

errors in a published work, this might cause you to question that author's credibility or provide some warning that the work has not been thoroughly reviewed for professional publication. Similarly, if an author makes repeated factual errors, you might question how knowledgeable that author really is.

Assessing these factors together should allow you to make thoughtful decisions about the credibility of articles, which in turn should allow you to make thoughtful decisions about which articles will prove most valuable as secondary sources.

How to Use Secondary Sources

Many students believe that using a secondary source is as simple as locating a sentence that seems to agree with their argument, putting it into a paper, and placing quotation marks on either side of it. It is common for students to state a claim, then use this type of quotation from a secondary source to "prove" that the claim is correct. While it's true that secondary sources can provide *evidence* to support a claim, you should remember that the types of claims you are making in your Analytical Research Paper are generally claims that cannot be proven or disproven in this manner. Instead, you will persuade your audience of their merit through strong and well-supported arguments.

Secondary sources are a vital part of constructing this kind of argument. However, to use them effectively, you must do more than simply mine them for quotations. The key point to consider when you are working with secondary sources is: **What is this secondary source contributing to your argument?** The foundation of any work you do with a secondary source should be a way in which that source makes an important contribution to your argument. In other words, you should not use a source simply because it sounds impressive or was the easiest to find. You should be able to explain (to yourself and, when necessary, to your teacher—for example, in the Annotated Bibliography) why you feel it is important to use this particular source. Once you have located the key contribution that a source is making to your argument, you can begin to consider which specific parts of that source you wish to quote or paraphrase in your research paper.

There are many different kinds of contributions that a secondary source can make to your argument. A secondary source might **support** your argument by providing an example that illustrates a point that you are making. It might **establish** the point in the intellectual conversation at which you wish to intervene. (Think about our example of the party conversation: a common way to enter a conversation is to say, "It's interesting that you say that, because I think...") A secondary source might **challenge** your argument by raising points that you wish to critique or argue against. It might raise **new ideas** or **questions** that you wish to explore in your research paper. It might serve as a **lens** (like a magnifying glass or a prism) through which you can see your primary source in new and interesting ways.

Here are some tips for using secondary sources effectively:

Paraphrase Paraphrasing literally means “saying the same thing in different words.” Paraphrasing sentences or arguments from a secondary source (rather than simply quoting them) can be a valuable tool for you. Firstly, it requires you to fully understand all the nuances of a secondary source’s language—something that is absolutely essential when you are using a source. Secondly, it allows you to highlight for your audience the exact elements of your source that you find important. In a sense, you are interpreting your source for your audience. It is important to remember that if you are directly paraphrasing a source, you should still include a citation.

Continue the Conversation Remember that you are taking part in an active and ongoing discussion. This makes you an *interlocutor*—a word used to describe someone who is involved in a conversation, but which literally means “someone who speaks among or between.” As an interlocutor, you want to keep the conversation going. This may mean questioning, challenging, or criticizing your sources, just as you might question, challenge, or criticize other members of a conversation. It might also mean pointing out ways in which sources challenge or criticize each other. What you should not do is let the conversation die by simply agreeing or disagreeing with a source and letting this be the last word.

Don’t Think in Binaries Not only is it okay to agree with some parts of a source and disagree with other parts of a source, this is important and valuable. If you judge potential sources simply as “good” or “bad,” “right” or “wrong,” you are preventing yourself from seeing the rich and interesting contributions that get hidden by these labels. Instead, embrace the tensions and contradictions of sources, and allow yourself to question and critique these aspects.

Don’t Forget Your Own Voice As the author of your research paper, you are using secondary sources as material with which to build a more solid argument. You might think of your sources as a kind of building material, which you will combine with others’ materials and with your own to make an attractive, solidly constructed building. Your architectural design—your own voice and argument—should be what stands out. To this end, you should always consider how you are adding to or challenging what others have said. We began by asking what your sources were contributing to your argument. Make sure that you also understand what you are contributing to your argument!

Of course, it’s not enough to just drop in quotations without context or transition; there are rules and customs for how to do so. To help you learn more about how to combine your words with other writers’ words at a sentence level, we turn again to *Writing Analytically*.

Integrating Quotations Into Your Paper

An enormous number of writers lose authority and readability because they have never learned how to correctly integrate quotations into their own writing. The following guidelines should help. The primary rules of thumb here are that you should:

- Tell your readers in the text of your paper, not just in citations, when you are using someone else's words, ideas, or information; rewording someone else's idea doesn't make it your idea.
- Always attach a quotation to some of your own language; never let it stand as its own sentence in your text.

1. **Acknowledge sources in your text, not just in citations.** When you incorporate material from a source, attribute it to the source explicitly in your text—not just in a citation. In other words, when you introduce the material, frame it with a phrase such as “according to Marsh” or “as Gruen argues.”

Although it is not required, you are usually much better off making the attribution overtly, even if you have also cited the source within parentheses or with a footnote at the end of the last sentence quoted, paraphrased, or summarized. If a passage does not contain an attribution, your readers will not know that it comes from a source until they reach the citation at the end. Attributing up front clearly distinguishes what one source says from what another says and, perhaps more importantly, what your sources say from what you say. Useful verbs for introducing attributions include the following: notes, observes, argues, comments, writes, says, reports, suggests, and claims. Generally speaking, by the way, you should cite the author by last name only—as “Gruen,” not as “William Gruen” or “Mr. Gruen.” (In some cases, the first appearance includes both first and last name.)

2. **Splice quotations onto your own words.** Always attach some of your own language to quotations; don't let them sit in your text as independent sentences with quotation marks around them. You can normally satisfy this rule with an attributive phrase—commonly known as a tag phrase—that introduces the quotation.

According to Paul McCartney, “All you need is love.”

Note that the tag phrase takes a comma before the quote.

Alternatively you can splice quotations into your text with a setup: a statement followed by a colon.

Patrick Henry's famous phrase is one of the first that American schoolchildren memorize: “Give me liberty, or give me death.”

The colon, you should notice, usually comes at the end of an independent clause (that is, a subject plus verb that can stand alone), at the spot where a period normally goes. It would be incorrect to write "Patrick Henry is known for: 'Give me liberty, or give me death.'"

The rationale for this guideline on splicing in quotations is essentially the same as that for the previous one: if you are going to move to quotation, you first need to identify its author so that your readers will be able to put it in context quickly.

Spliced quotations frequently create problems in grammar or punctuation for writers. Whether you include an entire sentence (or passage) of quotation or just a few phrases, you need to take care to integrate them into the grammar of your own sentence.

One of the most common mistaken assumptions is that a comma should always precede a quotation, as in "A spokesperson for the public defender's office demanded, 'an immediate response from the mayor.'" The sentence structure does not call for any punctuation after "demanded."

3. **Cite sources after quotations.** *Locate citations in parentheses after the quotation and before the final period.* The information about the source appears at the end of the sentence, with the final period following the closing parenthesis.

A recent article on the best-selling albums in America claimed that "Ever since Elvis, it has been pop music's job to challenge the mores of the older generation" (Hornby 168).

Note that there is normally *no punctuation* at the end of the quotation itself, either before or after the closing quotation mark. A quotation that ends either in a question mark or an exclamation mark is an exception to this rule because the sign is an integral part of the quotation's meaning.

As Hamlet says to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, "And yet to me what is this quintessence of dust?" (2.2.304-05).

4. **Use ellipses to shorten quotations.** *Add an ellipsis to indicate that you have omitted some of the language from within the quotation.* Form an ellipsis by entering three dots (periods) with spaces in between them, or use four dots to indicate that the deletion continues to the end of the sentence (the last dot becomes the period). Suppose you wanted to shorten the following quotation from a recent article about Radiohead by Alex Ross:

The album "OK Computer," with titles like "Paranoid Android," "Karma Police," and "Climbing Up the Walls," pictured the onslaught of the information age and a young person's panicky embrace of it (Ross 85).

Using an ellipsis, you could emphasize the source's claim by omitting the song titles from the middle of the sentence:

The album "OK Computer"... pictured the onslaught of the information age and a young person's panicky embrace of it (Ross 85).

In most cases, the gap between quoted passages should be short, and in any case, you should be careful to preserve the sense of the original. The standard joke about ellipses is pertinent here: A reviewer writes that a film "will delight no one and appeal to the intelligence of invertebrates only, but not average viewers." An unethical advertiser cobbles together pieces of the review to say that the film "will delight... and appeal to the intelligence of... viewers."

5. Use square brackets to alter or add information within a quotation.

Sometimes it is necessary to change the wording slightly inside a quotation to maintain fluency. Square brackets indicate that you are altering the original quotation. Brackets are also used when you insert explanatory information, such as a definition or example, within a quotation. Here are a few examples that alter the original quotations previously cited.

According to one music critic, the cultural relevance of Radiohead is evident in "the album 'OK Computer'...[which] pictured the onslaught of the information age and a young person's panicky embrace of it" (Ross 85).

Popular music has always "[challenged] the mores of the older generation," according to Nick Hornby (168).

Note that both examples respect the original sense of the quotation; they have changed the wording only to integrate the quotations gracefully within the writer's own sentence structure.