chapter is adapted from “8.2 – Exploring Source Types” In *Communication Essentials for College* by Emily Cramer & Amanda Quibell, licensed under [CC BY-NC 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/)./ An adaptation from “Exploring Source Types (<https://openeducationalberta.ca/introapatutorial7/chapter/exploring-source-types/>)” In *APA Style Citation Tutorial* by Sarah Adams and Debbie Feisst, University of Alberta Library, licensed under [CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/). / Adaptations include adjustment of alternate text and CC license updates.

SOURCE TYPE: TRADE PUBLICATION CUES

Examine the source and click on the  symbol to learn about each cue that helps to identify a trade publication.

Trade Journals Cover

Source Type: Trade Journals Cover (Text Version)

Graphics & Ads

Trade publications are generally more like popular magazines than scholarly journals due to their use of graphics. Graphics are present on the cover, in articles illustrating their topic, and as advertisements geared towards the journal's audience.

Specific focus

Trade journals and magazines are created for specific professional fields and contain articles that are generally written by professionals in that field.

Activity source: “8.4 – Source Type: Trade Journals Cover” by Sarah Adams and Debbie Feisst, University of Alberta Library, from “[Source Type: Trade Publication Cues](#)” In [APA Style Citation Tutorial](#) , licensed under [CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.](#) / [Screenshot of Teach Magazine cover](#) [Used under Fair Dealing Canada].

Trade Journal Webpage

Trade Journal Webpage (Text Version)

Discovering Trade Journals

Trade publications can be found in library databases and websites. This example (Teach) was found on the journal's website, but it is also found in multiple library databases.

Activity source: “8.4 – Source Type: Trade Journal Webpage” by Sarah Adams and Debbie Feisst, University of Alberta Library, from “[Source Type: Trade Publication Cues](#)” In [APA Style Citation Tutorial](#) , licensed under [CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.](#) / [Teach](#) [Screenshots of trade publication cover & website main page are used under Fair Dealing.]

Trade Journal Article Page

Trade Journal Article Page (Text Version)

Professional Authors

Articles may have short descriptions of the author's credentials or no description is provided. These credentials may emphasize their professional experience rather than their academic experience. Authors are typically listed right after the title of the article. Occasionally, you might find the author's name at the end of an article or footer of the page (similar to a magazine).

Short Articles & References

Trade publication articles are usually short, with few or no references cited, and focus on a specific topic within the profession (news, products, trends, professional practices, etc.). Authors are often experts in their field, but their articles are not peer-reviewed (i.e. scholarly). Articles may appear in a similar lay out to magazine articles, use more pictures and visual layouts than scholarly journal articles.

Language used

Trade publications use simple language and specific terminology used within their specific field.

Activity source: “8.4 – Source Type: Trade Journal Article Page 1” by Sarah Adams and Debbie Feisst, University of Alberta Library, from “Source Type: Trade Publication Cues” In [APA Style Citation Tutorial](#) , licensed under [CC BY-NC-SA 4.0](#). / [The end of discipline in the classroom](#), Teach, 26-29 [Screenshot of article used under Fair Dealing]

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- This chapter is adapted from “[Source Type: Trade Publication Cues \(https://openeducationalberta.ca/introapatutorial7/chapter/journal-article-cues/\)](https://openeducationalberta.ca/introapatutorial7/chapter/journal-article-cues/)” In *APA Style Citation Tutorial* by Sarah Adams and Debbie Feisst, University of Alberta Library, licensed under [CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 International License](#)
- Stone, A. (2020, January/February). The end of discipline in the classroom. *Teach*, 26-29. https://issuu.com/teachmag/docs/teach_janfeb2020 . [Screenshots of trade publication article are used under Fair Dealing.]

SOURCE TYPE: JOURNAL ARTICLE CUES

In the following source type examples, examine the different sources and click on the **i** symbol to learn about each cue that helps identify a source's type.

First, we will examine a scholarly journal article.

Explore: A scholarly journal article found in the Library database

Explore: A scholarly journal article found in the Library database (Text version)



A scholarly article found in library database search results.

The record in the library database search results displays the following information:

Name of the article: “Watch Out for Their Home!”: Disrupting Extractive Forest Pedagogies in Early Childhood Education. Click on the title of the article to view more information about the resource, a brief description of the work, and options to access, save or email the article.

Expert Authors: Nancy van Groll and Heather Fraser

Journal information: Journal of childhood studies (Prospect Bay), 2022, p.47-53. Peer reviewed. Open Access.

Access options: Click Get PDF to access the whole article in PDF format. Click Available Online for other access options.

Activity source: “Source Type: Journal Article Cues” In *APA Style Citation Tutorial* by Sarah Adams and Debbie Feisst, University of Alberta Library, used under [CC BY-NC-SA 4.0](#) . / Screenshot of

peer-reviewed journal article updated. Article displayed: Van Groll, & Fraser, H. (2022). "Watch Out for Their Home!": Disrupting Extractive Forest Pedagogies in Early Childhood Education. *Journal of Childhood Studies (Prospect Bay)*, 47–53. <https://doi.org/10.18357/jcs202219894> , licensed under [CC BY-NC](#). Screenshot of Primo database is used under Fair Dealing.

Explore: First page of a scholarly journal article

Explore: First page of a scholarly journal article (text version)

JOURNAL OF CHILDHOOD STUDIES
IDEAS FROM PRACTICE

"Watch Out for Their Home!": Disrupting Extractive Forest Pedagogies in Early Childhood Education

Nancy van Groll and Heather Fraser

Nancy van Groll is an instructor in the School of Education and Childhood Studies and a pedagogist at ECCEBC (Early Childhood Educators of British Columbia) living, working, and learning on the unceded Coast Salish territories of the sel̓ilwətl̓ (Tleil-Waututh), ɬəwəw̓/mesh (Squamish), and x̓'məḡəy̓əm (Musqueam) Nations. In her writing, research, teaching, and advocacy, Nancy pays attention to lively relations and activates slow, situated, and spiralling pedagogical projects with(in) 21st century contexts. Email: nancyvangroll@capilano.ca

Heather Fraser is a forest educator and the owner of Saplings Outdoor Programs, located on the traditional territories of Coast Salish peoples, including sel̓ilwətl̓ (Tleil-Waututh), ɬəwəw̓/mesh (Squamish), and x̓'məḡəy̓əm (Musqueam) Nations. Her passionate advocacy focuses on working with young children in outdoor contexts as they develop responsive relationships with place.

The frictions of living and learning in times of climate precarity, global unrest, and uncertainty require educators to consider the ways we can collectively engage in speculative pedagogies that respond to the complex, co-inherited common world(s) we inhabit. This conceptual and practice-based paper considers the way early childhood education is implicated in ongoing settler colonialism. It aims to notice, generate, and stay with the trouble of stories that disrupt and unsettle the extractive and colonial dialogues about the forest as a resource and pedagogical tool.

Human relationships with old-growth forests saw an increase in public attention and concern in 2021, with news cycles dominated by an extremely active forest fire season in western North America (CBC News, 2021), historic old-growth logging protests (McKeen, 2021) and a landmark call to action by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC, 2021). In these times of climate precarity and uncertainty, educators, instructors, pedagogists, and researchers who work, think, and engage with young children in settler colonial contexts are compelled to engage in speculative pedagogical processes that respond to the complex worlds that are co-inherited, coconstructed, and co-inhabited by human and more-than-human communities. In this conceptual and practice-based paper we consider the ways early childhood education is implicated in and reproduces ongoing systems of settler colonialism. We aim to notice, generate, and "stay with the trouble" (Haraway, 2016) of stories that disrupt and unsettle colonial dialogues that often reverberate within forest pedagogies. According to Donna Haraway (2016), troubles are tensions, complexities, or knots that challenge us to "stir up potent response" (p. 1) in our pedagogical practice. We see troubles as generative entry points for resisting taken-for-granted practices in early childhood education and for speculating about how we might be able to activate new ways of living well together (Government of British Columbia, 2019). Throughout this piece, we respond to a series of everyday moments that occurred in a forest-based early learning program (forest school) that operates out of a municipal park on unceded Coast Salish territory (land colonially known as coastal British Columbia (BC), Canada). The narrative below illustrates the complicated and, at times, troubling relations between children, educators, and place. As we think carefully with these happenings, we take up David Greenwood's (2016) invitation to pay attention to the paradoxical nature of place as both a concept and a relationship. We see place as meeting ground and contact zone (the collision of conflicting values, discourses, logics, and practices) that locates us within the past, present, and future of settler colonial contexts (Greenwood, 2016).

Key words: forest pedagogies; climate precarity; early childhood education; settler colonialism

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Source: "Watch Out for Their Home!": Disrupting Extractive Forest Pedagogies in Early Childhood Education by Nancy van Groll and Heather Fraser, [CC BY-NC 4.0](#)

Name of the Journal: Journal of Childhood Studies

Expert Authors: Nancy van Groll and Heather Fraser

Abstract: The frictions of living and learning in times of climate precarity, global unrest, and uncertainty require educators to consider the ways we can collectively engage in speculative pedagogies that respond to the complex, coinherited common world(s) we inhabit. >This conceptual and practice-based paper considers the way early childhood education is implicated in ongoing settler colonialism. It aims to notice, generate, and stay with the trouble of stories that disrupt and unsettle the extractive and colonial dialogues about the forest as a resource and pedagogical tool.

Volume and Issue Number: Vol. 47 No. 3

Activity source: “Source Type: Journal Article Cues” In *APA Style Citation Tutorial* by Sarah Adams and Debbie Feisst, University of Alberta Library, used under [CC BY-NC-SA 4.0](#) . / Screenshot of peer-reviewed journal article updated. **Article displayed:** Van Groll, & Fraser, H. (2022). “Watch Out for Their Home!”: Disrupting Extractive Forest Pedagogies in Early Childhood Education. *Journal of Childhood Studies (Prospect Bay)*, 47–53. <https://doi.org/10.18357/jcs202219894> , licensed under [CC BY-NC](#).

Source Type: Journal Article Cues

Name of the journal

Journal articles are collected and published in scholarly journals. Often (but not always), the word “journal” in the scholarly journal’s name is a good indicator. Look for the name of the journal in the document header (top left or right corner of each page in the article), or document footer. For peer reviewed journals, the name of the journal typically appears in the top half of the first page, often in the left-hand corner.

Volume & Issue number

Volume and issue numbers are most commonly used with journal articles and scholarly journals. Look for these following the name of the journal and the date/year of publication, typically in the header or footer of

the document. They may be written as: Volume 35, No. 3 or 35(3). The page numbers of the article are often located near the Volume and issue number.

Expert authors

Articles are written by experts in their field who often have high levels of education and professional experience. Their experience may be included in the article. In journal articles, the author's names are often listed immediately under the article title.

Abstract

Abstracts are usually found in journal articles and provide a summary of an article's research findings. Often this summary of the article will be found in the top half of the first page of the article. Some journals use a shaded box to make the abstract stand out from the rest of the text, and abstracts are usually labeled accordingly.

More information found in the library database entry

If you're looking at journal articles in a library database, you can often find a marker that indicates that the material has been peer reviewed. It may be specifically stated, or you may also see the "source type" indicating a scholarly journal.

- **Peer reviewed:** Scholarly journal articles are peer-reviewed by subject experts. Peer-review indicators may be found in database or library catalogue descriptions or on the journal article (*article received*, *article accepted*).
- **Source type:** Library catalogue and database descriptions often identify the source type of a work.

Attribution & References

Except where otherwise noted, this chapter is adapted from "[8.3 – Source Type: Journal Article Cues](#)" In *Communication Essentials for College* by Emily Cramer & Amanda Quibell, licensed under [CC BY-NC 4.0](#) :

- "[Source Type: Journal Article Cues \(https://openeducationalberta.ca/introapatutorial7/chapter/journal-article-cues/\)](https://openeducationalberta.ca/introapatutorial7/chapter/journal-article-cues/)" In *APA Style Citation Tutorial* by Sarah Adams and Debbie Feisst, University of

Alberta Library, used under a [CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/). / Adaptations include updates for accessibility and notes on fair dealing use.

- Kirkpatrick, L., Brown, H. M., Searle, M., Smyth, R. E., Ready, E. A., & Kennedy, K. (2018). Impact of a one-to-one iPad initiative on Grade 7 students' achievement in language arts, mathematics, and learning skills. *Computers in the Schools*, 35(3), 171-185. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07380569.2018.1491771> [Screenshots of scholarly journal article (in the H5P activities) are used under Fair Dealing.]

THE RESEARCH PROCESS: WHERE TO LOOK FOR EXISTING SOURCES

Once you have chosen your argumentative research topic, developed a workable research question, and devised a plan for your research, you are ready to begin the task usually associated with the term *research*—namely, the collection of sources. One key point to remember at this stage is intentionality; that is, begin with a research plan rather than a collection of everything you find related to your topic. Without a plan, you easily may end up overwhelmed by too many unusable sources. A carefully considered research plan will save you time and energy and help make your search for sources more productive. Access to information is generally not a problem; the problem is knowing where to find the information you need and how to distinguish among types and qualities of sources. In short, finding sources is all about sorting, selecting, and evaluating.

Your specific methods for collecting sources will depend on the details of your research project. However, a good strategy to begin with is to think in terms of needs: *What do you need, as the researcher and writer? What do your readers need?* This kind of needs assessment is similar to the considerations you make about the rhetorical situation when writing an analysis or argument.

Review Table 1 as you conduct a source “needs assessment.”

Table 1: Research needs assessment

Who	Need	More details
Your needs	Basic Facts/Data/Information	These materials help inform you about your topic. They also may help shape the scope of your knowledge of your topic.
Your Needs	Critical/Conceptual/Contextual Sources	These materials provide explanations and context for your research project. They may range from basic historical or contextual information to explanations of special theories or ideologies. These materials will help you with your analysis and will help you address the <i>So what?</i> questions that your research topic may pose.
Readers' needs	Reason to Invest	This material engages readers both intellectually and emotionally.
Readers' needs	Proof That It Matters	These are convincing arguments or illustrative examples that answer the <i>So what?</i> question, showing why anyone should care about the topic or your approach to it.
Readers' needs	Examples and Explanation	These are illustrative examples and explanations of complex, esoteric, or idiosyncratic concepts, theories, technical processes, etc.

Generating Key Words

Before you begin locating sources, consider the research terms you will use to find these sources. Most research is categorized according to key terms that are important for understanding the topic and/or methodologies. When beginning the research process, you may find that the ideas or words associated with your topic are not yielding results when you search library or Internet databases (organized collections of information).

If you are running into challenges locating information related to your topic, you may not have chosen the specific key terms needed. Because libraries and online databases generate search results based on algorithms that target keywords, the best way to find the appropriate terminology associated with your topic is to practice generating key terms. You may need a range of keywords, some for library searches and others for online searches. When considering the difference between keyword searches in academic libraries versus online sources, note that most academic libraries use Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH) for subject searches of their online catalogs. Many databases use subject searches based on algorithms that may be unique to that database. Don't become discouraged if you find that the terms for searching in your academic library may be somewhat different from the terms for searching online. As you begin to find sources related to your subject, take notes on the variety of terms that describe your research area. These notes will come in handy as both keyword and subject searches throughout your research process.

The following steps and examples will help you get started:

- Begin by limiting your topic to one or two sentences or questions. (*What effects do a region's water and temperatures have on fall foliage?*)
- Highlight specific words that are key to understanding or finding answers to your question. (*What effects do the amount of water a region gets and temperatures for that region have on colors of fall foliage?*)
- Consider words assumed but not mentioned in your question. For instance, the example question implies a search around trees and rainfall; however, *trees* and *rainfall* are not mentioned. Add these words to the words highlighted in your question.
- Consider synonyms for the words you highlighted. A search for synonyms for *fall* yields *harvest*, *autumn*, and *autumnal equinox*. A search for synonyms for *leaves* yields *foliage*, *fronds*, and *stalks*. Be sure you understand the meaning of each synonym so that you can choose those that best capture the concepts you seek to research.
- Try different combinations of the key terms and synonyms to help you find as many sources as you can.

Locating Sources

Once you have identified sources to fit both your and your readers' needs, you can begin to locate these sources. Throughout the research process, look for sources that will provide enough information for you to

form your own opinions or answer your research question(s). Use source materials as support for your own words and ideas. The following are possible locations for source materials:



Figure 1: New York City Public Library, Rose Main Reading Room.
Source: “Grand Study Hall, New York Public Library” by Alex Proimos, licensed under [CC BY 2.0](#)

Libraries

While much of your writing and research work happens online, libraries remain indispensable to research. Your university’s physical and/or online library is a valuable resource, providing access to databases, books and periodicals (both print and electronic), and other media that might not otherwise be accessible. In many cases, experienced people are available with discipline-specific research advice. To take full advantage of library resources, keep the following suggestions in mind:

- **Visit early and often.** As soon as you receive a research assignment, visit the library (physically, virtually, or both) to discover resources available for your project. Even if your initial research indicates a wealth of material, you may be unable to find everything during your first search. You may find that a book has been checked out or that your library doesn’t subscribe to a certain periodical. Furthermore, going to the library can be extremely helpful because you likely will see a range of additional sources simply by looking around the areas in which you locate initial sources.
- **Check general sources first.** Look at dictionaries, encyclopedias, atlases, and yearbooks for background information about your topic. An hour spent with these sources will give you a quick overview of the scope of your topic and lead you to more specific information.
- **Talk to librarians.** At first, you might show a librarian your assignment and explain your topic and research plans. Later, you might ask for help in finding a particular source or finding out whether the library has additional sources you have not checked yet. Librarians are professional information experts; don’t hesitate to use their expertise.

General Reference Works

General reference works provide background information and basic facts about a topic. To locate these

sources, you will need a variety of tools, including the online catalog and databases, as well as periodical indexes. To use these resources effectively, follow this four-step process:

1. Consult general reference works to gain background information and basic facts.
2. Consult specialized reference works to find relevant articles on all topics.
3. Consult the library's online catalog to identify library books on your topic.
4. Consult other sources as needed.

The summaries, overviews, and definitions in general reference works can help you decide whether to pursue a topic further and where to turn next for information. Because the information in these sources is necessarily general, they will not be sufficient alone as the basis for most research projects and are not strong sources to cite in research papers.

Following are some of the most useful general reference works to provide context and background information for research projects:

- Almanacs and yearbooks provide up-to-date information, including statistics on politics, agriculture, economics, and population. See especially the *Facts on File World News Digest* (1940–present), an index to current events reprinted in newspapers worldwide, and the *World Almanac and Book of Facts* (1868–present), which reviews important events of the past year as well as data on a wide variety of topics, including sports, government, science, business, and education. In addition to current publications, almanacs from recent years or from many years ago provide information about the times in which they were written.
- Atlases such as the *Hammond World Atlas*, the *National Geographic Atlas of the World*, and the *Times Atlas of the World* can help you identify places anywhere in the world and provide information on population, climate, and industry.
- Biographical dictionaries contain information about people who have made some mark on history in many different fields. Consult the following: *Contemporary Authors* (1962–present), containing short biographies of authors who have published during the year; *Current Biography* (1940–present), containing articles and photographs of people in the news; and *Who's Who in America* (1899–present), the standard biographical reference for living Americans.
- Dictionaries contain definitions and histories of words, along with their syllabication, and correct

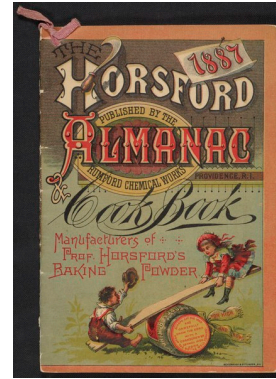


Figure 2: This edition of the *Horsford Almanac and Cook Book* dates from 1887. Published as an “advertising almanac” by a baking powder company, this short almanac featured recipes for a healthful diet as well as general almanac data. **Source:** “The Horsford 1887 almanac and cook book” by Science History Institute, is in the Public Domain.

spelling and usage.

- Encyclopedias provide basic information, explanations, and definitions of virtually every topic, concept, country, institution, historical person or movement, and cultural artifact imaginable. One-volume works such as the *Random House Encyclopedia* and the *Columbia Encyclopedia* give brief overviews. Larger works, such as the *New Encyclopedia Britannica* (32 volumes, also online), contain more detailed information.

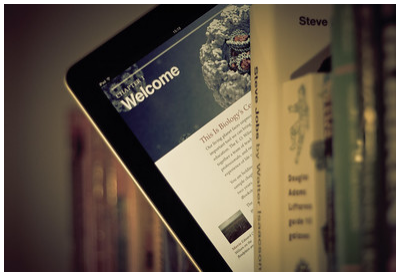


Figure 3: Both print and electronic texts provide excellent general resources for people of all ages. **Source:** “The future of books” by [Johan Larson](#), licensed under [CC BY](#).

Databases

Databases, usually accessed directly through your library website, are indispensable tools for finding both journal and general-audience articles. Some databases contain general-interest information, indexing articles from newspapers, magazines, and sometimes scholarly journals as well. While these databases can be useful when you begin your research, once you have focused your research topic, you likely will need to use subject databases, which index articles primarily from specialized scholarly and technical journals.

The difference between scholarly journal and other articles is important. Although at times these lines are blurred, think of articles found in popular journals or magazines as published widely and usually addressing a general audience. Such materials are useful for obtaining introductory or background information on a topic as well as a sense of the range of factors to consider. Indeed, these sources may help you narrow your topic by giving you a basic understanding of the range and scope of the “conversation” you are entering in your research process. Scholarly journal articles, on the other hand, typically are written and published by academic researchers. These publications often have more specialized information and vocabulary and are most useful after you have narrowed your topic and developed specific research questions. Within the range of scholarly articles are those that are peer reviewed or found in peer-reviewed journals. These journal articles are generally more specific and contain more reliable information because they are written by experts and reviewed by other experts in the field before the article is published.

A good starting point for research is a general-interest database, which covers a wide range of topics from many sources. Several major general-interest databases are listed below; however, many others may be available at your library. A librarian likely can help you find those that may be specific to your university.

- Academic OneFile from Gale. Based on the access capabilities of your institution, you may be able to use this database, which indexes citations, abstracts, and some full texts in such subjects as the physical sciences, technology, medicine, social sciences, the arts, theology, literature, and more. By using this database, you may be able to retrieve the full text of articles provided in PDF and HTML formats and audio versions of texts in MP3 format.
- Academic Search Complete from EBSCOhost. Your library also may provide you with access to this database, which indexes citations, abstracts, and full text from journal articles, books, reports, and conference proceedings in all disciplines. An advantage of this database is that you can retrieve full-text articles provided in PDF and HTML forms. Academic Search Complete also provides searchable cited references for nearly 1,000 journals.
- CQ Researcher. This general database is unique because it publishes well-researched, single-themed 12,000-word reports by respected journalists who have established ethos because of their history of in-depth, unbiased coverage of health, social trends, criminal justice, international affairs, education, the environment, technology, and the economy. These reports can be beneficial at any research stage because they provide an overview, background, chronology, assessment of the current situation, tables and maps, pro/con statements from opposing positions, and bibliographies. Files from before 1996 are in HTML format; newer ones, beginning January 1996, are PDFs.
- Factiva. Many students find Factiva a useful general tool because it provides full-text news articles and business/industry information from newswires, newspapers, business and industry magazines, television and radio transcripts, financial reports, and news service photos. Within the Factiva database, most content is HTML, though other formats are available for export. The database contains news sources from 1979 to the present and financial data from the 1960s to the present.
- Google. One of the most frequently used databases for any research is Google. Students often use Google to begin their searches because they can find material from many different sources, both formal and informal, including blogs, journals, websites, and popular magazines. For academic research, you may find it useful to begin with a general Google search and then move to Google Scholar. Google Scholar provides a simple way to do a broad search for scholarly literature across a variety of disciplines and sources—articles, theses, books, etc. Within the Google database, you will also find more information or effective uses of Google for your research purposes.
- Opposing Viewpoints in Context from Gale. As you familiarize yourself with your topic, you may find this database helpful for understanding the parameters of the discussion on your topic. Opposing Viewpoints offers over 20,000 pro/con viewpoint essays on controversial issues and current events, plus thousands of topic overviews, primary source documents, social activist biographies, court case overviews, related full-text periodical articles, statistical tables, and multimedia content.
- Gale in Context. This database provides curated topic pages that combine academic journal articles, primary sources, reference works, essays, news sources, multimedia, and biographies about people, events, places, and time periods.

- Web of Science from Clarivate Analytics. The three Web of Science databases index citations from journal articles and conference proceedings in the sciences, social sciences, arts, and humanities. You can access cited reference searches, analyze trends and patterns, and create visual representations of citation relationships. Its contents date from 1900 to the present.

Government Documents

The U.S. government publishes numerous reports, pamphlets, catalogs, and newsletters on most issues of national concern. To access documents published from 1976 and onward, consult the Catalog of U.S. Government Publications. To find documents published prior to 1976, consult the *Monthly Catalog of United States*. Both resources should be available electronically and contain listings for materials in formats such as nonprint media, records, CDs, audiocassettes, videotapes, slides, photographs, and other media. Many of these publications may be located through your university's library catalog as well. Consult a librarian to find out what government documents are available to you and in what forms.

Archives/Special Collections

Many libraries have donated records, papers, or writings that make up archives or special collections containing manuscripts, rare books, architectural drawings, historical photographs and maps, and so on. These, as well as items of local interest such as community and family histories, artifacts, and other memorabilia, are usually found in a special room or section of the library. By consulting these collections or archives, you also may find local or regional atlases, maps, and geographic information systems (GIS). Maps and atlases depict more than roads and boundaries. They include information on population density, language patterns, soil types, and much more. And, as discussed later in this chapter, these materials can figure into research projects as primary data.

University libraries' special collections often house items donated by alumni, families, and other community groups. For example, one state university library's special collections, housing a collection of Black Panther and American Communist Party newspapers and pamphlets, celebrated Black History Month with an exhibit featuring the Black Panther Party and the Black Power movement. Included in the exhibit were Black Panther newspapers and pamphlets published in the 1960s and 1970s, as well as earlier civil rights literature from the American Communist Party. This exhibit not only helped students become aware of information about the time and movement but also demonstrated the range and depth of the university's archive collection.

Interlibrary Loans

Even though libraries house many materials, you may need a source unavailable at your library. If so, you usually can get the source through a networked system called interlibrary loans. Your library will borrow the

source for you and provide some guidance as to the form of the materials and how long you will have access to them.

Whichever search tool you use, nothing is magic about information gathered. You will need to use critical skills to evaluate materials gathered from sources, and you will still need to ask these basic questions: Is the author identified? Is that person a professional in the field or an interested amateur? What are their biases likely to be? Does the document represent an individual's opinion or peer-reviewed research?

Evaluating Sources

One key to judging the validity of sources is analysis. You already may be familiar with analysis, which involves looking at texts, media, or other artifacts to examine their individual parts and make interpretive claims about them. In the research process, analysis involves collecting data, deciding how you want to use that data (*what are you looking for?*), and applying those criteria to your data. For example, if you were looking at how the presence of social media has changed in television programs in the last five to seven years, you would determine what shows you want to view and what patterns you want to study.

As you analyze sources, you evaluate them in terms of your research needs. On the basis of your needs assessment, you will determine whether a source is acceptable or unacceptable, good or bad, trustworthy or biased. Although firm categories can be useful, you may find a more nuanced evaluation helpful as well. When you look for sources and evaluate them, begin with general questions such as these:

- How do I want to use this source?
- Am I able to use it in that way?
- Might this source be more valuable if used in another way?

When you ask whether a source is acceptable, the answer usually depends on what you want to do with it. Even biased, false, or misleading material can be useful, depending on how a researcher puts it to use. For instance, you may be writing about a particular historical event and come across a magazine article featuring a biased account of that event. If your purpose is to write a brief but accurate description of the event, then this account is of little use. *But what if your purpose is to write a critical analysis of the ways in which misleading media coverage of an event has influenced public perception of it?* Suddenly, the biased account becomes useful as a specific example of the media coverage you wish to analyze.

A source's value, therefore, is a function of your purpose for it. Labeling a source as good or bad, truthful or misleading, doesn't really evaluate its use to you as a researcher and writer; truthful sources can be used poorly, and misleading sources can be used effectively. What matters is whether the source fits your purpose.

Finally, when evaluating a source, consider time (*when was it judged true?*) and perspective (*who said it was true, and for what reason?*).

Locate the Date

Most documents, especially those created since the advent of copyright laws at the end of the 19th century, include their date of publication. Pay attention to the date a source was created and reflect on what might have happened since then. Information may be outdated and useless. On the other hand, it may still be highly useful—and continuing usefulness is the reason many old texts remain in circulation. Once you locate the source's date, you can decide whether it will be relevant for your purpose. If you are studying change over time, for example, old statistical information would be useful baseline data to demonstrate what has changed. But if you are studying current culture, dated information may be misleading. In other words, when evaluating whether a dated source serves your purpose, know what that purpose is.

Identify Perspective

To identify and evaluate perspective, ask what viewpoint, or perspective, it represents. *Who created the source, and for what purpose?* This question can be difficult to answer immediately because an author's viewpoint is not always identified or summarized in the source itself—and when it is, the information provided, being a creation of the author, cannot always be believed. To trust a source, you need to analyze its assumptions, evidence, biases, and reasoning, which together constitute the author's perspective. In essence, you need to ask these questions: *What is this writer's purpose? Is it scholarly analysis, political advocacy, entertainment, or something else?* Consider the following:

- Will a quick perusal of the introduction or first chapter reveal the writer's assumptions about the subject or audience?
- Can you tell which statements are facts, which are inferences drawn from facts, and which are strictly opinions?
- Does a first reading of the evidence persuade you? Is the logic of the position apparent and/or credible?
- Does the writer omit relevant points?
- Do the answers to these questions make you more or less willing to accept the author's conclusions?

Although trying to answer these questions about every source may seem daunting or even futile at first, have patience and give the research process the time it needs. At the beginning of a research project, when you are still trying to gain context and overview and have looked at only one source, you likely will have difficulty recognizing an author's purpose and viewpoint. However, as you read further and begin to compare and contrast one source with another, differences will emerge, especially if you read extensively and take notes. The more differences you note, the more critically aware you become and the more you understand how and where a source might help you.

Review Critically

To review a source with a critical eye, ask both first and second questions of the text. The answers to first questions are generally factual, the result of probing the text (identifying the title, table of contents, chapter headings, index, and so on). The answers to second questions are more inferential, the result of analyzing assertions, evidence, and language in the text (identifying the perspective of the author and their sources).

Review Internally

Does information in one source support or contradict information in other sources? Do a subject search of the author across platforms to find out how other experts view the author and how your source fits in with the author's other works.

Attribution & References

Except where otherwise noted, this section is adapted from “[13.1 The Research Process: Where to Look for Existing Sources](#)” In *Writing Guide with Handbook* by Michelle Bachelor Robinson, Maria Jerskey, featuring Toby Fulwiler, licensed under [CC BY 4.0](#). Access for free at *Writing Guide with Handbook (OpenStax)* (<https://openstax.org/books/writing-guide/pages/1-unit-introduction>).

RESEARCH HELP VIDEOS

Watch It: Research Help Videos

Research Help Videos (Text Version)

Watch Accessing Page 1+ and other library resources (1 minute) on YouTube

(<https://youtu.be/05fRKAq-6Fc>)

Watch Research guides what are they for, and what's in them -2022 (2 minutes) on YouTube (<https://youtu.be/XUrZxfEKun8>)

Watch Searching keywords in Page 1+ (2 minutes) on YouTube (<https://youtu.be/lwhzUilyu0>)

Watch Using AND & OR in Page 1+ (2:30 minutes) on YouTube (<https://youtu.be/qOJdmfcmWCK>)

Watch Search results the good, the bad, and the ugly – 2022 (2:30 minutes) on YouTube (<https://youtu.be/hUTGtqw8oVc>)

Watch What on Earth does ‘peer-reviewed’ mean, anyway? (2 minutes) on YouTube (<https://youtu.be/jmnnv9XBomGA>)

Watch Evaluating resources (5:30 minutes) on YouTube (<https://youtu.be/vTpmT9f5Re0>)

Watch Evaluating resources digging deeper (3 minutes) on YouTube (https://youtu.be/s3dlni9_Z90)

Watch Evaluating articles with the CRAAP test (5 minutes) on YouTube (<https://youtu.be/dYVWYAvjB-w>)

Watch Getting to the good stuff accessing better web content (3 minutes) on YouTube (https://youtu.be/O_UK-dTrBPM)

Watch So you found something on the web: Should you use it or lose it (3 mins) on YouTube (<https://youtu.be/sr6HQj6SiCg>)

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FINDING AND EVALUATING RESEARCH SOURCES

In this “information age” when so much information is available at our fingertips on the internet, it is crucial to be able to critically search through the reams of information in order to select *credible* sources that can provide *reliable and useful* data to support your ideas and convince your audience. In the era of “fake news,” deliberate misinformation, and “alternative facts,” developing the skill to evaluate the credibility of sources is critical.

In previous sections of this text, you became familiar with academic journals and how they differ from popular sources, as in **Figure 1**. If you would like to refresh your memory on this, watch UVic library’s video on Scholarly and Popular Sources [New tab] (<https://libguides.uvic.ca/librarysearchvideos/scholarly>). These contain peer-reviewed articles written by scholars, often presenting their original research, reviewing the original research of others, or performing a “meta-analysis” (an analysis of multiple studies that analyze a given topic).



Figure 1 Examples of Popular vs Scholarly Sources.¹

Scholarly articles published in academic journals are usually required sources in academic research essays; they are also an integral part of engineering projects and technical reports. Many projects require a literature review [New Tab] (<https://ecp.engineering.utoronto.ca/resources/online-handbook/components-of-documents/literature-reviews/>), which collects, summarizes and sometimes evaluates the work of researchers in this field whose work has been recognized as a valuable contribution to the “state of the art.” However, they are not the only kind of research you will find useful. Since you are researching in a professional field and preparing for the workplace, there are many credible kinds of sources you will draw on in a professional context. **Table 1** lists several types of sources you may find useful in researching your projects.

Table 1: Typical research sources for technical projects

[Skip Table]	
Source Type	Description
Academic Journals, Conference Papers, Dissertations, etc.	<p>Scholarly (peer-reviewed) academic sources publish primary research done by professional researchers and scholars in specialized fields, as well as reviews of that research by other specialists in the same field.</p> <p>For example, the <i>Journal of Computer and System Sciences</i> publishes original research papers in computer science and related subjects in system science; <i>International Journal of Robotics and Animation</i> is one of the most highly ranked journals in the field.</p>
Reference Works	<p>Specialized encyclopaedias, handbooks and dictionaries can provide useful terminology and background information.</p> <p>For example, the <i>Kirk-Othmer Encyclopedia of Chemical Technology</i> is a widely recognized authoritative source.</p> <p>Do not cite <i>Wikipedia</i> or <i>dictionary.com</i> in a technical report.</p>
Books Chapters in Books	<p>Books written by specialists in a given field and which contain a References section can be very helpful in providing in-depth context for your ideas.</p> <p>For example, <i>Designing Engineers</i> by Susan McCahan et al. has an excellent chapter on effective teamwork.</p>
Trade Magazines and Popular Science Magazines	<p>Reputable trade magazines contain articles relating to current issues and innovations, and therefore they can be very useful in determining the “state of the art” or what is “cutting edge” at the moment, or finding out what current issues or controversies are affecting the industry.</p> <p>Examples include <i>Computerworld</i>, <i>Wired</i>, and <i>Popular Mechanics</i>.</p>
Newspapers (Journalism)	<p>Newspaper articles and media releases can offer a sense of what journalists and people in industry think the general public should know about a given topic. Journalists report on current events and recent innovations; more in-depth “investigative journalism” explores a current issue in greater detail. Newspapers also contain editorial sections that provide personal opinions on these events and issues.</p> <p>Choose well-known, reputable newspapers such as <i>The New York Times</i>.</p>
Industry Websites (.com)	<p>Commercial websites are generally intended to “sell,” so you have to select information carefully, but these websites can give you insights into a company’s “mission statement,” organization, strategic plan, current or planned projects, archived information, white papers, technical reports, product details, costs estimates, etc.</p>
Organization Websites (.org)	<p>A vast array of .org sites can be very helpful in supplying data and information. These are often public service sites and are designed to share information with the public.</p>

Government Publications and Public Sector Web Sites (.gov/.edu/.ca)	<p>Government departments often publish reports and other documents that can be very helpful in determining public policy, regulations, and guidelines that should be followed.</p> <p><i>Statistics Canada</i>, for example, publishes a wide range of data.</p> <p>University websites also offer a wide array of non-academic information, such as strategic plans, facilities information, <i>etc.</i></p>
Patents	<p>You may have to distinguish your innovative idea from previously patented ideas; you can look these up and get detailed information on patented or patent-pending ideas.</p>
Public Presentations	<p>Public Consultation meetings and representatives from industry and government speak to various audiences about current issues and proposed projects. These can be live presentations or video presentations available on YouTube or TED talks.</p>
Other	<p>Can you think of some more? (Radio programs, Podcasts, Social Media, <i>etc.</i>)</p>

The importance of critically evaluating your sources for authority, relevance, timeliness, and credibility cannot be overstated. *Anyone can put anything on the internet*; and people with strong web and document design skills can make this information look very professional and credible—even if it isn’t. Since much research is currently done online, and many sources are available electronically, developing your critical evaluation skills is crucial to finding valid, credible evidence to support and develop your ideas. In fact, this has become such a challenging issue that there are sites like this resource on [Predatory Publishers](https://libguides.usask.ca/predatorypublishers) (<https://libguides.usask.ca/predatorypublishers>) from University of Saskatchewan that regularly update its online list of journals that subvert the peer review process and simply publish for profit.

H.G. Wells has been (mis)quoted as stating, “statistical thinking will one day be as necessary for efficient citizenship as the ability to read and write” (Cook, n.d.). On the other hand, Mark Twain (supposedly quoting British Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli) famously said, “There are three kinds of lies: lies, damned lies, and statistics.” The fact that the actual sources of both of these “quotations” are unverifiable makes their sentiments no less true. The effective use of statistics can play a critical role in influencing public opinion as well as persuading in the workplace. However, as the fame of the second quotation indicates, statistics can be used to mislead rather than accurately inform—whether intentionally or unintentionally.

When evaluating research sources and presenting your own research, be careful to critically evaluate the **authority**, **content**, and **purpose** of the material, using questions in **Table 2**.

Table 2: Evaluate the authority, content, and purpose of information

[Skip Table]	
<p>Authority Researchers Authors Creators</p>	<p>Who are the researchers/authors/creators? Who is their intended audience? What are their credentials/qualifications? What else has this author written? Is this research funded? By whom? Who benefits? Who has intellectual ownership of this idea? How do I cite it? Where is this source published? What kind of publication is it?</p> <p>Authoritative Sources: written by experts for a specialized audience, published in peer-reviewed journals or by respected publishers, and containing well-supported, evidence-based arguments.</p> <p>Popular Sources: written for a general (or possibly niche) public audience, often in an informal or journalistic style, published in newspapers, magazines, and websites with a purpose of entertaining or promoting a product; evidence is often “soft” rather than hard.</p>
<p>Content</p>	<p>Methodology What is the methodology of their study? Or how has evidence been collected? Is the methodology sound? Can you find obvious flaws? What is its scope? Does it apply to your project? How? How recent and relevant is it? What is the publication date or last update?</p> <hr/> <p>Data Is there sufficient data here to support their claims or hypotheses? Do they offer quantitative and/or qualitative data? Are visual representations of the data misleading or distorted in some way?</p>
<p>Purpose Intended Use and Intended Audience</p>	<p>Why has this author presented this information to this audience? Why am I using this source? Will using this source bolster my credibility or undermine it? Am I “cherry picking”, using inadequate or unrepresentative data that only supports my position (and ignores substantial amount of data that contradicts it)? Could “cognitive bias” be at work here? Have I only consulted the kinds of sources I know will support my idea? Have I failed to consider alternative kinds of sources? Am I representing the data I have collected accurately? Are the data statistically relevant or significant?</p>

Given the pie chart in **Figure 2**, if you only consulted articles that rejected global warming in a project related to the issue of climate change, you could be guilty of cherry picking and cognitive bias.

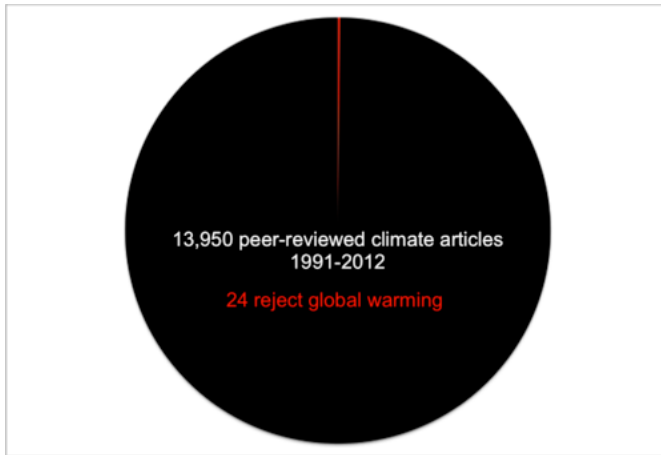


Figure 2 *The number of articles that reject global warming out of all peer-reviewed climate articles within a 21 year time period (Powell, 2012).*

Beware of Logical Fallacies

There are many logical fallacies that both writers and readers can fall prey to (see **Table 3**). It is important to use data ethically and accurately, and to apply logic correctly and validly to support your ideas.

Table 3: Common logical fallacies

[Skip Table]	
Bandwagon Fallacy	Argument from popularity: <i>“everyone else is doing it, so we should too!”</i>
Hasty Generalization	Using insufficient data to come to a general conclusion. <i>An Australian stole my wallet; therefore, all Australians are thieves!</i>
Unrepresentative Sample	Using data from a particular subset and generalizing to a larger set that may not share similar characteristics. <i>e.g.: giving a survey to only female students under 20 and generalizing results to all students.</i>
False Dilemma	“Either/or fallacy”: presenting only two options when there are usually more possibilities to consider. <i>e.g.: You’re either with us or against us.</i>
Slippery Slope	Claiming that a single cause will lead, eventually, to exaggerated catastrophic results.
Slanted Language	Using language loaded with emotional appeal and either positive or negative connotation to manipulate the reader.
False Analogy	Comparing your idea to another that is familiar to the audience but which may not have sufficient similarity to make an accurate comparison. <i>e.g.: Governing a country is like running a business.</i>
<i>Post hoc, ergo prompter hoc</i>	“After this; therefore, because of this” <i>e.g.: A happened, then B happened; therefore, A caused B.</i> Just because one thing happened first, does not necessarily mean that the first thing caused the second thing.
Begging the Question	Circular argument—assuming the truth of the conclusion by its premises. <i>e.g.: never lie; therefore, I must be telling the truth.</i>
<i>Ad hominem</i>	An attack on the person making an argument does not really invalidate that person’s argument. It might make them seem a bit less credible, but it does not dismantle the actual argument or invalidate the data.
Straw Man Argument	Making a “straw man” argument means restating the opposing idea in an inaccurately absurd or simplistic manner to more easily refute or undermine it.
Others?	There are many more... can you think of some? For a bit of fun, check out Spurious Correlations [New Tab].

We all have biases when we write or argue; however, when evaluating sources, you want to be on the lookout

for bias that is unfair, one-sided, or slanted. Consider whether the author has acknowledged and addressed opposing ideas, potential gaps in the research, or limitations of the data. Look at the kind of language the author uses: is it slanted, strongly connotative, or emotionally manipulative? Is the supporting evidence presented logically, credibly, and ethically? Has the author cherry-picked or misrepresented sources or ideas? Does the author rely heavily on emotional appeal?

Critical thinking [New Tab] (http://www.criticalreading.com/critical_thinking.htm) lies at the heart of evaluating sources. You want to be rigorous in your selection of evidence, because once you use it in your paper, it will either bolster your own credibility or undermine it.

Watch It: Evaluating Sources

Watch Evaluating sources (5 minutes) on YouTube (<https://youtu.be/FKaH7PIXx1Q>)

Summary

In this module, you learned how to identify and evaluate credible sources as well as reviewed different source types. You will use this knowledge in the next module as you learn how to integrate the source material into your own work.

Attribution & References

Except where otherwise noted, this chapter is adapted from “[5.2 Finding and Evaluating Research Sources](#)” In *Technical Writing Essentials* by Suzan Last licensed under [CC BY 4.0](#).

Reference

Cook, J. [James Cook]. (n.d.). *Statistical thinking will one day be as necessary for efficient citizenship as the ability to read and write* [Comment on the online forum post *What is the source of the H.G. Wells quote, “Statistical thinking will one day be as necessary for efficient citizenship as the ability to read and write”?*]. Quora. <https://qr.ae/pya3oH>

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Notes

1. Cover images from journals are used to illustrate difference between popular and scholarly journals, and are for noncommercial, educational use only.

PARAPHRASING & SUMMARIZING

Introduction

When you think of academic integrity, the term “plagiarism” conjures up all kinds of thoughts including the academic penalty all educational institutions follow. Plagiarism is the act of using another person’s words or ideas and passing them off as your own, without proper acknowledgment. Plagiarism manifests in various forms; for example, a student seeking to evade the task of writing a paper by duplicating content found on the web or a songwriter pilfering lyrics from a fellow band member. Regardless of the context, plagiarism stands as a moral and ethical wrong. Deliberate plagiarism is a calculated misrepresentation, intended to deceive the reader and undermine the trust that should be placed in the author.

Thankfully, there exists a legitimate process of presenting ideas from source material in a personalized manner—paraphrasing. Unlike summarizing, where the content is condensed, paraphrasing involves the expression of thoughts from the original source using one’s own words while retaining a comparable length to the original material being paraphrased.

In this chapter, you will learn about the complexities of plagiarism and the art of summarizing and paraphrasing. You will learn the principles that underlie these practices, and you will gain the tools necessary to navigate the world of intellectual honesty and integrity, ensuring that your academic works are built upon a foundation of ethical scholarship.

Learning Objectives

- Apply citation conventions systematically in your work, understanding the concepts of intellectual property that motivate documentation conventions.
- Compose texts that integrate the writer’s ideas with those from appropriate sources.
- Identify how summarizing and paraphrasing work together.
- Apply paraphrasing techniques of changing words and sentence structures.
- Integrating quotations provides direct evidence from reliable sources to support your argument.
- Use the words of credible sources conveys your credibility.

To Do List

- Read “Plagiarism” in *The Worry-Free Writer*
- Watch video on “Plagiarism” using the Georgian College library website.

- Read “Writing Summaries” in *Advanced English*.
- Read “Paraphrasing” in *Advance English*
- Read “Integrating Source Evidence into Your Writing” in *Technical Writing Essentials*.
- Complete the Plagiarism Assignment in Blackboard.

Attribution & References

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PLAGIARISM

The term plagiarism is derived from the Latin word for “kidnapper.” When you plagiarize, you essentially ‘kidnap’ another person’s words or ideas and pass them off as your own without acknowledgement.

Plagiarism is often a deliberate act. Whether a student is trying to get out of writing a paper and copies one from the web or a songwriter ‘steals’ lyrics from a band member, plagiarism is wrong. Deliberate plagiarism is an intentional misrepresentation meant to deceive the reader.

However, plagiarism can also be unintentional. On an old episode of *Seinfeld*, the character of Elaine creates a political cartoon for the *New York Times*, only to find later that it was an exact copy of another comic strip. You can read a [plot summary of “The Cartoon” episode \(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Cartoon\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Cartoon) on Wikipedia.

This often happens in music and poetry, too. These are often not deliberate acts of plagiarism, but they are plagiarism just the same and can lead to negative consequences for the perpetrator. For example, when MC Hammer used some of the music from the song “Super Freak” in his song “Can’t Touch This,” it resulted in a lawsuit.

Students often plagiarize unintentionally, as well, simply because they do not realize what should be cited. For example, a student might include a statistic in his/her paper and not give the source. That is plagiarism. If a student copies a sentence or two from a Wikipedia article and gives the source in parentheses after the quote, but does not put the quote in quotations marks, that is plagiarism.

Avoiding Plagiarism

Student plagiarism most often occurs during note taking or drafting, as students rushing to complete a thought insert a quote, with every intention to go back and properly cite the source. Of course, once the paper is done, those good intentions mean little when the student can’t remember what a quote was and what was the student’s own idea.

One way to avoid unintentional plagiarism is to begin by writing down your own ideas first. Put an asterisk * in the text where you know you want to insert a quote, but don’t put the quote in yet. This method ensures that you are consciously inserting quotes at a time when you can take the time to cite the source properly. One side benefit of this method is that you don’t lose your train of thought while writing. Another is that you are focusing on your own words and ideas—not simply reporting what others have said. In fact, APA guidelines state that no more than 20% of a text should be referenced from other sources.

Another important step is to carefully check your text against each source. Make sure that all direct quotes are properly enclosed in quotation marks and cited. Double check that any paraphrases are also cited properly.

Georgian College students can visit the Writing Centre where the students can learn more effectively and efficiently, earn higher grades, become independent learners and persist throughout their studies and beyond. The Writing Centre is not an editing service, but rather works to help students become stronger and more confident writers.

- For more information contact AcademicSuccess@georgiancollege.ca
- Review the [Academic Success Policies and Procedures \(https://library.georgiancollege.ca/about/policies#s-lg-box-15940449\)](https://library.georgiancollege.ca/about/policies#s-lg-box-15940449)

Note that ideas that are common knowledge do not need to be cited. Common knowledge includes well-known facts or general knowledge (like the number of states in the United States of America or the team that won the Super Bowl). Sometimes what is common knowledge in the field you are studying may not be common knowledge to you. But, if you see the same thing over and over again in all of your sources, this is probably common knowledge. When in doubt, always cite!

Consequences of Plagiarism

The consequences of plagiarism vary widely, depending on the writing situation. Songwriters caught plagiarizing face hefty fines, as well as the possible end to their careers. Academic writers may lose their jobs. Students can receive failing grades or even be expelled from school. Regardless of your writing situation, your credibility as a writer, a person and a researcher is compromised. Take the extra time to verify your sources and give credit where credit is due.

Learn more about Plagiarism

To know more about plagiarism, check out [Georgian College Library Plagiarism Tutorial \(https://library.georgiancollege.ca/plagiarism\)](https://library.georgiancollege.ca/plagiarism).

Attribution & References

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WRITING SUMMARIES

A summary is a short overview of the main points of a text. The purpose of a summary is to quickly give the reader or listener an idea of what this material is saying. You may create summaries of material by other authors, such as articles, plays, films, lectures, stories, or presentations.

Why Summarize?

At some point in your classes, you will likely be given an assignment to summarize a specific text, an assignment in which summary is the sole intent. You will also use summaries in more holistic ways, though, incorporating them along with paraphrase, quotation, and your own opinions into more complex pieces of writing. You might summarize for several reasons, both in your time as a student and in your life outside of education.

Here are some common uses:

- A summary can show your understanding of the main points of an assigned reading or viewing, so your instructor might ask you to summarize in order to know that you've understood the material.
- You might summarize a section from a source, or even the whole source, when the ideas in that source are critical to an assignment you are working on and you feel they need to be included, but they would take up too much space in their original form.
- You might also summarize when the general ideas from a source are important to include in your work, but the details included in the same section as those main ideas aren't needed for you to make your point. For example, technical documents or in-depth studies might go into much, much more detail than you are likely to need to support a point you are making for a general audience. These are situations in which a summary might be a good option.
- Summarizing is also an excellent way to double-check that you understand a text—if you can summarize the ideas in it, you likely have a good grasp on the information it is presenting. This can be helpful for school-related work, such as studying for an exam or researching a topic for a paper, but is also useful in daily life when you encounter texts on topics that are personally or professionally interesting to you.

What Makes Something a Summary?

When you ask yourself, after reading an article (and maybe even reading it two or three times), “What was

that article about?” and you end up jotting down—from memory, without returning to the original article to use its language or phrases—three things that stood out as the author’s main points, you are summarizing.

Summaries have several key characteristics.

You’re summarizing well when you:

- Use your own words.
- Significantly condense the original text.
- Provide accurate representations of the main points of the text they summarize.
- Avoid personal opinion.

Summaries are much shorter than the original material—a general rule is that they should be no more than 10% to 15% the length of the original, and they are often even shorter than this.

It can be easy and feel natural, when summarizing an article, to include our own opinions. We may agree or disagree strongly with what this author is saying, or we may want to compare their information with the information presented in another source, or we may want to share our own opinion on the topic. Often, our opinions slip into summaries even when we work diligently to keep them separate. These opinions are not the job of a summary, though. A summary should *only* highlight the main points of the article.

Focusing on just the ideas that best support a point we want to make or ignoring ideas that don’t support that point can be tempting. This approach has two significant problems, though:

First, it no longer correctly represents the original text, so it misleads your reader about the ideas presented in that text. A summary should give your reader an accurate idea of what they can expect if we pick up the original article to read.

Second, it undermines your own credibility as an author to not represent this information accurately. If readers cannot trust an author to accurately represent source information, they may not be as likely to trust that author to thoroughly and accurately present a reasonable point.

How Should I Organize a Summary?

Like traditional essays, summaries have an introduction, a body, and a conclusion. What these components look like will vary some based on the purpose of the summary you’re writing. The introduction, body, and conclusion of work focused specifically around summarizing something is going to be a little different than in work where summary is not the primary goal.

Introducing a Summary

One of the trickier parts of creating a summary is making it clear that this is a summary of someone else’s

work; these ideas are not your original ideas. You will almost always begin a summary with the author, title, and thesis of the piece. This information will appear again in your Works Cited, but is also useful here so the reader can follow the conversation happening in your paper. You will want to provide it in both places.

In summary-focused work, this introduction should accomplish a few things:

- Introduce the name of the author whose work you are summarizing.
- Introduce the title of the text being summarized.
- Introduce where this text was presented (if it's an art installation, where is it being shown? If it's an article, where was that article published? Not all texts will have this component—for example, when summarizing a book written by one author, the title of the book and name of that author are sufficient information for your readers to easily locate the work you are summarizing).
- State the thesis.

Summary within Your Essay

You will probably find yourself more frequently using summary as just one component of work with a wide range of goals (not just a goal to “summarize X”).

Summary introductions in these situations still generally need to:

- Name the author.
- Name the text being summarized.
- State just the relevant context, if there is any (maybe the author has a specific credential that makes their work on this topic carry more weight than it would otherwise, or maybe the study they generated is now being used as a benchmark for additional research).
- Introduce the author's full name (first and last names) the first time you summarize part of their text. If you summarize pieces of the same text more than once in a work you are writing, each time you use their text after that initial introduction of the source, you will only use the author's last name as you introduce that next summary component.

Presenting the Body of a Summary

Again, this will look a little different depending on the purpose of the summary work you are doing. Regardless of how you are using summary, you will introduce the main ideas throughout your text with transitional phrasing, such as “One of [Author's] biggest points is...,” or “[Author's] primary concern about this solution is...”

If you are responding to a “write a summary of X” assignment, the body of that summary will expand on

the main ideas you stated in the introduction of the summary, although this will all still be very condensed compared to the original. What are the key points the author makes about each of those big-picture main ideas? Depending on the kind of text you are summarizing, you may want to note how the main ideas are supported (although, again, be careful to avoid making your own opinion about those supporting sources known).

When you are summarizing with an end goal that is broader than just summary, the body of your summary will still present the idea from the original text that is relevant to the point you are making (condensed and in your own words).

Since it is much more common to summarize just a single idea or point from a text in this type of summarizing (rather than all of its main points), it is important to make sure you understand the larger points of the original text. For example, you might find that an article provides an example that opposes its main point in order to demonstrate the range of conversations happening on the topic it covers. This opposing point, though, isn't the main point of the article, so just summarizing this one opposing example would not be an accurate representation of the ideas and points in that text.

Concluding a Summary

If the author has a clear conclusion, use that. Otherwise, this is also a good place to state (or restate) the things that are most important for your readers to remember after reading your summary.

When your writing has a primary goal other than summary—such as response, analysis, or compare/contrast sources—your conclusion should:

- Include an in-text citation, if appropriate. (To learn how to do this correctly, refer to the [Library's APA Citation Guide](#) or the [APA chapter in *Communication Essentials for College*](#).)
- Discuss the summary you've just presented. How does it support, illustrate, or give new information about the point you are making in your writing? Connect it to your own main point for that paragraph so readers understand clearly why it deserves the space it takes up in your work. (Note that this is still not giving your opinion on the material you've summarized, just making connections between it and your own main points.)

Check Your Understanding: Writing a Summary Paragraph

Write a summary paragraph for a reading you are assigned. A summary is an effective restatement focusing on the main idea of a writing passage.

Requirements

- Your topic sentence should provide the author and title along with the thesis of the work.
- Only mention key points that support the thesis.
- Keep the same order or sequence of information.
- Mention only information from the original writing. Do not include new information, personal opinions, or interpretations.
- Include a fair distribution of summary statement, paraphrase, and quote.
- Your assignment must be formatted in correct APA Formatting.

Step-by Step Instructions

Follow these steps carefully.

1. Read through once, not taking notes or highlighting, but simply noting the overall main idea of the text.
2. Re-read with pen in hand. Make note of key words and ideas—highlight, underline, or circle them.
 - A. Divide the text into sections that focus on one key idea in each section.
 - B. Note a key term for each section.
 - C. Plan which sections best suit summary statement, paraphrase, and quote.
3. Write an outline: your topic sentence and a list of the points that support the main idea.
4. Write a sentence for each point. Conclude with a sentence showing the significance of the writing from the author's point of view, not yours. (If the author makes a clear conclusion, skip writing a conclusion of your own.)
5. Make sure to use correct APA formatting. Run the spelling and grammar check and follow the revision process before submitting your final assignment.

Don't forget to ask for help if you need it!

Attribution & References

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PARAPHRASING

When you quote a source, you are taking the words directly from the passage: these are the original author's words. Quotes can be useful, but in order to show you understand what you have read, you should paraphrase. **Paraphrasing** is putting information into your words; it is an important skill to develop because when you do it, you are not only showing you understand what you have read, but you are also processing and adapting that information to your writing purpose.

When you paraphrase, you are using the **technique** of putting a condensed version of someone else's ideas (summary) into **your own words**.

It is very important to remember that when you paraphrase you still need to include citations because although the words are yours, the ideas belong to the original authors, and you must give that person credit for the ideas.

Tip

If you prefer rewriting, try not to copy but use your own paraphrasing of the material. If a concept is difficult, put it in your own terms with a concrete example so you understand it. Try to put it in the vocabulary of the course.

Paraphrasing Sources

When you paraphrase material from a source, restate the information from an entire sentence or passage in your own words, using your own original sentence structure. A paraphrased source differs from a summarized source in that you focus on restating the ideas, not condensing them. Again, it is important to check your paraphrase against the source material to make sure it is both accurate and original. Inexperienced writers sometimes use the thesaurus method of paraphrasing; that is, they simply rewrite the source material, replacing most of the words with synonyms. This constitutes a misuse of sources. A true paraphrase restates ideas using the writer's (your) own language and style.

In his draft, Jorge frequently paraphrased details from sources. At times, he needed to rewrite a sentence more than once to ensure he was paraphrasing ideas correctly. Below is a passage with examples of how he paraphrased and adapted the information to create his own paragraph. Read the passage from a website. Then read Jorge's initial attempt at paraphrasing it, followed by the final version of his paraphrase.

Source

According to Heinz (2009), dieters nearly always get great results soon after they begin following a low-carbohydrate diet, but these results tend to taper off after the first few months, particularly because many dieters find it difficult to follow a low-carbohydrate diet plan consistently.

Jorge's Original Paraphrase

People usually see encouraging outcomes shortly after they go on a low-carbohydrate diet, but their progress slows down after a short while, especially because most discover that it is a challenge to adhere to the diet strictly (Heinz, 2009).

After reviewing the paraphrased sentence, Jorge realized he was following the original source too closely. He did not want to quote the full passage verbatim, so he again attempted to restate the idea in his own style.

Jorge's Revised Paraphrase

Because it is hard for dieters to stick to a low carbohydrate eating plan, the initial success of these diets is short lived (Heinz, 2009).

Check Your Understanding: Paraphrasing I

Paraphrasing – A (Text Version)

Paraphrase the following passage in your own words:

“The twenties were the years when drinking was against the law, and the law was a bad joke because everyone knew of a local bar where liquor could be had. They were the years when organized crime ruled the cities, and the police seemed powerless to do anything against it. Classical music was forgotten while jazz spread throughout the land, and men like Bix Beiderbecke, Louis Armstrong, and Count Basie became the heroes of the young. The flapper was born in the twenties, and with her bobbed hair and short skirts, she symbolized, perhaps more than anyone or anything else, America’s break with the past” (Yancey, 1989, p. 25).

Paraphrasing – B (Text Version)

Paraphrase the following passage in your own words:

“While the Sears Tower is arguably the greatest achievement in skyscraper engineering so far, it’s unlikely that architects and engineers have abandoned the quest for the world’s tallest building. The question is: Just how high can a building go? Structural engineer William LeMessurier has designed a skyscraper nearly one half mile high, twice as tall as the Sears Tower. And architect Robert Sobel claims that existing technology could produce a 500-story building” (Bachman, 1990, p. 15).

Activity source: “3.7 Paraphrase (a& b)” Brenna Clarke Gray (H5P Adaptation) is based on content from *Writing for Success – 1st Canadian Edition* by Tara Harkoff, licensed under [CC BY-NC-SA 4.0](#). / Converted to text version.

Check Your Understanding: Paraphrasing II

Paraphrasing II (Text Version)

Write Your Paraphrase

- Choose an important idea or detail from your notes—for any class you like, or any research you have in process!—and jot it down here in point form.
- Restate the idea in your own words as completely as possible. Do not look it up in your notes first!
- Find the original text in the source. Now, compare your paraphrase. Do you capture the idea accurately? Is your language and sentence structure original to you? Revise and make any necessary changes here—and don’t forget to add your citation!

Activity source: “3.8 Original Paraphrase” by Brenna Clarke Gray (H5P Adaptation) is based on content from *Writing for Success – 1st Canadian Edition* by Tara Harkoff, licensed under [CC BY-NC-SA 4.0](#). / Converted to text version.

Check Your Understanding: Summary (Assignment 2)

Please follow the instructions to complete Assignment 2. Once finished, you will be able to print your completed assignment for submission.

Summary-Assignment 2 (Text Version)

Assignment Preparation

Read the following article and compose a summary of 100 to 150 words. Determine what the key points are and paraphrase accordingly. Make sure all the points you choose are important to the understanding and overall meaning of the essay.

Remember:

- You want to use objective language that accurately represents the original author's angle of vision: do not provide analysis or discussion.
- You should not simply substitute words.
- You should change up the sentence structure.
- The end result needs to capture all the main points but also be in your own words.

Heroin as One of the Most Lethal Drugs

Among prohibited narcotic substances, heroin has been classified as one of the most addictive and detrimental. In a recent research study run by the Institute of Narcotic Examination in Rollesque, Nevada, heroin ranked 2.89 out of 3 on a dependence rating scale (Perez, 2012). This result was also confirmed by scores of research held in London by the Academy of Pharmaceutical Studies (Perez, 2012). An opiate processed from morphine, heroin is delineated as a lethal drug. The common form of heroin sold in streets looks like a white or brown gummy substance with a high consistency of tar.

Heroin is injected into the human body through a hypothermic needle directly in a muscle or a particular blood vein. It can also be smoked like cigarettes. There is the possibility of it being successfully mixed with drugs or snorted as cocaine. Street heroin is often mixed with other substances like sugar, starch, quinine, poisons or even powder milk to dilute the effect. Short and long term effects of heroin use have different levels of withdrawal, reinforcements, tolerance, dependency and intoxication. Heroin reduces pain and mimics the traits of endorphins, which causes the human brain to experience pleasure (Hollow, 2011). The

central neural system becomes supersaturated with endorphin like substances, and when the effect of heroin ends, individuals begin to feel the need for a new injection to prolong pleasure (Hollow, 2011).

The degree of heroin addictiveness can be measured by the severe withdrawal symptoms which it induces in individuals. Among the most common symptoms, one can enlist the following: a warm flush feeling in the skin, an ill mood and depression, vomiting, itching, nausea, and heavy pain in joints. The cardiac functions and the neural system functions slow down, though it often depends on the individual's genetic type, amount of the drug taken, and the purity of the substance (Hollow, 2011).

Heroin addiction causes numerous side effects to the physical body. Blood vein structure collapses, and a risk of receiving a heart infection, liver disease, or abscesses dramatically increases. Long term addiction to the drug takes the form of a chronic, relapsing disease. Long term use of heroin prompts users to gradually increase doses. Once a user is in the chronic stage, this implies such symptoms as restlessness, bone and muscle pain, insomnia, and intense withdrawal stages lasting for 24 to 48 hours after heroin has been taken (Lichter, 2012).

The treatment of heroin addiction includes a thorough detoxification program, which helps to minimize the severity of withdrawal symptoms. The use of medications for treatment along with therapy helps individuals cope. Methadone programs, buprenorphine, together with behavioral therapies aid to recover from addiction (Perez, 2012). These aspects are important, as both behavioral and pharmacological interventions can effectively normalize addiction levels, brain functions and social behavior. These methods are used in a varied combination to cure the withdrawal, tolerance, dependence and intoxication elements to minimize the addictive qualities of heroin.

References

Hollow, M. (2011). *Heroin: The Ultimate Drug*. Chicago: Running Hill Books.

Lichter, M. (2012). *The Dark Hole of Heroin*. Boston: Sidetrack Books.

Perez, G. (2012). *Studies of Heroin*. New York: Gold Beard Press.

Essay taken and adapted from: <http://academichelp.net/samples/essays/expository/heroin-lethal-drug.html>

Reviewing the Criteria

Remember that your summary should meet the following criteria:

- 100-150 words.
- Includes all key points from the original article.
- Demonstrates good use of your own vocabulary and sentence structure.
- Uses objective language (reporting on the content, not analyzing it).

For each of the criteria listed here, click the Add Criteria button and explain how you will meet the requirements for this assignment.

Drafting Your Summary

- Make your first attempt at drafting your summary. Ensure you have covered all of the key points, but work towards a word count goal of 100-150 words.
- Now, go back one page and review the text of the original article. Have you missed any key details? Have you accidentally borrowed any words, phrases, or sentence structure? Revise your summary.

Reviewing Criteria

Reflect on each of the parts of your assignment as laid out in the criteria.

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Converted to text version.

Paraphrasing is another way of presenting ideas from source material in your own words, but without the condensing that happens in a summary. Instead, paraphrases stay approximately the same length as the original source material being paraphrased.

Why Paraphrase?

To Demonstrate Understanding

Paraphrasing can demonstrate your understanding of a text, including its more complex details and connections between its main points, and can also help you double-check the depth of your understanding of a text.

To Provide Support

You might paraphrase a section from a source (unlike summary, it is unlikely that you will ever need to paraphrase an entire source) when an idea or point in that source is important to an assignment you are working on and you feel it needs to be included, but you can rephrase it in a way that fits your work without losing any key information.

Tip

Use paraphrase instead of direct quote unless you have compelling reasons to preserve the exact language of the original text. Often, the reason to preserve the original text in a direct quote is because that text uses specialized language that you can't easily rephrase. As much of your work as possible should be in your own voice.

Look at the last paragraph of the *Scientific American* article, “[Are you a Magnet for Mosquitoes?](https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/are-you-a-magnet-for-mosquitoes/) [New Tab] (<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/are-you-a-magnet-for-mosquitoes/>)” about why mosquitoes are more attracted to some humans than others.

The following sentence would be a good candidate for a direct quote because you might not know how to paraphrase the part about MHC genes:

“Scientists that study human odors and genetics have previously suggested scent cues associated with genetics are likely controlled via the major histocompatibility complex (MHC) genes” (Maron, 2017, para. 8).

The sentence that follows, though, says this:

“Those genes appear to play a role in odor production and also in mammals’ mating choices—because humans and mice alike appear to prefer mates that smell less similar to themselves, which scientists have theorized may be a natural control against inbreeding” (Maron, 2017, para. 8).

Since there isn't particularly specialized or original language in here that must be preserved, this second sentence is a good candidate for paraphrasing. One way might look like this:

These same genes that might be attracting mosquitoes more to some of us than to others could also be helping us choose partners that we aren't likely to be related to (Maron, 2017).

What Makes Something a Paraphrase?

A paraphrase

- Is in your own words.
- Is not condensed.
- Avoids personal opinion.
- Is completely rephrased from the original.

WARNING: don't “thesaurize” a paraphrase. This means, don't take a thesaurus and find a

replacement for the words in the text one by one. This is NOT writing in your own words, and it puts you at risk for plagiarism. It will also sound ridiculous.

Like summary, a paraphrase is someone else's ideas rewritten in your own words. Unlike summary, though, paraphrase should not be condensed—the ideas as you write them should take up about the same amount of space as they do in the original text. A paraphrase should not include your own opinions about the topic, what the author of the text is saying about it, or how that author is presenting their point.

It can be easy, when writing a paraphrase, to rely on some of the original author's phrasing or direct synonyms for the author's original words. Remember that a paraphrase must be entirely your own writing, not just phrases or words substituted in the same sentence structure, length, etc. used by the original text.

Write paraphrases in sentence structures that are natural to you and true to your own writing voice. The only job of a paraphrase is to accurately and completely represent the relevant idea presented in the text you are paraphrasing.

How Should I Organize a Paraphrase?

It is not likely that you will encounter an assignment that solely requires you to paraphrase a text. Instead, you will use paraphrase to support your own points and ideas in work with a wide range of goals. That said, there are still some guidelines for incorporating paraphrase into your work:

- Introduce the author and original text, just as you would for a summary.
- If there is relevant context, mention that as well.
- Then, restate the part of the original text that you want to use *into your own original language and sentence structures*.
- Include a parenthetical citation (if appropriate) at the end of the paraphrased material.
- After delivering and citing the paraphrased material, reconnect that information to your own topic and point.

Check Your Understanding: Paraphrasing III

Here is a brief passage from Sarah Boxer’s article in *The Atlantic*, “An Artist for the Instagram Age (<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2017/07/yayoi-kusamas-existential-circus/528669/>)”:

“The fact that some folks have managed to make the scene while others get left out in the cold is integral to the excitement of participatory art. The thrill is akin to exotic travel, or getting to see *Hamilton*. Because not everyone who wants the experience actually gets the experience, these works, even if their intentions and messages are democratic, tend to become exclusive affairs” (Boxer, 2017, para. 7).

Which of the following is an appropriate paraphrase of this passage? Why is that one strong and the other one less functional as a paraphrase?

1. The truth that many people have been able to attend these events as others have been shut out of them is key to what makes this kind of art appealing. The excitement is similar to visiting foreign countries or attending a showing of a sold-out musical. Since some people who wish to attend can’t do so, these art forms, despite not necessarily wanting to, often end up denying access to many would-be attendees.
2. Boxer notes that this kind of art only maintains its appeal as long as there are more people clamoring to view it than can possibly actually view it. This reliance on scarcity means these artists are ultimately relying on elitist principles to find their success and remain in demand.

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References

Bachman, R. (1990, May). Reaching for the sky. *Dial*, 15.

Boxer, S. (2017, July-August). An artist for the Instagram age. *The Atlantic*. <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2017/07/yayoi-kusamas-existential-circus/528669/>

Maron, D. F. (2017, June 20). Are you a magnet for mosquitos? *Scientific American*.

Yancey, K. (1989). *English 102 supplemental guide*.

DEVELOPING ESSAY OUTLINES

Introduction

Creating a well-structured and persuasive essay involves traversing three pivotal stages: preparation, writing, and revision. In this chapter, you will discover the art of formulating a compelling introduction that sets the stage for your argument, adding substantial evidence in the main body, and summarizing your points in your conclusion. You will also explore the importance of having a well-constructed outline to use as your guide when writing your first draft.

Additionally, you will continue to learn about intellectual property, empowering you to make informed decisions and navigate the ethical considerations surrounding citation and the proper utilization of external sources. In this journey, you will begin to understand the purpose and embrace the process of using a systematic application of citation conventions contributing to the robustness and reliability of your own work.

These techniques and processes will prepare you with the methods and technologies commonly employed for research and communication across diverse fields. By embracing these tools, you will unlock new avenues for information gathering, analysis, and collaboration, empowering your scholarly pursuits with efficiency and precision.

Learning Objectives

- Inquire about the research process to create a comprehensive plan.
- Understand how body paragraphs serve a thesis.
- Identify when and how to summarize, paraphrase, and directly quote information from research sources.
- Apply citation conventions systematically.
- Apply critical thinking skills, pattern analysis, and synthesize ideas to compose texts in a reflective way.

To Do List

- Watch the video on How to Write an Essay: Four Minute Step by Step Guide.
- Read “Integrating Sources” in *Critical Reading, Critical Writing*
- Read “Research Guide” in *Writing Guide with Handbook*.
- Read “Creating a Rough Draft Four a Research Paper” in *Communications Essentials for College*.

- Read “Annotated Student Sample: Research Log in *Writing Guide with Handbook*.”
- Complete Essay Outline Assignment in Blackboard.

Attribution & References

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HOW TO WRITE AN ESSAY: 4 MINUTE STEP BY STEP GUIDE

Watch It: How to Write an Essay

Watch How to write an essay: 4 minute step-by step-guide | Scribbr (4 minutes) on YouTube (<https://youtu.be/UuOWNNvupik>)

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USING SOURCES TO SUPPORT YOUR WRITING

Using Sources to Serve Academic Argument

At some point in your academic career, you will be asked to move beyond merely reporting on the findings of sources, as you would in a bibliography, and instead to use what you have learned from sources to participate meaningfully and responsibly in an academic conversation. This may be a literal conversation or one that takes place in writing as writers read and respond to one another.

All academic writers must show how what they know or what they claim connects with prior information or knowledge. This is true even when these scholars are presenting a new study or their own new findings. Sometimes, academic writers contribute to what we know or understand about a subject by presenting their own position, or argument, in an ongoing debate. At these times, they must use perspectives and information from others to support or provide evidence for that position. This is a skill that you will practice as a composition student.

Finding credible, relevant sources is only one part of the research process; effectively integrating those sources in the arrangement of an academic or argumentative essay is a different task requiring further close reading and critical thinking. This chapter highlights three skills of academic writers when they work with sources:

1. Considering the different roles that sources can play in your argument;
2. Synthesizing, or connecting information from multiple sources in unique ways;
3. Providing context for your reader about each source and how it fits into your argument.

Roles that Sources Can Play

Good Research is a Process that Starts with Inquiry

Good research starts with a question; you have an idea about something, and you want to learn more. Academic research is a specific type that involves finding and reading sources to prepare to participate in an academic conversation. This requires you to keep three elements in your mind and to stay aware of how they are changing, and how they are changing each other, as you learn more (figure 1):

1. your central research topic or question
2. your knowledge or understanding about the topic
3. your working main claim or position about the topic (working thesis)

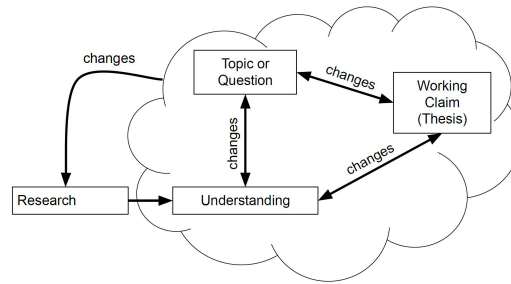


Figure 1: Research Process Flowchart

To evaluate whether a source is relevant for your purpose, you should not just try to decide whether it “fits” or relates to what you already know or believe. In fact, that source’s perspective may change what you believe. Or it may change your entire question or topic itself, as you learn about specific issues, conversations, and debates related to the question that you started with.

Example of Research as a Recursive Process

Imagine you start with a broad research question: “Are the graduation rates really so low for college students in the United States?” After some preliminary research, you learn that, yes, there are some statistics that highlight a problem of students starting but not finishing college.

So, you narrow your research question to learn more: “What factors contribute to students’ struggles with completing college?” And you start to see that there is an ongoing conversation about students from under-served populations: low-income students and first-generation students in particular.

So, given all your findings, you write a working thesis that might sound like this:

The promise of college as a gateway to increased financial earnings or lifelong success for its attendees isn’t panning out; more needs to be done to address completion rates for college graduates—especially among under-served populations, including students from low-income households.

Remember: your initial topic was graduation rates, and that shifted to a topic about why students struggle to finish college. While you are researching, keep in mind that the many ongoing conversations about higher

education might not immediately “match” or sound just like your own search terms or topic. So, skimming articles and texts about your overarching topic—college—can still be valuable. Look at the article, “[Is a tuition-free policy enough to ensure college success?](https://theconversation.com/is-a-tuition-free-policy-enough-to-ensure-college-success-57947)” [New Tab] (<https://theconversation.com/is-a-tuition-free-policy-enough-to-ensure-college-success-57947>) in figure 2 and note the title: it seems to be asking about the possible effects of free college tuition. It doesn’t look like it will “answer” your research question, but it can still prove useful.

As you skim this source, you find that, as the title implies, these authors argue that making college free is not “enough to ensure college success” because low-income students face more complex struggles than just the difficulty of affording college. So, even though your working thesis does not directly relate to the main claim or thesis of this article, it contains relevant perspectives and evidence about your topic.



Figure 2: Example Source #1 that Widens the Conversation. **Source:** Screenshot of article featured in *The Conversation*, licensed under [CC BY-ND](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nd/4.0/).

Similarly, if your working question or topic is why low-income students struggle in college, then the [Postsecondary Pathways out of poverty: City University of New York accelerated study in associate programs and the case for national policy](https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7758/rsf.2018.4.3.06) (<https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7758/rsf.2018.4.3.06>) article in figure 3 may not seem to answer your question directly. Instead, it appears to be about why a New York college’s “accelerated” associate degree programs should be used as a good model for making a policy for the whole nation. But, if these authors are arguing that their college has made a successful “pathway out of poverty,” then maybe part of their article first describes the problem that you are researching (low-income student struggles) before arguing for their specific solution.

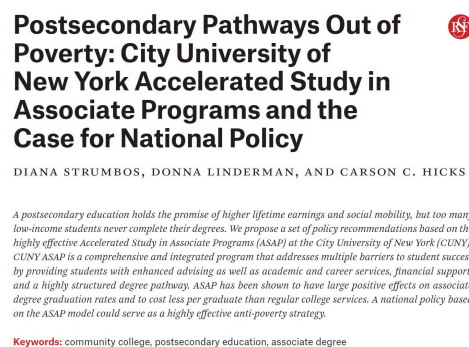


Figure 3: Example Source #2 that Broadens the Conversation. **Source:** Screenshot of article in *RSF Journal*, licensed under [CC BY-NC-ND 3.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/).

After reading these and other sources, you should revisit and revise your working claim or thesis statement to reflect all that you have learned and the likely position that you will take in your argument. Note the changes between this one and the previous example:

Because low-income students do not complete college at the same rate as their peers due to several “hidden” barriers, American community colleges should redesign the ways in which they educate and support students from low-income households in order to meet the goal of putting those students on the path to increased financial earnings and lifelong stability.

Rereading Sources with their Roles in Mind

Once you have reached the step of preparing to “join the conversation” with your own writing, review how all of the perspectives and information you have gathered relate or “speak to” your working thesis statement. How will you organize and present all that you have learned to your reader to persuade them effectively?

You are already familiar with the idea of a text appealing to readers by providing logical reasons, conveying credibility, and evoking an emotional response. So you can think of the perspectives and information from your sources as tools that strengthen these rhetorical appeals of your argument. But sources can serve in more specific ways, too.

Sources often provide evidence to support the claims within your argument. There are different kinds of evidence that are persuasive in different ways:

- **Numerical data** and statistics such as the results of scientific studies or surveys
- **Expert testimony**: the views and ideas of experts who support your claims
- **Stories and anecdotes**: specific examples that illustrate the real human experience of your topic and elicit emotion
- **Counterarguments**: opposing viewpoints or ideas that otherwise challenge your claims, which you will refute or answer

Also, some sources may include background information that you must provide as a writer so that your reader is adequately informed about your topic. This may include:

- The **scope** or scale of your topic (where your topic is relevant and how widespread it is)
- **Definitions** of terms or explanations of unfamiliar concepts that are important to your argument
- The **history** of events that your reader must understand for a full understanding of why the topic exists in its present form
- Information that shows the **timeliness** or relevance of the issue (*kairos*) and why it is important right now

With all of your research available, it may help to check for gaps in your supporting evidence using a chart like the one in table 1.

Table 1: Roles of a Source (Example 1 – Page and Kehoe (2016))

Type of source	Examples
Background/ Kairos	Section 1: rates of enrollment increasing, but graduation rates low Section 3: discussion about need for support that goes beyond financial assistance and discussion about what kind of support helps
Numerical data and statistics	Section 1: statistics about college attendance + also “only three in five completed their bachelor’s degree within six years” (para. 2) + contrast between students from high-income families who completed (3/4) and students from low-income families (under half) Section 3: statistics about success in one program “61-75%” Section 4: increase in AA degree from 18-33%
Expert testimonies	Section 3: quote attributed to Dell Scholars program, students need “ongoing support and assistance to address all of the emotional, lifestyle, and financial challenges that may prevent scholars from completing college” (para. 20). Section 4: Levin and Garcia explain cost/value of program
Stories and anecdotes	Section 2: Story about “Veronica” and her needs for childcare and additional financial guidance Story about “Marcus” as a full-time student and also supporting a family
Counterarguments	Last 2 paragraphs address problem of “free tuition” as a solution to completion rates; possible counterargument to explore?

This kind of graphic organizer lets you “see” how your research will (or will not) help you start to build and support your argument.

A successful academic argument will draw from multiple sources in a variety of ways. So to help you create your graphic organizer—and start outlining your argumentative body paragraphs—it’s important that you review your sources strategically to start seeing how they will serve you as a writer. Let’s take a look at an article we’ve used in some of our model paragraphs (in the next section of this chapter).

This is an article called, “Feet on Campus, Heart at Home: First-Generation College Students Struggle with Divided Identities,” and it’s written by Linda Banks-Santilli, a college professor. In our research, we were focusing on the struggles faced by students from low-income families, but Banks-Santilli notes that around 50 percent of first-generation students are low-income students, so this article seems relevant to our argument as

well. When we reread Banks-Santilli, keeping the different roles sources can play in mind, we can add to our graphic organizer (Table 2):

Table 2: Roles of a Source (Example 2 – Banks-Santilli (2015))

Type of Source	Examples
Background/ Kairos	Defines first-gen students, could use this in a separate paragraph about this population or explain that “About 50% of all FG students in the US are low-income” (para. 5).
Numerical data and statistics	
Expert testimonies	
Stories and anecdotes	Section 3 – last paragraph: one student’s experience moving away to college and still helping parents with household finances
Counterarguments	

It’s clear that this source, Banks-Santilli, doesn’t “serve” many parts of our thesis. This is because the focus of the article isn’t aligned with the focus of our argument. That doesn’t mean it isn’t a useful source in the creation and composition of our argument.

In fact, if you fill out a graphic organizer with all of your sources, you will be able to “see” quite a bit about what you have and what you need to make and support your argument. You will notice if there is an obvious lack of evidence, for instance, or a lack of counterarguments. You will probably not use everything you note in your graphic organizer in your actual essay, but the act of rereading sources critically to note how they can serve your argument will help you.

How Body Paragraphs Serve a Thesis

Students are sometimes intimidated by the prospect of a 6, 7, or even 10-page assignment. They can’t imagine they’ll have enough to say to fill that length. One way that may help tackle such a task is to consider a shift in your thinking: you’re no longer the researcher, you’re now the messenger, writing your own argument that explains and develops your thesis.

If we break down the thesis statement above we can see that there are several points to explain, claims to prove, and ideas to develop (Table 3), and these different parts will likely become different sections of your essay.

Table 3: Sample Implications of a Thesis Statement

Excerpt from thesis statement	Implications for body paragraphs
Because low-income students do not complete college at the same rate as their peers	First, this needs to be proven or demonstrated thoroughly to engage readers and prepare them for the rest of the argument.
due to several “hidden” barriers	The second half of this clause argues for the main cause of the problem—though it is not specified in detail—and this also needs to be explained and proven: what are the “hidden” barriers? What do readers need to know or understand regarding these obstacles to completion? What is the proof that these are the primary cause of the problem?
American community colleges should redesign the ways in which they educate and support students from low-income households in order to meet the goal of putting those students on the path to increased financial earnings and lifelong stability	<p>This thesis ends with a “proposal” section: a call for change. It may be more complicated to support this:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If we are calling for a redesign, we may first need to prove problems with the “old design.” So, the parts of college that are inhibiting completion must be presented and analyzed in some way. 2. The writer has to choose whether they will present specific solutions or changes and prove why they are the best ones, or just focus on proving the need for change in some meaningful way. <p>Note: this thesis specifies community colleges, so the essay will likely focus on two-year institutions at some point in the argument.</p>

Check Your Understanding: Identifying parts of your working thesis

In your own paper, you may want to identify different points or parts of your working thesis. If you take the time to do this, you will be able to start imagining the different parts or sections of your own paper:

- Do you mention a specific problem? Will you prove that problem? Give background information about it? Define terms? Explore and discuss the current status of the problem?

- Should you address multiple causes of that problem? Or do you intend to demonstrate the severity of that problem by discussing effects?
- Have you identified multiple populations affected by the issue that you are presenting?

Once you've clarified (for yourself) what, exactly, you will need to accomplish in your essay to support your argument, you may find it easier to start drafting paragraphs that address those separate points. In fact, it can be most effective to write a draft of your body paragraphs before revising your thesis statement and finally drafting your introduction and conclusion sections.

Synthesis of Multiple Sources

One way in which academic writers create knowledge or make progress in the discussion or exploration of a topic is by juxtaposing or combining the ideas and perspectives from multiple sources, or **synthesizing**, in new ways.

When you write a summary, rhetorical analysis, or annotated bibliography, you are reporting on a single source at a time. Synthesis asks you to do more. Through research, you have reached a deeper understanding of the different perspectives or parts of your topic by reading multiple sources and finding connections between them. The goal of synthesis is to now try to help your reader to reach that same understanding. So synthesis is both the invisible act of learning about different perspectives and messages and the very visible act of using multiple sources in the composition of your own, unique message.

Why Synthesize?

Synthesis in academic writing helps your reader to see the same connections between information in sources that you see, which in turn helps to persuade your reader to reach the same conclusion that you have from your research.

Furthermore, your argument will be more well-rounded and more well-developed when you use more than one source of support for each of your main claims. Also, because it is often dangerous to rely on a single source for information, incorporating multiple sources in support of a claim or idea helps to ensure that your information is accurate to you and your reader.

Usually it is not considered productive for an academic writer to repeat, summarize, or paraphrase a large passage or many ideas from a single source. Not only does this fail to further the discussion of a topic beyond what has already been said by others, but it may also pose problems of academic integrity, since academic ethics require a writer to produce original work and provide attribution for ideas that are not their own.

Examples of Synthesis in a Sample Essay

A paragraph like the one below would appear earlier in the essay to provide background information as well as context, before the writer starts to “prove” the thesis. This is a meaningful way to engage readers and prepare them for the rest of the argument.

In this paragraph, the writer uses three sources to present the scope of the problem (essentially, the background information about the issue and some context about current data or ongoing discussions before highlighting the specific population of individuals that the thesis statement will address (students from low-income households). First, read the paragraph, then review Table 4 for annotations on how these sources are working together.

Students are not completing the college degrees they set out to achieve. The number of students attending college has increased over time; “In 1950, only 16 percent of young people had at least some college exposure. By 2012, this figure rose to 63 percent” (Page & Kehoe, 2016, para. 1). However, the rate of students graduating is just too low. According to NPR Education reporter Elissa Nadworny, “just 58 percent of students who started college in the fall of 2012 had earned any degree six years later” (Nadworny, 2019, para. 2). Nadworny (2019) is citing the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center for this information in her article written in 2019. Among community college students, this number is even lower: below forty percent (Nadworny, 2019). The promise of college as a way ahead is especially troubling for students who don’t come from a place of privilege. Statistics show that low-income students do not complete at the rate that high-income students do (Page & Kehoe, 2019; Favero, 2018). In fact, researchers from the City University of New York published an article about an accelerated associate degree program aimed at helping increase graduation rates (Strumbos et al., 2018). They discuss the fact that college as a stepping stone or a way to advance students’ economic mobility becomes increasingly problematic when we recognize that students from low-income households are “six times less likely to have earned a bachelor’s degree by the age of twenty-five than those from high-income families” (Strumbos et al., 2018, p. 102). Page and Kehoe (2019) note that this is especially troubling since the “gaps in degree attainment” have been increasing (para. 3). Clearly this issue isn’t getting better on its own.

Table 4: Synthesis of Sources

excerpt from the paragraph	function of the the source(s)
The number of students attending college has increased over time; “In 1950, only 16 percent of young people had at least some college exposure. By 2012, this figure rose to 63 percent” (Page & Kehoe, 2019, para 1). However, the rate of students graduating is just too low. According to NPR Education reporter Elissa Nadworny (2019), “just 58 percent of students who started college in the fall of 2012 had earned any degree six years later” (para. 2).	One source shows the wider context of the total number of students attending college, and then other sources show the percentages of those students who actually graduate.
According to NPR Education reporter Elissa Nadworny (2019), “just 58 percent of students who started college in the fall of 2012 had earned any degree six years later” (para. 2). Nadworny is citing the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center for this information in her article written in 2019. Among community college students, this number is even lower: below forty percent (Nadworny, 2019)	The writer puts their topic in context by moving from general to specific. One source states the completion rates for American college students and then community college students.
They discuss the fact that college as a stepping stone or a way to advance students’ economic mobility becomes increasingly problematic when we recognize that students from low-income households are “six times less likely to have earned a bachelor’s degree by the age of twenty-five than those from high-income families” (Strumbos et al., 2018, p. 102).	Then, another source focuses more specifically on completion rates for low-income students.
Page and Kehoe (2019) note that this is especially troubling since the “gaps in degree attainment” have been increasing (para. 3).	This source claims that there is a trend, or consistent change over time. Proving that there is a growing problem shows the current relevance or timeliness (kairos) of the topic.

A paragraph like the one below would serve as a body paragraph presenting one claim that supports our working thesis. This paragraph tries to engage readers logically, supporting its claim with evidence from sources. The first sentence acts as a **topic sentence** (a helpful indicator about the paragraph’s main claim). The writer then uses information from two sources to prove this claim. First, read the paragraph, then review Table 5 for annotations on how these sources are working together.

A major reason why low-income students do not earn degrees at the same rates as their peers is that they are more likely to face obstacles in their personal lives that may slow or delay their college progress. In their 2018 study, Strumbos et al. report that if a student does not complete twenty credits per year, they are not likely to complete their degree. Unfortunately, this “degree momentum” is often difficult for low-income students to achieve due to what Nathan Favero (2018), a professor of public policy at American University, calls “personal barriers to success.” For

example, Favero notes that low-income students may be single parents who lack support from other family members, and so they “can feel a strong pull to pause their studies and start working” (Favero, 2018, para. 7) when unexpected bills arise. Diana Strumbos and her colleagues agree that “Work and family obligations sometimes force students to attend part time, which can again lead to a loss of momentum and decrease their likelihood of graduating” (Strumbos et al., 2018, p. 102). Therefore, typical degree programs and schedules often do not serve low-income students.

Table 5: Synthesis of Sources Example #2

excerpt from the paragraph	function of the the source(s)
if a student does not complete twenty credits per year, they are not likely to complete their degree.	The first source presents data to provide evidence (in this case, of the claim that pace of credits correlates with completion)
Unfortunately, this “degree momentum” is often difficult for low-income students to achieve due to what Nathan Favero, a professor of public policy at American University, calls “personal barriers to success.”	A different source is used here in order to show that multiple sources corroborate the claim. (Multiple experts have reached the same conclusion about a major cause of the problem.)
Favero notes that low-income students may be single parents who lack support from other family members, and so they “can feel a strong pull to pause their studies and start working” when unexpected bills arise.	The purpose of this evidence is to present an expert’s testimony or viewpoint. This expert view draws a conclusion or inference from the previously presented data, and it confirms the writer’s claim.
Diana Strumbos and her colleagues agree that “Work and family obligations sometimes force students to attend part time, which can again lead to a loss of momentum and decrease their likelihood of graduating.”	This source presents an expert view that affirms the main claim: the link between the cause (personal barriers) and the effect (loss of degree momentum).
Therefore, typical degree programs and schedules often do not serve low-income students.	The closing sentence reaches a new conclusion about the claim based on the evidence that has been presented. (In this example, because some students’ “personal barriers” are a cause of the problem, changes to “typical degree programs” may be part of the solution.)

A paragraph like the one below would serve as a later body paragraph. This paragraph tries to engage the reader emotionally. After the writer has proven their claims about major causes of the issue by citing data that was reported by credible sources, the writer presents individual examples in narrative form—*anecdotal evidence*—to illustrate the quality or nature of the issue. First, read the paragraph, then review Table 6 for annotations on how these sources are working together.

It may be easy to overlook the role that a family plays in either supporting a student or creating additional burdens for them while at college. While time, money, and knowledge may flow from an affluent family to a student, for a low-income student it may be the other way around. For example, Linda Banks-Santilli, an Associate Professor of Education, explains how some first-generation students may feel as though they're leaving their families behind or abandoning them. One student moved to live on campus, but she was concerned about her parents, who didn't own or use computers, so she "divided her time," Banks-Santilli notes, between her own coursework and paying her family's bills (Banks-Santilli, 2015, para. 19). Page and Kehoe (2016) describe a similar situation when they introduce Marcus, a student who had "transitioned successfully to college but retained responsibility for supporting his family financially. [...] Marcus stumbled academically, was placed on probation, and lost his financial aid" (para. 16). What Page and Kehoe (2016) demonstrate here is that playing the dual roles of student and family provider often proves too challenging to sustain.

Table 6: Synthesis of Sources Example #3

excerpt from the paragraph	function of the the source(s)
One student moved to live on campus, but she was concerned about her parents, who didn't own or use computers, so she "divided her time," Banks-Santilli notes, between her own coursework and paying her family's bills (Banks-Santilli, 2015, para. 19). Page and Kehoe (2016) describe a similar situation when they introduce Marcus, a student who had "transitioned successfully to college but retained responsibility for supporting his family financially (para. 16).	Use of different sources suggests that these example situations are widespread, present in multiple contexts, or observed by multiple experts.
"[...] Marcus stumbled academically, was placed on probation, and lost his financial aid" (para. 16).	Multiple examples prompt the reader to find similarities between them and infer a pattern or trend.
that playing the dual roles of student and family provider often proves too challenging to sustain.	A phrase following the evidence states the common pattern or trend presented by multiple examples ("dual roles") and states the claim that these examples support. The phrase reinforces the writer's original claim (the burden of family obligations on low-income college students).

Reviewing these annotations, you should see two things. First, that successful synthesis means that you have engaged in critical inquiry by drawing upon multiple texts and perspectives in order to form your own. Second, that the use of multiple sources can strengthen your argument by:

- showing how expert testimonies confirm data

- presenting common patterns or trends
- showing that an issue is present in multiple contexts

Check Your Understanding: Evaluating your paper draft, one paragraph at a time

Take an early draft of your paper and evaluate one paragraph at a time:

- How many sources have you cited in this paragraph?
- Do these sources “talk to each other”?
- What function(s) do these sources serve?
- Can you explain (to yourself) how each source has contributed to your overall message or perspective?

Putting Sources in Context

In general, you should refer to sources with your audience in mind. You should not expect your reader to infer the connection between your quotes, paraphrases, or summaries, and your claims. Nor should you simply drop quotes into your paragraphs without analyzing or discussing them in some way.

When revising a draft, you may find that you have dropped a quote into a paragraph with no introduction and then moved on without discussing the ideas of the quote at all. This is usually not helpful to academic readers. Or, you may find in your draft that you have repeated the phrase, “This quote says that...” or “This quote shows...” quite often. While this shows an effort to refer to quoted sources, it is not likely to help your reader to understand your sources or the specific ways in which they connect to your argument.

When you refer to a source in academic writing, you are taking it out of one context, where it was initially published, and transplanting it into another—your own writing, where it serves a specific purpose. Therefore, academic writers often include the most important information for their readers about:

1. the original context of the source itself, and
2. how the source information fits into their own argument

They often choose transitions that will best present this information in order to integrate source information into their writing.

Context of the Source Itself

When considering what your reader needs to know about the original context of source information, think about the five “w” questions (who, what, where, when, and why). Would explaining any of this information about the original source help your reader to understand the information and the role that it plays in your argument?

For example, in the body paragraph above, the writer writes:

Unfortunately, this “degree momentum” is often difficult for low-income students to achieve due to what Nathan Favero, **a professor of public policy at American University**, calls “personal barriers to success.”

This source serves the role of presenting an expert view agreeing with the writer’s claim, so the most relevant information about the source is who wrote it. Therefore, the paragraph introduces this evidence using a phrase that elaborates on the credentials of the author to show his expertise: “a professor of public policy at American University.” See table 7 for different ways to consider a source’s context.

Table 7: Context of a Source

Information about the source’s original context	Consider explaining this in your writing when you want to show...
Who wrote it?	the author’s experience or credentials in order to present expert testimony, or show the unique perspective or bias of the source.
What is the author’s main idea or thesis?	how the source’s focus is different from or similar to your own.
Where was the source originally published?	the credibility of a source related to a specific topic or audience, or the bias of a source.
Where geographically was the information in the source gathered?	information about a different location or cultural context than the one you are writing about.
When was the source published?	past information, trends over time, contrasting information from different times, or relevance of current information (kairos).
Why was the source written, or why was the study conducted?	how a source’s purpose is different from or similar to your own..
How did the author gather their information?	the significance or scope of numerical data or statistics, or how stories and anecdotes were gathered.

You have probably heard of instances of dishonesty that occur when writers present information “out of

context.” Sometimes, presenting source information without explaining its original purpose, audience, or context presents a false impression to your reader. In these cases, your writing may imply that a source agrees with, disagrees with, or relates to your claim when this is not the case.

Context of Your Argument

So how do you effectively integrate the words (quotes) and ideas (paraphrases) of your sources into your own argument?

First, keep in mind why you are quoting/paraphrasing a certain part of a certain source. Then, decide how you may need to refer to that source material in neighboring sentences in your own writing to help your reader to understand your intent and the role that this reference serves in your argument. Does the quote or paraphrase prove a claim that you have just made? Does it define or explain something that you are trying to make clear to readers? Does it provide an example or illustration of one of your claims? Does it elaborate on or introduce a different perspective about a previous point you have made?

Second, keeping your purpose for the quote or paraphrase in mind, choose the best transition words and phrases to show how the quote or paraphrase relates to the neighboring sentences and ideas.

- Transitions like *Similarly* or *Furthermore* will show that you are about to present more on a line of reasoning.
- Transitions like *However* or *On the other hand* will show that you are about to present a conflicting idea.
- Transitions like *Consequently*, *Therefore*, or *Because* will show cause and effect.

Third, choose the best **signal verb** to show how the source material relates to your neighboring sentences or ideas. These verbs, paired with the author of your source text, work much like transitional words and phrases.

If a reference is near the beginning of a paragraph or is the first reference to a source, you may choose a neutral verb:

- Favero (2018) *writes* that...
- Favero (2018) *explores* several factors that...
- Favero (2018) *states*/Favero (2018) *argues*

Later, you can connect source material to the ideas in your paragraph by using verbs that indicate how the source relates to neighboring ideas:

- show agreement (Favero (2018) *concur*s)
- disagreement (Favero (2018) *disput*es...)

You can also give readers an indication of what kind of information you will be presenting. Consider how these different verbs would fit with different types of quotations or paraphrases:

- Favero (2018) *lists*...
- Favero (2018) *claims*...
- Favero (2018) *emphasizes*...

Below, the sample body paragraph is shown, this time with key words highlighted to show how the writer integrates the source materials into the context of their own argument using transitions and signal verbs. Which highlighted words are most helpful to you as the reader, and what do they tell you about the writer's purpose for each quote or paraphrase?

A major reason why low-income students do not earn degrees at the same rates as their peers is that they are more likely to face obstacles in their personal lives that may slow or delay their college progress. In their 2018 study, Strumbos et al. **report** that if a student does not complete twenty credits per year, they are not likely to complete their degree. Unfortunately, this “degree momentum” is often difficult for low-income students to achieve due to what Nathan Favero (2018), a professor of public policy at American University, calls “personal barriers to success.” **For example**, Favero (2018) **notes** that low-income students may be single parents who lack support from other family members, and so they “can feel a strong pull to pause their studies and start working” (para. 7) when unexpected bills arise. Diana Strumbos and her colleagues **agree** that “Work and family obligations sometimes force students to attend part time, which can again lead to a loss of momentum and decrease their likelihood of graduating” (Strumbos et al., 2018, p. 102). **Therefore**, typical degree programs and schedules often do not serve low-income students.

Transitional phrases: for example, therefore

Signal phrases: Report, notes, agree

Check Your Understanding: Using Transition and Signal Phrases

Take a fully developed body paragraph and edit it for the use of transition phrases and signal phrases to show context:

1. Highlight all source material within the paragraph (quotes, paraphrases, and summaries)
2. Review these highlighted passages to see:
 - a. Have you addressed any of the five “w” questions for your sources? If not, is there anything more that your reader needs to understand about this source’s original context?
 - b. Have you included signal verbs for your quotes and/or paraphrases? Do you have a variety of appropriate words (for example *argues* vs. *believes* vs. *points out*)?
 - c. Have you used transitions to help show how sources’ ideas and your own ideas are related to each other?

Additional Resource: Roles of Sources Organizers

Download a copy of the [Roles of Sources Graphic Organizer \[PDF\]](https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/app/uploads/sites/2886/2022/10/Roles-of-Sources-Graphic-Organizer.pdf)
(<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/app/uploads/sites/2886/2022/10/Roles-of-Sources-Graphic-Organizer.pdf>)

Roles of Sources Organizer (Text version)

Roles of Sources in Academic Argument Graphic Organizer

Area	What I know about this	Title of the source that provided this information	What I would still like to know about this
The past history of my topic			
The wider context (including surrounding laws, cultures and circumstances) related to my topic			
Definitions of key concepts related to my topic			
Most important numbers, numerical data, or statistics related to my topic			
Expert opinions or expert testimonies related to my topic			
Counter-arguments (views that disagree with mine) related to my topic			
specific stories about actual people (anecdotes) that are good examples of why my topic is important or relevant			

Activity source: “Roles of Sources Graphical Organizer” by Sarah Johnson and Jeremy O’Roark In *Critical Reading, Critical Writing*, is licensed under [CC BY-NC-SA](#).

Attribution & References

Except where otherwise noted, this section is adapted from “8 Integrating Sources” In *Critical Reading, Critical Writing* by Curated and/or composed by the English Faculty at Howard Community College, licensed under [CC BY-NC-SA 4.0](#).

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RESEARCH PROCESS: MAKING NOTES, SYNTHESIZING INFORMATION, AND KEEPING A RESEARCH LOG

As you conduct research, you will work with a range of “texts” in various forms, including sources and documents from online databases as well as images, audio, and video files from the Internet. You may also work with archival materials and with transcribed and analyzed primary data. Additionally, you will be taking notes and recording quotations from secondary sources as you find materials that shape your understanding of your topic and, at the same time, provide you with facts and perspectives. You also may download articles as PDFs that you then annotate. Like many other students, you may find it challenging to keep so much material organized, accessible, and easy to work with while you write a major research paper. As it does for many of those students, a research log for your ideas and sources will help you keep track of the scope, purpose, and possibilities of any research project.

A research log is essentially a journal in which you collect information, ask questions, and monitor the results. Even if you are completing the annotated bibliography for [Writing Process: Informing and Analyzing \[New Tab\]](https://openstax.org/books/writing-guide/pages/14-4-writing-process-informing-and-analyzing) (<https://openstax.org/books/writing-guide/pages/14-4-writing-process-informing-and-analyzing>), keeping a research log is an effective organizational tool. Most entries have three parts: a part for notes on secondary sources, a part for connections to the thesis or main points, and a part for your own notes or questions. Record source notes by date and allow room to add cross-references to other entries.

Research Log

Before you create your outline for the research essay, you may want to create a research log similar to the student model. The research log will help you to keep track by recording all secondary source information such as your notes, complete publication data, relation to thesis, and other information as indicated in the right-hand column of the sample entry.

Another Lens: Customize the research log for your needs or preferences. You can apply [shading or colour coding \[New Tab\]](https://openstax.org/r/shadingorcolorcoding) (<https://openstax.org/r/shadingorcolorcoding>) headers, rows, and/or columns in the three-column format. Or you can add columns to accommodate more information, analysis, synthesis, or commentary, formatting them as you wish. Consider adding a column for questions only or one for connections to other sources. Finally, consider a different [visual format \[New Tab\]](https://openstax.org/r/) (<https://openstax.org/r/>

visualformat), such as one without columns. Another possibility is to record some of your comments and questions so that you have an aural rather than a written record of these.

Review your assignment and customize your research log to fit the task.

Writing Centre

At this point, or at any other point during the research and writing process, you may find that your school's writing centre (https://library.georgiancollege.ca/writing_centre) can provide extensive assistance. If you are unfamiliar with the writing centre, now is a good time to pay your first visit. Writing centres provide free peer tutoring for all types and phases of writing. Discussing your research with a trained writing centre tutor can help you clarify, analyze, and connect ideas as well as provide feedback on works in progress.

Quick Launch: Beginning Questions

You may begin your research log with some open pages in which you free write, exploring answers to the following questions. Although you generally would do this at the beginning, it is a process to which you likely will return as you find more information about your topic and as your focus changes, as it may during the course of your research.

- What information have I found so far?
- What do I still need to find?
- Where am I most likely to find it?

These are beginning questions. You will come across general questions or issues that a quick note or free write may help you resolve. The key to this section is to revisit it regularly. Written answers to these and other self-generated questions in your log clarify your tasks as you go along, helping you articulate ideas and examine supporting evidence critically. As you move further into the process, consider answering the following questions in your freewrite:

- What evidence looks as though it best supports my thesis?
- What evidence challenges my working thesis?
- How is my thesis changing from where it started?

Creating the Research Log

As you gather source material for your argumentative research paper, keep in mind that the research is

intended to support original thinking. That is, you are not writing an informational report in which you simply supply facts to readers. Instead, you are writing to support a thesis that shows original thinking, and you are collecting and incorporating research into your paper to support that thinking. Therefore, a research log, whether digital or handwritten, is a great way to keep track of your thinking as well as your notes and bibliographic information.

In the model below, the author records the correct MLA bibliographic citation for the source. Then, she records a note and includes the in-text citation here to avoid having to retrieve this information later. Perhaps most important, Tran records *why* she noted this information—how it supports her thesis: *The human race must turn to sustainable food systems that provide healthy diets with minimal environmental impact, starting now*. Finally, she makes a note to herself about an additional visual to include in the final paper to reinforce the point regarding the current pressure on food systems. And she connects the information to other information she finds, thus cross-referencing and establishing a possible synthesis. Use a format similar to that in Table 1 to begin your own research log.

Table 1: Model research log

Information	Connection to Thesis/Main Points	Notes/Cross-References/Synthesis
<p>Date: 6/06/2021</p> <p>It has been estimated, for example, that by 2050, milk production will increase 58 percent and meat production 73 percent (Chai, et al., 2019).</p>	<p>Shows the pressure being put on food systems that will cause the need for more sustainable systems</p>	<p>Maybe include a graph showing the rising pressure on food systems.</p> <p>Connects to similar predictions about produce and vegan diets. See Lynch et al.</p>
<p>Chai, B. C., van der Voort, J. R., Grofelnik, K., Eliasdottir, H. G., Klöss, I., Perez-Cueto, J. A. (2019). Which diet has the least environmental impact on our planet? A systematic review of vegan, vegetarian and omnivorous diets. <i>Sustainability</i>, 11(40), 4110. https://doi.org/10.3390/su11154110.</p>		
<p>Date:</p>		
<p>Source/Citation:</p>		
<p>Date:</p>		
<p>Source/Citation:</p>		

Types of Research Notes

Taking good notes will make the research process easier by enabling you to locate and remember sources and use them effectively. While some research projects requiring only a few sources may seem easily tracked, research projects requiring more than a few sources are more effectively managed when you take good bibliographic and informational notes. As you gather evidence for your argumentative research paper, follow

the descriptions and the electronic model to record your notes. You can combine these with your research log, or you can use the research log for secondary sources and your own note-taking system for primary sources if a division of this kind is helpful. Either way, be sure to include all necessary information.

Bibliographic Notes

These identify the source you are using. When you locate a useful source, record the information necessary to find that source again. It is important to do this as you find each source, even before taking notes from it. If you create bibliographic notes as you go along, then you can easily arrange them in alphabetical order later to prepare the reference list required at the end of formal academic papers. If your instructor requires you to use MLA formatting for your essay, be sure to record the following information:

1. Author
2. Title of source
3. Title of container (larger work in which source is included)
4. Other contributors
5. Version
6. Number
7. Publisher
8. Publication date
9. Location

When using MLA style with online sources, also record the following information:

10. Date of original publication
11. Date of access
12. URL
13. DOI (A DOI, or digital object identifier, is a series of digits and letters that leads to the location of an online source. Articles in journals are often assigned DOIs to ensure that the source can be located, even if the URL changes. If your source is listed with a DOI, use that instead of a URL.)

It is important to understand which documentation style your instructor will require you to use. Check the [Georgian Library Citation Guide \(http://library.georgiancollege.ca/citing\)](http://library.georgiancollege.ca/citing) for more details on APA.

Informational Notes

These notes record the relevant information found in your sources. When writing your essay, you will work

from these notes, so be sure they contain all the information you need from every source you intend to use. Also try to focus your notes on your research question so that their relevance is clear when you read them later. To avoid confusion, work with separate entries for each piece of information recorded. At the top of each entry, identify the source through brief bibliographic identification (author and title), and note the page numbers on which the information appears. Also helpful is to add personal notes, including ideas for possible use of the information or cross-references to other information. As noted in [Using Sources to Support your Writing](#) you will be using a variety of formats when borrowing from sources. Below is a quick review of these formats in terms of note-taking processes. By clarifying whether you are quoting directly, paraphrasing, or summarizing during these stages, you can record information accurately and thus take steps to avoid plagiarism.

Direct Quotations, Paraphrases, and Summaries

A direct quotation is an exact duplication of the author's words as they appear in the original source. In your notes, put quotation marks around direct quotations so that you remember these words are the author's, not yours. One advantage of copying exact quotations is that it allows you to decide later whether to include a quotation, paraphrase, or summary. In general, though, use direct quotations only when the author's words are particularly lively or persuasive.

A paraphrase is a restatement of the author's words in your own words. Paraphrase to simplify or clarify the original author's point. In your notes, use paraphrases when you need to record details but not exact words.

A summary is a brief condensation or distillation of the main point and most important details of the original source. Write a summary in your own words, with facts and ideas accurately represented. A summary is useful when specific details in the source are unimportant or irrelevant to your research question. You may find you can summarize several paragraphs or even an entire article or chapter in just a few sentences without losing useful information. It is a good idea to note when your entry contains a summary to remind you later that it omits detailed information. See [Paraphrasing and Summarizing](#) for more detailed information and examples of quotations, paraphrases, and summaries and when to use them.

Other Systems for Organizing Research Logs and Digital Note-Taking

Students often become frustrated and at times overwhelmed by the quantity of materials to be managed in the research process. If this is your first time working with both primary and secondary sources, finding ways to keep all of the information in one place and well organized is essential.

Because gathering primary evidence may be a relatively new practice, this section is designed to help you navigate the process. As mentioned earlier, information gathered in fieldwork is not catalogued, organized, indexed, or shelved for your convenience. Obtaining it requires diligence, energy, and planning. Online

resources can assist you with keeping a research log. Your college library may have subscriptions to tools such as Todoist or EndNote. Consult with a librarian to find out whether you have access to any of these. If not, use something like the template shown in Figure 1, or another like it, as a template for creating your own research notes and organizational tool. You will need to have a record of all field research data as well as the research log for all secondary sources.

A computer screen shows an electronic notecard that
has separate fields for Title, Source, URL, and Page.
Three windows read, “Copy, paste and annotate here,”
“In your own words,” and “Original thinking here.”

Figure 1: Electronic note card by Rice University, OpenStax, licensed under [CC BY 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

Attribution & References

Except where otherwise noted, this section is adapted from “13.5 Research Process: Making Notes, Synthesizing Information, and Keeping a Research Log” In *Writing Guide with Handbook* (OpenStax) by Michelle Bachelor Robinson, Maria Jerskey and featuring Toby Fulwiler, licensed under [CC BY 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

Access for free at *Writing Guide with Handbook (OpenStax)* (<https://openstax.org/details/books/writing-guide>)

Reference

Chai, B. C., van der Voort, J. R., Grofelnik, K., Eliasdottir, H. G., Klöss, I., Perez-Cueto, J. A. (2019). Which diet has the least environmental impact on our planet? A systematic review of vegan, vegetarian and omnivorous diets. *Sustainability*, 11(40), 4110. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su11154110>

ANNOTATED STUDENT SAMPLE: RESEARCH LOG

Introduction

Lily Tran created this log entry during the research process for an argumentative research paper assigned in her first-year composition class, as shown in this Annotated Student Sample.

Living by Their Own Words

Planning to Write



“Arizona National Guard” by [The National Guard](#), licensed under [CC BY 2.0](#).

Freewrite: I found this photograph in an article I was reading about food insecurity during the COVID-19 pandemic. I copied and pasted it here as inspiration for my argumentative research paper.

Lily Tran includes a visual in the freewrite section of her research log. The visual may or may not appear in the final paper, but here, it serves to stimulate her writing and thinking about her topic and possibly connect to other information she finds.

For a sustainable future, food production and processing have to change. So does global distribution.

Tran begins to establish problem-and-solution reasoning, recognizing that there are different stages to food production and that all will be affected by any proposed solution.

The necessary changes will affect nearly all aspects of life, including world hunger, health and welfare, use of land resources, habitats, water, energy use and production, greenhouse gas emissions and climate change, and economics, as well as cultural and social values.

Tran also employs cause-and-effect reasoning in beginning to think about the effects of any proposed change.

These needed changes may not be popular, but people will have to accept them.

She recognizes potential counterarguments to address if the paper is to be persuasive.

Table 1: Research log entry

Information	Connection to Thesis/ Main Points	Notes/Cross-References/Synthesis
<p>Date: 12/07/2020</p> <p>Their report states, “If society continues on a ‘business-as-usual’ dietary trajectory, a 119% increase in edible crops grown will be required by 2050” (Berners-Lee et al., 2018, p. 1).</p> <p><i>Tran cites and quotes an alarming statistic from a secondary source.</i></p>	<p>Shows why a solution to food sustainability is needed</p> <p><i>She makes a connection to her thesis.</i></p>	<p>Create a concrete example to support this statistic. For example, if Farmer Joe grows . . .</p> <p>Tie to the explanation of the problem for which I’m proposing a solution.</p> <p><i>She anticipates that not all readers will respond to the statistic alone. To counteract this possibility, she may decide to create an original anecdotal example.</i></p> <p><i>Tran then connects the information to the text structure: problem/solution.</i></p>
<p>Source/Citation: Berners-Lee, M., Kennelly, C., Watson, R., & Hewitt, C. N. (2018). Current global food production is sufficient to meet human nutritional needs in 2050 provided there is radical societal adaptation.” <i>Elementa: Science of the Anthropocene</i>, 6(52), 1-14. https://doi.org/10.1525/elementa.310 <i>Tran uses APA 7th edition style guidelines to create this citation for her log entry. She includes all information needed for citing the entry in the works cited list for her paper.</i></p>		

Discussion Questions

1. If Lily Tran were to use the photo, what information or questions might she enter in the right-hand column of her research log?
2. Why do you think Tran has chosen a direct quotation instead of a summary or paraphrase?
3. Why is the information in the center column important to include in a research log?

Attribution & References

Except where otherwise noted, this section is adapted from “[13.4 Annotated Student Sample: Research Log](#)” In *Writing Guide with Handbook (OpenStax)* by Michelle Bachelor Robinson, Maria Jerskey and featuring Toby Fulwiler, licensed under [CC BY 4.0](#). Access for free at *Writing Guide with Handbook (OpenStax)* (<https://openstax.org/details/books/writing-guide>)

Reference

Berners-Lee, M., Kennelly, C., Watson, R., & Hewitt, C. N. (2018). Current global food production is sufficient to meet human nutritional needs in 2050 provided there is radical societal adaptation.” *Elementa: Science of the Anthropocene*, 6(52), 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.1525/elementa.310>

CREATING AN OUTLINE FOR AN ESSAY

In a college research and writing course, George-Anne was given a research assignment that asked her to write a 5-paragraph essay that integrated reliable research sources.

The Writing Process

Research:

George-Anne took the time to do an internet search, where she found links to radio podcasts and news articles. Then, she used her college library's database to find some scholarly articles [New Tab] (<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/gccomm/chapter/popularvsscholarly/>).

Outline Ideas:

After researching her topic and learning what experts on the subject had to say, George-Anne created a sentence outline for her paper.

George-Anne's Sentence Outline

- I. **Introduction** – Land acknowledgements are for showing respect towards Indigenous communities, but they fall short when they only seem insincere and include no action.
- II. **Land acknowledgements are meant to show respect for Indigenous communities and are becoming standard practice:**
Information from (Friesen, 2019), (Maga, 2019), (Wilkes et al, 2019)
 - a. Schools and government institutions do them before gathering
 - b. They increase awareness of Indigenous communities and their land rights.
 - c. They are intended to honour Truth & Reconciliation.
- III. **While land acknowledgements are becoming more common, they are sometimes flawed**

and even disrespectful:

Information from (Friesen, 2019), (Maga, 2019), (Blenkinsop & Fettes, 2019)

- a. First Nations names are mispronounced or incorrect names are given.
- b. They can be a barrier to learning and give a false sense of something being accomplished, which can actually cause harm to the people they are supposed to honour.
- c. They lack meaning because they don't require any action

IV. **To ensure that land acknowledgements help rather than harm, Indigenous scholars demand changes to the current approach:**

Information from (Friesen, 2019), (Maga, 2019), (Blenkinsop & Fettes, 2019)

- a. These land acknowledgements should avoid the colonial way of viewing land and strive to reflect an Indigenous way of understanding.
- b. Scripts shouldn't be simply read; personal connections should also be made
- c. Land acknowledgements should reflect on the harms of colonialism and express ways to disrupt the system to stop these harms.

- V. **Conclusion:** Land acknowledgements must go beyond a scripted list of Indigenous communities and treaties.

References

- Blenkinsop, S., & Fettes, M. (2020). Land, language and listening: The transformations that can flow from acknowledging Indigenous land. *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 54(4), 1033–1046. <https://doi-org.georgian.idm.oclc.org/10.1111/1467-9752.12470>
- Friesen, J. (2019, June 27). As Indigenous land acknowledgements become the norm, critics question whether the gesture has lost its meaning. *Globe & Mail* (Toronto, Canada), A1.
- Maga, C. (2019, April 10). Land acknowledgements capture the mood of an awkward stage; Anishinaabe writer Hayden King says statements concerning Indigenous recognition don't negate "ongoing disposition" of people. *The Toronto Star* (Toronto, Ontario), E1
- Wilkes, R., Duong, A., Kesler, L., & Ramos, H. (2017). Canadian University Acknowledgment of Indigenous Lands, Treaties, and Peoples. *Canadian Review of Sociology*, 54(1), 89–120. <https://doi-org.georgian.idm.oclc.org/10.1111/cars.12140>

Drafting Ideas & Integrating Sources

Once her outline was completed, George-Anne followed the steps shown in [Creating a Rough Draft for a Research Paper](#). She expanded on the sentences of her outline, took care to integrate sources [using APA in-](#)

text citations [New Tab] (<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/gccomm/chapter/in-text-citation/>), and set up her Reference list following [APA conventions for references](https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/gccomm/chapter/create-reference-list-citations/) [New Tab] (<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/gccomm/chapter/create-reference-list-citations/>).

Revising

George-Anne followed the advice in [Developing a Final Draft](https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/gccomm/chapter/finaldraft/) [New Tab] (<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/gccomm/chapter/finaldraft/>) but also decided to book a session with her college Writing Centre. During her appointment, her tutor encouraged her to read her work aloud; this helped her identify and edit some problems with her sentence structure. Her tutor drew her attention to the fact that she needed stronger transitions between her paragraphs. Adding the transitions helped improve the cohesion of her essay. She also learned about some small errors with her reference list. Finally, her essay was ready to submit.

Read George-Anne's Final Essay: Land Acknowledgements

Read George-Anne's Final essay on Land Acknowledgements in Plain text

Note: HTML/plain text & Pressbooks do not always display page layout or APA formatting such as page numbers, spacing, margins or indentation accurately. Please review [APA formatting rules](#) to ensure you meet APA guidelines with your own work. The text version is included here in HTML format for ease of reading/use. You may also want to [View George-Anne's paper in PDF format](https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/app/uploads/sites/2886/2023/05/COMMESS-7-5-LandAcknowledgementsEssay.pdf) (<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/app/uploads/sites/2886/2023/05/COMMESS-7-5-LandAcknowledgementsEssay.pdf>).

Land Acknowledgements

George-Anne Lerner

The remains of thousands of murdered Indigenous children are being discovered on

the grounds of former Residential Schools. In 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission called for the Canadian government to recognize the tragic history of residential schools and the ongoing problems faced by Indigenous people. One response to this call to action is the land acknowledgement. Announcements that name the territories, communities, and treaties are now heard at the beginning of many events and gatherings. Even though these statements are made to show respect and to raise awareness about Indigenous communities, mistakes are sometimes made, and the reading of a script can seem like an empty gesture. Indigenous scholars and leaders are asking that institutions go beyond just reading a land acknowledgement; they hope for a stronger focus on taking action. Land acknowledgements are intended to show respect towards Indigenous communities and their land rights, but these announcements can feel like empty words to the people they are meant to honour; to truly show respect, land acknowledgements need to take action beyond reciting a script.

Land acknowledgements show respect for Indigenous communities and they are becoming standard. Colleges, Universities, school boards, governments and other institutions across Canada now make public acknowledgements of Indigenous peoples, lands, and treaties. Many public gatherings, events, and even email signatures include a land acknowledgement (Friesen, 2019). For example, as Maga (2019) reports, the City of Toronto's statement reads: "We acknowledge that we are gathered on the traditional territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishinaabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples, now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples" (para. 1). Land acknowledgements are intended to increase awareness of Indigenous presence and land rights, and to improve the experience of Indigenous students and communities. They are done in an effort to honour the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's final report (Wilkes et al., 2019), which calls for significant changes in order to reconcile Canada's unjust treatment of Indigenous people.

While land acknowledgements are becoming more common, some concerns are being raised; they are sometimes flawed and even disrespectful. Friesen (2019) shows that land acknowledgements are criticized as empty gestures as First Nations names are often mispronounced and incorrect nations are named. Anishinaabe scholar Hayden

King regrets helping Ryerson write its land acknowledgement; he fears that these acknowledgements actually prevent learning about Indigenous people and treaty relationships (Friesen, 2019). King points out that the current style of land acknowledgement can sound “detached, shallow and give a false sense of progressive accomplishment” (Maga, 2019, para. 2). They may “cause harm to the people they’re supposed to celebrate” (Maga, 2019, para. 3). Blenkinsop & Fettes (2019) state that the problem with these acknowledgements is that “they stop with a notion of land as something one lives on, rather than continuing on into an understanding of land as something we are part of” (p. 1036). The acknowledgements lack meaning because they do not demand any action from the speakers or listeners. Indigenous leaders argue that these land acknowledgements do not acknowledge the privileges that settlers have due to the legacy of colonialism, or recognize the trauma that continues as a result of colonialist societal structures, which actually can harm the same people these acknowledgements are meant to respect.

In order to ensure that land acknowledgements help rather than harm, Indigenous scholars demand a change to the current approach. Land acknowledgements “have a vital function when done correctly” (Maga, 2019, para. 7), but must do more than naming Indigenous territories, languages and treaties. These land acknowledgements should not express the colonial way of viewing land as a resource or commodity, a thing that is owned. Instead, they should emphasize an Indigenous way of understanding. Blenkinsop & Fettes (2019) explain that the Land is more than an object; it is a teacher, offering a dialogue:

The land is there, outside our windows, under our feet, all around us, thinking, feeling, conversing and offering its teachings. When we start to really listen, to the land and to the people whose identities and traditions are fundamentally shaped through long dialogue with the land, transformation follows (p. 1043).

Scripts should not be simply read without any reflection. Instead, an effort should be made to include Indigenous ways of thinking and people should expand on them to include personal information. People delivering land acknowledgements should speak about “their own connections to the land and communities they are attempting to honour” (Friesen, 2019, para. 20). A speaker who expands on their own family history will give deeper insights and connections, which leads to a more meaningful

acknowledgement. Additionally, speakers should acknowledge both the impact of colonialism and express an intention to disrupt the current injustices that are part of society.

As land acknowledgements become more routine across institutions, Indigenous leaders ask that these statements be approached with respect. Land acknowledgements must go beyond a scripted list of Indigenous communities and treaties. For reconciliation to begin, land acknowledgements must become part of a conversation that calls attention to our responsibilities as caretakers of the land, and sets intentions for action in ending the systematic harms on Indigenous peoples.

References

- Blenkinsop, S., & Fettes, M. (2020). Land, language and listening: The transformations that can flow from acknowledging Indigenous land. *Journal of Philosophy of Education, 54*(4), 1033–1046. <https://doi-org.georgian.idm.oclc.org/10.1111/1467-9752.12470>
- Friesen, J. (2019, June 27). As Indigenous land acknowledgements become the norm, critics question whether the gesture has lost its meaning. *Globe & Mail* (Toronto, Canada), A1.
- Maga, C. (2019, April 10). Land acknowledgements capture the mood of an awkward stage; Anishinaabe writer Hayden King says statements concerning Indigenous recognition don't negate "ongoing disposition" of people. *The Toronto Star* (Toronto, Ontario), E1
- Wilkes, R., Duong, A., Kesler, L., & Ramos, H. (2017). Canadian University Acknowledgment of Indigenous Lands, Treaties, and Peoples. *Canadian Review of Sociology, 54*(1), 89–120. <https://doi-org.georgian.idm.oclc.org/10.1111/cars.12140>

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Summary

In this module, you learned how to plan a research essay. You also examined the importance of developing strong note taking skills in preparation for your Essay Outline Assignment, which you completed at the end of this module. At the end of the day, it does not matter **how** you take research notes, as long as you record information in a way that prevents plagiarism and helps you with your assignments. So, experiment and pick a style that works for you—and be consistent.

Congratulations on finishing Unit 4: Research Skills. You are now ready to move on to Unit 5: Presentation Skills.

Attribution & References

Except where otherwise noted, this section is adapted from, “[7.5 – Student Sample Research Essay](#)” by Amanda Quibell in *Communication Essentials for College* by Emily Cramer & Amanda Quibell, licensed under [CC BY-NC 4.0](#).

- “Student sample research essay” by Amanda Quibell is licensed under [CC-BY-NC 4.0](#).
- Adapted to remove some instructions.

CREATING A ROUGH DRAFT FOR A RESEARCH PAPER

After doing all of your research, you are ready to write your research paper. Putting your thinking and research into words is exciting, but it can also be challenging. In this section, you will learn strategies for handling the more challenging aspects of writing a research paper, such as integrating material from your sources, citing information correctly, and avoiding any misuse of your sources.

The Structure of a Research Paper

Research papers generally follow the same basic structure:

1. an introduction that presents the writer's thesis,
2. a body section that develops the thesis with supporting points and evidence,
3. and a conclusion that revisits the thesis and provides additional insights or suggestions for further research.

Your writing voice will come across most strongly in your introduction and conclusion, as you work to attract your readers' interest and establish your thesis. These sections usually do not cite sources at length. They focus on the big picture, not specific details. In contrast, the body of your paper will cite sources extensively. As you present your ideas, you will support your points with details from your research.

Writing Your Introduction

There are several approaches to writing an introduction, each of which fulfills the same goals. The introduction should get readers' attention, provide background information, and present the writer's thesis. Many writers like to begin with one of the following catchy openers:

- A surprising fact
- A thought-provoking question
- An attention-getting quote
- A brief anecdote that illustrates a larger concept
- A connection between your topic and your readers' experiences

The next few sentences place the opening in context by presenting background information. From there, the writer builds toward a thesis, which is traditionally placed at the end of the introduction. Think of your thesis as a signpost that lets readers know in what direction the paper is headed.

Jorge decided to begin his research paper by connecting his topic to readers' daily experiences. Read the first draft of his introduction. The thesis is underlined. Note how Jorge progresses from the opening sentences to background information to his thesis.

Jorge's Introduction

Beyond the Hype: Evaluating Low-Carb Diets

I. Introduction

Over the past decade, increasing numbers of dieters have jumped on the low-carb bandwagon. Some studies estimate that approximately 40 million Americans, or about 20 percent of the population, are attempting to restrict their intake of food high in carbohydrates (Sanders and Katz, 2004; Hirsch, 2004). Proponents of low-carb diets say they are not only the most effective way to lose weight, but they also yield health benefits such as lower blood pressure and improved cholesterol levels. Meanwhile, some doctors claim that low-carb diets are overrated and caution that their long-term effects are unknown. Although following a low-carbohydrate diet can benefit some people, these diets are not necessarily the best option for everyone who wants to lose weight or improve their health.

Check Your Understanding: Writing an Introductory Paragraph

Write the introductory paragraph of your research paper. Try using one of the techniques listed in this section to write an engaging introduction. Be sure to include background information about the topic that leads to your thesis.

Tip

Writers often work out of sequence when writing a research paper. If you find yourself struggling to write an engaging introduction, you may wish to write the body of your paper first. Writing the body sections first will help you clarify your main points. Writing the introduction should then be easier. You may have a better sense of how to introduce the paper after you have drafted some or all of the body.

Writing Your Conclusion

In your introduction, you tell readers where they are headed. In your conclusion, you recap where they have been. For this reason, some writers prefer to write their conclusions soon after they have written their introduction. However, this method may not work for all writers. Other writers prefer to write their conclusion at the end of the paper, after writing the body paragraphs. No process is absolutely right or absolutely wrong; find the one that best suits you.

No matter when you compose the conclusion, it should sum up your main ideas and revisit your thesis. The conclusion should not simply echo the introduction or rely on bland summary statements, such as “In this paper, I have demonstrated that...” In fact, avoid repeating your thesis verbatim from the introduction. Restate it in different words that reflect the new perspective gained through your research. That helps keep your ideas fresh for your readers. An effective writer might conclude a paper by asking a new question the research inspired, revisiting an anecdote presented earlier, or reminding readers of how the topic relates to their lives.

Writing at Work

If your job involves writing or reading scientific papers, it helps to understand how professional researchers use the structure described in this section. A scientific paper begins with an abstract that briefly summarizes the entire paper. The introduction explains the purpose of the research, briefly summarizes previous research, and presents the researchers’ hypothesis. The body provides details about the study, such as who participated in it, what the researchers measured, and what results they recorded. The conclusion presents the researchers’ interpretation of the data, or what they learned.

Using Source Material in Your Paper

One of the challenges of writing a research paper is successfully integrating your ideas with material from your sources. Your paper must explain what you think, or it will read like a disconnected string of facts and quotations. However, you also need to support your ideas with research, or they will seem insubstantial. How do you strike the right balance?

You have already taken a step in the right direction by writing your introduction. The introduction and conclusion function like the frame around a picture. They define and limit your topic and place your research in context.

In the body paragraphs of your paper, you will need to integrate ideas carefully at the paragraph level and at the sentence level. You will use topic sentences in your paragraphs to make sure readers understand the significance of any facts, details, or quotations you cite. You will also include sentences that transition between ideas from your research, either within a paragraph or between paragraphs. At the sentence level, you will need to think carefully about how you introduce paraphrased and quoted material.

Earlier you learned about summarizing, paraphrasing, and quoting when taking notes. In the next few sections, you will learn how to use these techniques in the body of your paper to weave in source material to support your ideas.

Summarizing Sources

When you summarize material from a source, you zero in on the main points and restate them concisely in your own words. This technique is appropriate when only the major ideas are relevant to your paper or when you need to simplify complex information into a few key points for your readers.

Be sure to review the source material as you summarize it. Identify the main idea and restate it as concisely as you can—preferably in one sentence. Depending on your purpose, you may also add another sentence or two condensing any important details or examples. Check your summary to make sure it is accurate and complete.

In his draft, Jorge summarized research materials that presented scientists' findings about low-carbohydrate diets. Read the following passage from a trade magazine article and Jorge's summary of the article.

Trade Magazine Source

Assessing the Efficacy of Low-Carbohydrate Diets

Adrienne Howell, Ph.D.

Over the past few years, a number of clinical studies have explored whether high-protein, low-carbohydrate diets are more effective for weight loss than other frequently recommended diet plans, such as diets that drastically curtail fat intake (Pritikin) or that emphasize consuming lean meats, grains, vegetables, and a moderate amount of unsaturated fats (the Mediterranean diet). A 2009 study found that obese teenagers who followed a low-carbohydrate diet lost an average of 15.6 kilograms over a six-month period, whereas teenagers following a low-fat diet or a Mediterranean diet lost an average of 11.1 kilograms and 9.3 kilograms respectively. Two 2010 studies that measured weight loss for obese adults following these same three diet plans found similar results. Over three months, subjects on the low-carbohydrate diet plan lost anywhere from four to six kilograms more than subjects who followed other diet plans.

Jorge's Summary with parenthetical in-text citation

In three recent studies, researchers compared outcomes for obese subjects who followed either a low-carbohydrate diet, a low-fat diet, or a Mediterranean diet and found that subjects following a low-carbohydrate diet lost more weight in the same time (Howell, 2010).

Tip

A summary restates ideas in your own words—but for specialized or clinical terms, you may need to use terms that appear in the original source. For instance, Jorge used the term *obese* in his summary because related words such as *heavy* or *overweight* have a different clinical meaning.

Check Your Understanding: One-sentence Summary

On a separate sheet of paper, practice summarizing by writing a one-sentence summary of the same passage that Jorge already summarized.

Paraphrasing Sources

When you paraphrase material from a source, restate the information from an entire sentence or passage in your own words, using your own original sentence structure. A paraphrased source differs from a summarized source in that you focus on restating the ideas, not condensing them.

Again, it is important to check your paraphrase against the source material to make sure it is both accurate and original. Inexperienced writers sometimes use the thesaurus method of paraphrasing—that is, they simply rewrite the source material, replacing most of the words with synonyms. This constitutes a misuse of sources. A true paraphrase restates ideas using the writer’s own language and style.

In his draft, Jorge frequently paraphrased details from sources. At times, he needed to rewrite a sentence more than once to ensure he was paraphrasing ideas correctly. Read the passage from a website. Then read Jorge’s initial attempt at paraphrasing it, followed by the final version of his paraphrase.

Webpage Information—Research Source

Dieters nearly always get great results soon after they begin following a low-carbohydrate diet, but these results tend to taper off after the first few months, particularly because many dieters find it difficult to follow a low-carbohydrate diet plan consistently.

Jorge's Summary

People usually see encouraging outcomes shortly after they go on a low-carbohydrate diet, but their progress slows down after a short while, especially because most discover that it is a challenge to adhere to the diet strictly (Heinz, 2009).

After reviewing the paraphrased sentence, Jorge realized he was following the original source too closely. He did not want to quote the full passage verbatim, so he again attempted to restate the idea in his own style.

Jorge's Revised Summary

Because it is hard for dieters to stick to a low-carbohydrate eating plan, the initial success of these diets is short-lived (Heinz, 2009).

Check Your Understanding: Paraphrasing

On a separate sheet of paper, follow these steps to practice paraphrasing.

1. Choose an important idea or detail from your notes.
2. Without looking at the original source, restate the idea in your own words.
3. Check your paraphrase against the original text in the source. Make sure both your language and your sentence structure are original.
4. Revise your paraphrase if necessary.

Quoting Sources Directly

Most of the time, you will summarize or paraphrase source material instead of quoting directly. Doing so shows that you understand your research well enough to write about it confidently in your own words.

However, direct quotes can be powerful when used sparingly and with purpose.

Quoting directly can sometimes help you make a point in a colorful way. If an author's words are especially vivid, memorable, or well phrased, quoting them may help hold your reader's interest. Direct quotations from an interviewee or an eyewitness may help you personalize an issue for readers. And when you analyze primary sources, such as a historical speech or a work of literature, quoting extensively is often necessary to illustrate your points. These are valid reasons to use quotations.

Less experienced writers, however, sometimes overuse direct quotations in a research paper because it seems easier than paraphrasing. At best, this reduces the effectiveness of the quotations. At worst, it results in a paper that seems haphazardly pasted together from outside sources. Use quotations sparingly for greater impact.

When you do choose to quote directly from a source, follow these guidelines:

- Make sure you have transcribed the original statement accurately.
- Represent the author's ideas honestly. Quote enough of the original text to reflect the author's point accurately.
- Never use a stand-alone quotation. Always integrate the quoted material into your own sentence.
- Use ellipses (...) if you need to omit a word or phrase. Use brackets [] if you need to replace a word or phrase.
- Make sure any omissions or changed words do not alter the meaning of the original text. Omit or replace words only when absolutely necessary to shorten the text or to make it grammatically correct within your sentence.
- Remember to include correctly formatted citations that follow the assigned style guide.

Jorge interviewed a dietician as part of his research, and he decided to quote her words in his paper. Read an excerpt from the interview and Jorge's use of it, which follows.

Source—Interview (personal communication)

Personally, I don't really buy into all of the hype about low-carbohydrate miracle diets like Atkins

and so on. Sure, for some people, they are great, but for most, any sensible eating and exercise plan would work just as well.

Jorge's Summary—with narrative in-text citation

Registered dietician D. Kwon (personal communication, August 10, 2010) admits, “Personally, I don’t really buy into all of the hype....Sure, for some people, [low-carbohydrate diets] are great, but for most, any sensible eating and exercise plan would work just as well.”

Notice how Jorge smoothly integrated the quoted material by starting the sentence with an introductory phrase. His use of ellipses and brackets did not change the source’s meaning.

Documenting Source Material

Throughout the writing process, be scrupulous about documenting information taken from sources. The purpose of doing so is twofold:

1. To give credit to other writers or researchers for their ideas
2. To allow your reader to follow up and learn more about the topic if desired

You will cite sources within the body of your paper and at the end of the paper in your bibliography. For this assignment, you will use the citation format used by the American Psychological Association (also known as APA style).

Citing Sources in the Body of Your Paper

In-text citations document your sources within the body of your paper. These include two vital pieces of information: the author’s name and the year the source material was published. When quoting a print source, also include in the citation the page number where the quoted material originally appears. The page number

will follow the year in the in-text citation. Page numbers are necessary only when content has been directly quoted, not when it has been summarized or paraphrased.

Within a paragraph, this information may appear as part of your introduction to the material or as a parenthetical citation at the end of a sentence. Read the examples that follow.

Jorge's Summary—with narrative in-text citation

Leibowitz (2008) found that low-carbohydrate diets often helped subjects with Type II diabetes maintain a healthy weight and control blood-sugar levels.

The introduction to the source material includes the author's name followed by the year of publication in parentheses.

Jorge's Summary with parenthetical in-text citation

Low-carbohydrate diets often help subjects with Type II diabetes maintain a healthy weight and control blood-sugar levels (Leibowitz, 2008).

The parenthetical citation at the end of the sentence includes the author's name, a comma, and the year the source was published. The period at the end of the sentence comes after the parentheses.

Creating a List of References

Each of the sources you cite in the body text will appear in a references list at the end of your paper. While in-text citations provide the most basic information about the source, your references section will include additional publication details. In general, you will include the following information:

- The author's last name followed by his or her first (and sometimes middle) initial
- The year the source was published
- The source title

- For articles in periodicals, the full name of the periodical, along with the volume and issue number and the pages where the article appeared

Additional information may be included for different types of sources, such as online sources.

Using Primary and Secondary Research

As you write your draft, be mindful of how you are using primary and secondary source material to support your points. Recall that primary sources present firsthand information. Secondary sources are one step removed from primary sources. They present a writer's analysis or interpretation of primary source materials. How you balance primary and secondary source material in your paper will depend on the topic and assignment.

Using Primary Sources Effectively

Some types of research papers must use primary sources extensively to achieve their purpose. Any paper that analyzes a primary text or presents the writer's own experimental research falls in this category. Here are a few examples:

- A paper for a literature course analyzing several poems by Emily Dickinson
- A paper for a political science course comparing televised speeches delivered by two presidential candidates
- A paper for a communications course discussing gender biases in television commercials
- A paper for a business administration course that discusses the results of a survey the writer conducted with local businesses to gather information about their work-from-home and flextime policies
- A paper for an elementary education course that discusses the results of an experiment the writer conducted to compare the effectiveness of two different methods of mathematics instruction

For these types of papers, primary research is the main focus. If you are writing about a work (including nonprint works, such as a movie or a painting), it is crucial to gather information and ideas from the original work, rather than relying solely on others' interpretations. And, of course, if you take the time to design and conduct your own field research, such as a survey, a series of interviews, or an experiment, you will want to discuss it in detail. For example, the interviews may provide interesting responses that you want to share with your reader.

Using Secondary Sources Effectively

For some assignments, it makes sense to rely more on secondary sources than primary sources. If you are not analyzing a text or conducting your own field research, you will need to use secondary sources extensively.

As much as possible, use secondary sources that are closely linked to primary research, such as a journal article presenting the results of the authors' scientific study or a book that cites interviews and case studies. These sources are more reliable and add more value to your paper than sources that are further removed from primary research. For instance, a popular magazine article on junk-food addiction might be several steps removed from the original scientific study on which it is loosely based. As a result, the article may distort, sensationalize, or misinterpret the scientists' findings.

Even if your paper is largely based on primary sources, you may use secondary sources to develop your ideas. For instance, an analysis of Alfred Hitchcock's films would focus on the films themselves as a primary source, but might also cite commentary from critics. A paper that presents an original experiment would include some discussion of similar prior research in the field.

Jorge knew he did not have the time, resources, or experience needed to conduct original experimental research for his paper. Because he was relying on secondary sources to support his ideas, he made a point of citing sources that were not far removed from primary research.

Tip

Some sources could be considered primary or secondary sources, depending on the writer's purpose for using them. For instance, if a writer's purpose is to inform readers about how the No Child Left Behind legislation has affected elementary education, a Time magazine article on the subject would be a secondary source. However, suppose the writer's purpose is to analyze how the news media has portrayed the effects of the No Child Left Behind legislation. In that case, articles about the legislation in news magazines like Time, Newsweek, and US News & World Report would be primary sources. They provide firsthand examples of the media coverage the writer is analyzing.

Avoiding Plagiarism

Your research paper presents your thinking about a topic, supported and developed by other people's ideas and information. It is crucial to always distinguish between the two—as you conduct research, as you plan your paper, and as you write. Failure to do so can lead to plagiarism.

Intentional and Accidental Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the act of misrepresenting someone else's work as your own. Sometimes a writer plagiarizes work on purpose—for instance, by purchasing an essay from a website and submitting it as original course work. In other cases, a writer may commit accidental plagiarism due to carelessness, haste, or misunderstanding. To avoid unintentional plagiarism, follow these guidelines:

- Understand what types of information must be cited.
- Understand what constitutes fair use of a source.
- Keep source materials and notes carefully organized.
- Follow guidelines for summarizing, paraphrasing, and quoting sources.

When to Cite

Any idea or fact taken from an outside source must be cited, in both the body of your paper and the references list. The only exceptions are facts or general statements that are common knowledge. Common-knowledge facts or general statements are commonly supported by and found in multiple sources. For example, a writer would not need to cite the statement that most breads, pastas, and cereals are high in carbohydrates; this is well known and well documented. However, if a writer explained in detail the differences among the chemical structures of carbohydrates, proteins, and fats, a citation would be necessary. When in doubt, cite.

Fair Use/Fair Dealing

In recent years, issues related to the fair use (USA) and Fair Dealing (Canada) of sources have been prevalent in popular culture. Recording artists, for example, may disagree about the extent to which one has the right to sample another's music. For academic purposes, however, the guidelines for fair use are reasonably straightforward.

Writers may quote from or paraphrase material from previously published works without formally obtaining the copyright holder's permission. Fair use/Fair Dealing means that the writer legitimately uses brief excerpts from source material to support and develop his or her own ideas. For instance, a columnist may excerpt a few sentences from a novel when writing a book review. However, quoting or paraphrasing another's work at excessive length, to the extent that large sections of the writing are unoriginal, is not fair use or fair dealing.

As he worked on his draft, Jorge was careful to cite his sources correctly and not to rely excessively on any one source. Occasionally, however, he caught himself quoting a source at great length. In those instances, he

highlighted the paragraph in question so that he could go back to it later and revise. Read the example, along with Jorge's revision.

Jorge's Summary with unoriginal writing

Heinz (2009) found that "subjects in the low-carbohydrate group (30% carbohydrates; 40% protein, 30% fat) had a mean weight loss of 10 kg (22 lbs) over a 4-month period" (para. 7). These results were "noticeably better than results for subjects on a low-fat diet (45% carbohydrates, 35% protein, 20% fat)" whose average weight loss was only "7 kg (15.4 lbs) in the same period" (Heinz, 2009, para. 8). From this, it can be concluded that "low-carbohydrate diets obtain more rapid results" (Heinz, 2009, p. 82). Other researchers agree that "at least in the short term, patients following low-carbohydrate diets enjoy greater success" than those who follow alternative plans (Johnson & Crowe, 2010, p. 25).

After reviewing the paragraph, Jorge realized that he had drifted into unoriginal writing. Most of the paragraph was taken verbatim from a single article. Although Jorge had enclosed the material in quotation marks, he knew it was not an appropriate way to use the research in his paper.

Jorge's Revised Summary

Low-carbohydrate diets may indeed be superior to other diet plans for short-term weight loss. In a study comparing low-carbohydrate diets and low-fat diets, Heinz (2009) found that subjects who followed a low-carbohydrate plan (30% of total calories) for 4 months lost, on average, about 3 kilograms more than subjects who followed a low-fat diet for the same time. Heinz concluded that these plans yield quick results, an idea supported by a similar study conducted by Johnson and Crowe (2010). What remains to be seen, however, is whether this initial success can be sustained for longer periods.

As Jorge revised the paragraph, he realized he did not need to quote these sources directly. Instead, he paraphrased their most important findings. He also made sure to include a topic sentence stating the main idea of the paragraph and a concluding sentence that transitioned to the next major topic in his essay.

Working with Sources Carefully

Disorganization and carelessness sometimes lead to plagiarism. For instance, a writer may be unable to provide a complete, accurate citation if he didn't record bibliographical information. A writer may cut and paste a passage from a website into her paper and later forget where the material came from. A writer who procrastinates may rush through a draft, which easily leads to sloppy paraphrasing and inaccurate quotations. Any of these actions can create the appearance of plagiarism and lead to negative consequences.

Carefully organizing your time and notes is the best guard against these forms of plagiarism. Maintain a detailed working bibliography and thorough notes throughout the research process. Check original sources again to clear up any uncertainties. Allow plenty of time for writing your draft so there is no temptation to cut corners.

Writing at Work

Citing other people's work appropriately is just as important in the workplace as it is in school. If you need to consult outside sources to research a document you are creating, follow the general guidelines already discussed, as well as any industry-specific citation guidelines. For more extensive use of others' work—for instance, requesting permission to link to another company's website on your own corporate website—always follow your employer's established procedures.

Academic Integrity

The concepts and strategies discussed in this section connect to a larger issue—academic integrity. You maintain your integrity as a member of an academic community by representing your work and others' work honestly and by using other people's work only in legitimately accepted ways. It is a point of honour taken seriously in every academic discipline and career field.

Academic integrity violations have serious educational and professional consequences. Even when cheating and plagiarism go undetected, they still result in a student's failure to learn necessary research and writing skills. Students who are found guilty of academic integrity violations face consequences ranging from a failing grade to expulsion from the university. Employees may be fired for plagiarism and do irreparable damage to their professional reputation. In short, it is never worth the risk.

Attribution & References

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