



Center for Writing and Speaking

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How to Cite Sources

There are different formatting styles and ways to cite your sources; the main formats include MLA, APA, and Chicago.

Evaluating Your Sources

Having your thesis or argument in mind, research and collect relevant information. Take notes on the credibility of your sources. To determine the credibility of your sources, first look at the author. Research the author's expertise or experience. What is the author's point of view (biased; peer reviewed; academic journal) and their possible audience? What sources did the author use? Are the sources relevant and reliable? Are the author's citations correct?

Credible source: A well-known author conducting a study on gender roles in Victorian literature, using 19th century novels, academic journals on gender roles.

Non-credible source: An organization giving statistics on voting patterns without providing research or citing sources.

What is the ICE Method?

ICE is an acronym for Introduction, Cite, and Explanation. It is an effective way to present textual evidence and strengthen your analysis.

How to ICE

Introduction Author's name, name of source, any relevant background information.

Cite This could be a quote, summary, or paraphrase with an in-text citation that matches the formatting style (MLA, APA, Chicago).

Explanation This is also your analysis of the cited source. Why is that particular citation important? How does it relate to your thesis? Are there any additional comments, insights, or connections that could be explored?

Traits of Summary

Summary is a general recapitulation, review, and/or retelling of relevant information (focusing on the main points) found in a text without the addition of original thoughts and ideas. More than a few sentences of summary is too much. How can you retell the main points of the argument in a way that is clear, concise, and complete?

How to Summarize

You don't need to fully understand the text and its details. Identify thesis or argument of source, highlighting main points. Leave out examples and evidence when taking notes. Restate your notes in your own words: the thesis, the main points, and conclusion of the text. Don't forget to append your in-text citations.

Example: (MLA Style) The Color Purple by Alice Walker is a series of letters written by a young woman exploring her sexuality and the meaning of life, family, and friendship (Walker 1982).

(continued on reverse)

Traits of Paraphrase

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How to Cite Sources (using ICE Method), Continued

Paraphrasing is more specific than Summarizing, but the two can be easily confused. Paraphrasing is written in your own words and style of writing to express the author's ideas and keep the same meaning of the original text.

How to Paraphrase

Carefully read, being sure to fully understand the text. Consider each point of view and how you would rephrase it in a way that reflects your style of writing. When you're finished, ask yourself, "Does my paraphrase reflect the same meaning as the original text?" Don't forget to append your in-text citations.

Example: (MLA Style) In his 2020 study, Miller discusses recent innovations in COVID-19 vaccines. He writes that increasing intake of vitamin C fast tracks immune response to the vaccine (Miller 2020).

Traits of Analysis Analysis is the process of examining and interpreting a piece of text (or summarized content) to determine its deeper meaning and prove a point (thesis). Analysis of primary and secondary source material through your research helps to offer evidence, make claims, and support your thesis statement. You can find more information on analysis on our [E6: Summary v Analysis Handout](#) on the [Center for Writing and Speaking webpage](#)

How to Analyze

[Read Critically](#) and take notes from sources. Keep your thesis in mind, as well as the overall topic, and the main points that support your thesis statement. Answer HOW and WHY a piece of information, theme(s), rhetorical devices, and/or motifs are important to the text and your argument.

What is an Annotated Bibliography?

An annotated bibliography gives a brief overview of the information contained in the source and how helpful it was to your research. It is usually written in the present tense, and sentence fragments are permitted. The typical annotation is usually no more than 150 words. Annotated bibliographies allow you not only to cite your research but also to analyze it.

How to create an Annotated Bibliography

There are six main sources you can put in an annotated bibliography:

books, periodicals, academic journals, organization websites, news/magazine websites, interviews/lecture notes/personal communication.

There are also three different types of annotations:

summary: informative and indicative; summarize the topics addressed, theses, main points and conclusions

evaluative: assess strengths and weaknesses, any bias, and usefulness of source to a particular field

combination: a combination of summary and evaluative, including analysis on reason source was created.

View our [A2: Annotated Bibliography Handout](#) on our [Center for Writing and Speaking webpage](#) for more detailed information.

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