Using Sources

When you have an assignment that requires you to consult sources other than those assigned by your instructor, you may be overwhelmed about where—and how—to begin. After all, Harvard has more than 28 libraries containing more than 20 million books, 400 million rare items (manuscripts, letters, photographs), and six million other digitized items. Harvard also subscribes to about 1500 databases.

In this section of the Harvard Guide to Using Sources, you will find information about how to use the Harvard Libraries to locate sources that are appropriate and useful for your assignment, how to evaluate the sources you find, and how to integrate the information and ideas from those sources into your own written work.

Locating Sources

For some paper assignments, the only sources you'll be expected to consult are those assigned in class. These assignments will ask you to engage in some way with the assigned reading. For example, you might be asked to do a close reading of a poem for an English course or to test a theory using texts assigned in your Social Studies tutorial. For other assignments, you'll be asked to locate your own sources. Still other assignments may expect you to generate some of the sources yourself through lab research or interviews.

If you're writing in your concentration or in a discipline that has become familiar to you, you'll likely know what types of sources are considered reliable in that field. But when an assignment leaves the research process open and you're not familiar with the field, it can be challenging to figure out where to start. Between the holdings of books and journals in the Harvard libraries and the numerous electronic resources available through the library catalogs, you have access to an enormous variety of texts—literally millions of books and billions of files. In theory this is a great privilege: Scholars travel from around the world for access to Harvard's collections, and the Harvard librarians add to these collections with careful thought. But in practice, it can be paralyzing to start the process of figuring out which materials to consider.

Navigating the Harvard Libraries

The contents of the Harvard Library cover all languages and all eras of history; they represent all branches of learning and all parts of the globe. They are massive: upwards of 22,000,000 items, according to some estimates, a number that keeps growing. And they exist in an extraordinary array of information types, including manuscripts, maps, data sets, sound recordings, photographs and films, legal documents, and cultural artifacts.

You'll find everything in Harvard libraries from papyrus fragments to a #metoo archive to the most recent issues of the journal *Nature*. And it's all available for you to encounter, interrogate, learn from, and use to create something new and meaningful of your own.

Harvard's libraries inspire wonder and allow for infinite imagining, but given their number and complexity, they can bewilder as well as bedazzle. It's helpful to remember that libraries are human spaces powered by people with deep expertise who want to create conditions in which you can learn and thrive.

Over the course of a semester, your Expos 20 or Studio 20 section will meet with a librarian from Lamont or Widener, who will demystify the research process and introduce you to library databases (including HOLLIS) that might be a good fit for your research projects. They'll model ways to craft good searches, to test out the appropriateness of sources for your project, and to cite

what you find. Ideally, your library engagements in Expos will equip you with strategies that you'll be able to use for other course-related research projects.

Harvard Libraries identify themselves as "Champions of Curiosity." They host a wide array of workshops and presentations; they design interesting exhibits, both online and onsite; they hold events that are specifically designed for undergraduates; and they create all sorts of research guides for different topics and courses, including many individual Expos classes.

You get better at research with practice, and you'll feel more comfortable with research projects over time. As you get acquainted with the libraries, there are many ways to seek help. In addition to reaching out to the librarian you meet in your Expos section, you can use the Ask-a-Librarian online form for questions, chat with the librarians online, or talk in person, one-on-one, at a time that's good for you.

Online Library Tools

In addition to providing access to numerous databases and publications through Hollis, the Harvard Library offers several resources to help you figure out whether sources you locate outside of Hollis can be accessed through Harvard.

Check Harvard Library bookmark

You can install the Harvard Library bookmark in your browser's bookmark bar. When you find a journal, magazine, or article online that requires a subscription, you can click the bookmark. If Harvard subscribes to the source, you will automatically be given access to it.

Lean Library

Lean Library is a browser extension that you can download and install in your browser. When enabled, Lean Library will automatically connect you to sources that Harvard subscribes to whenever you access them on the web. So, for example, if you had Lean Library installed and you visited the website of the Economist magazine, you would automatically get full subscriber access because Harvard subscribes. Because Lean Library will always check to see if Harvard has access to sources, it can sometimes be distracting. In that case, you may prefer to use the Check Harvard Library bookmark, which only checks for Harvard access when you click on it.

Browzine

Browzine is an app that lets you access scholarly journals in a format that makes them easier to read on your phone or tablet.

CURIOSity Digital Collections

This site offers curated collections of Harvard's digital resources, organized into exhibits. This is a helpful resource if you want to look at items from Harvard's collection of rare photos, books, maps, and more–and you're not sure where to start.

University Press Scholarship Online

University Press Scholarship Online gives you direct access to scholarly books that have recently been published by university presses.

Understanding Your Assignment

Before you visit the library, you should make sure you understand what you're being asked to do and what constraints, if any, have been placed on your assignment. If you have been asked to review the literature on post-traumatic stress disorder, for example, do you understand how far back you should go? If you have been asked to write a paper about American policy in relation to Vietnam, do you know what policies to focus on? Or is the choice of policies up to you? Has your professor offered any guidance in narrowing your topic? If you are researching a genetic disorder, are there any guidelines for what you should be seeking to learn about the disorder beyond what it is and how it presents itself?

Even when you understand the basic expectations of your assignment, you should be prepared for the fact that you won't necessarily know exactly what you're looking for—and that you shouldn't know what you want to find before you start looking. Research is an iterative process—the more you learn about what's available and what's been written already, the clearer your own project becomes, which in turn means you need to go back to the library to further narrow and continue your search. Before you take the first plunge into your research, it will be helpful to ask the following questions:

How wide a net should I cast, given the scope of my assignment?

Because it's so easy to locate sources electronically, you may feel overwhelmed when you type "ADHD medication" into Google Scholar and get more than 300,000 hits, or when you search for information about college financial aid policies in a database and end up with several hundred results. If you are writing a ten-page paper and are only expected to consult a few sources, you may want to talk to a librarian about what makes sense before you try to sift through the many sources available. On the other hand, if your topic turns up only a few hits, you may need to cast a wider net to make sure that you find the sources that are most relevant to your project.

What is required? What is optional?

Some professors will tell you how many outside sources to consult. When this is the case, try to think of this as a guideline for how much work seems reasonable rather than as a quota you must meet. If you think of the number of sources as a quota, you'll be less likely to look for sources that help you build your own argument and more likely to simply check off a number. If you choose the first three sources you find, you risk ending up with a paper that strings together unrelated ideas, rather than one that truly integrates the most important ideas to make a compelling argument.

Sometimes requirements laid out in an assignment will help you shape your paper. For example, an assignment might tell you to "look for an argument to critique" or to "use at least one source that puts forth a counterargument." If your assignment doesn't offer possible approaches, you can come up with your own. Consult the section of this guide on the roles that a source can play in your paper for some ideas on what sources can do in your paper that might, in turn, help you think about what types of sources to look for.

How will my use of sources help me meet the terms of the assignments?

If you have a sense of why you're using sources to write a particular paper, you will be able to begin the process of locating them efficiently. If you are doing a literature review and your goal is to analyze past research on a particular topic, then your use of sources is fairly straightforward, and you know what you're looking for. If your assignment is to come up with your own question based on course readings and then find your own sources to answer that question, your task may be less clear cut. Here are some questions to ask yourself as you search for sources:

- Am I surveying the literature on a particular topic?

- Am I looking for sources in order to better understand a particular topic so that I can come up with a question to ask?

- Am I looking for sources to help me develop my thesis and argument?

As you begin your research process, keep in mind that it's important to avoid looking only for sources that back up a position you've already decided to argue. Rather, you should see what ideas are out there and then decide how those ideas affect your thinking on a topic. It may be that someone disagrees with your interpretation, but rather than weakening your argument, this source may well prompt you to strengthen your position. On the other hand, if you find that every source seems to validate your position, it's worth asking yourself if your thesis is, in fact, arguable.

How will I know when I'm done with my research?

Writing a research paper is rarely a linear process. In many cases you won't be able to narrow your focus to a research question until you begin reading about your chosen topic. Once you formulate your question, you'll need to go back to the library resources you've identified and look for the sources that are most useful to you as you answer your question. As you read those sources, you'll likely refine your thesis and consult even more sources as your paper takes shape. This doesn't mean that you'll never be finished with your paper, however. Remember that you need to decide what's reasonable for the scope of your assignment, and that your goal is to answer your research question, not to report on every source that has ever been produced on your topic. If you're having trouble knowing when to stop reading, consult your instructor.

Library research can be overwhelming, especially given the many resources available at Harvard. You might find it helpful to remember that most research assignments are designed to provide you with an opportunity to learn something about a topic related to your course material that interests you. With that in mind, use the resources available to you through the Harvard library system, and don't be afraid to ask for help.

Evaluating Sources

From the many volumes and electronic resources that you have access to through the Harvard library system to the many resources available on the Web, finding information has never been easier. But at times, the sheer volume of information available to you can be overwhelming: How will you know which sources to rely on? How will you decide which sources are appropriate for a particular assignment? How can you determine if the data on a website is trustworthy? What's the difference between what a peer-reviewed journal offers and what a website like Wikipedia offers?

Although the most useful sources for a given assignment will depend on the assignment itself, as well as on the kinds of sources generally relied upon in your field of study, there are some universal rules that will help you decide whether to use a source. Once you determine whether a source is worth looking at, you'll still need to figure out what you will do with it in your paper, how to cite the information and ideas you draw from it, and how to avoid plagiarism. When you write for an academic audience, you are responsible for making sure that any information you provide and any ideas you cite come from sources that are both reliable and appropriate for your assignment. The most reliable sources are those that have been vetted by scholars in the field— articles published in peer-reviewed journals and books published by academic publishers.

No matter what you're working on, keep in mind that not all sources are appropriate for your project; just because someone has written something down doesn't mean it is a reliable source. Before you decide to rely on a source, you should evaluate the source and decide whether it is appropriate to use in your paper. You should always determine the qualifications of the author, the purpose of the source (that is, in what context it was created), the scope of the source (what it covers and in what depth), and, where relevant, the currency of the source.

Questions to Ask About All Sources

What are the author's credentials?

Before you rely on the expertise offered by an author, you should consider the author's credentials. What is the author's academic or institutional affiliation? Has the author published other books or articles on the subject? This information is readily available on the "about the author" page of most books, and generally can be found accompanying the author's name in journal articles. When using an electronic database to locate journal articles, you should be able to identify the author of a journal article in the citation record. The author's institutional affiliation will often be listed in the citation record as well. If there isn't any information about the author in the citation record, you can usually find it by looking at the journal article itself.

Finding information about an author published on a website can be more difficult (see [Evaluating Web Sources](#)), so you should be very careful about using websites if you can't locate any information about the author.

What is the purpose of the source?

Before you rely on a source, you should always try to figure out why the source was written and for whom the source is intended. For example, is the author an academic who is engaging in a particular scholarly conversation? Does the author cite other major works or data about the topic, or is this a personal response to an issue or text? Does the author have some kind of financial stake in expressing a particular point of view? Does the author work for an organization with a known viewpoint on the issues discussed in the source? It's important to make sure that you ask these questions so that you'll know whether a source is useful to consult. For example, a summary of an issue written by an author who works for an organization with a known political viewpoint on that issue might be quite different from a summary of that issue published by an academic who researches the issue.

What is the scope of the source?

As you consider a source, try to determine what it covers and in what depth. Does the source make an argument relevant to your topic? Does it respond to arguments made by other scholars? Does it lay out background information relevant to your topic? Does it summarize other research on your topic? If you wanted to gain background information on this topic, would looking at this article be enough, or would you need to consult other sources?

For more information about the scope and goals of a source, you can often consult an article's abstract—a short summary of the article's main ideas—or a book's introduction to get a sense of how it might be useful to you in your research.

Who published the source?

Is the publication a [peer-reviewed journal](#)? Is it published by an organization with a known viewpoint or financial stake in an issue? Articles and books published by organizations with political affiliations or financial interests may be useful to you as you learn about a topic, but you should be aware of how these affiliations and interests might shape the data or arguments in the source.

If you are using a source from social media—a TikTok or YouTube video, a Tweet, or another social media post—it's important to make sure you understand who has created the post, what sources they cite in the post, and what the purpose of the post is before you assume it is a reliable source for your paper. While some online content creators do rigorous research, many do not.

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How current is the source?

Researchers in the social sciences and the natural sciences place a premium on the most current, up-to-date scholarship in the field. This means that a literature review of a particular topic that was published ten years ago is much less relevant than one that was published this year. In other fields, currency may be less important. You should always check with your instructor if you have questions about the currency of your sources.

Evaluating Journal Articles

When you look at a printed copy of a journal, information about the author and publisher is readily available to you. You can page through the journal and see what other types of articles are published there, and you can often find out what credentials the author has by looking at their biographical information. If you are looking at the electronic version of the journal, you will need to click on the name of the journal for more information about it. In both electronic and print versions, you can see if a journal is peer-reviewed either by clicking on the journal title or by looking at the front matter in the print version of the journal.

When searching for journal articles, it's best to find articles that have been vetted by scholars in the field. Editors of refereed or peer-reviewed journals send prospective manuscripts to scholars who specialize in the topics covered, and these scholars critique the manuscripts without knowing the identity of the author. If an author has made claims that are unsubstantiated or considered problematic by their peers, the manuscript may not be published; if, on the other hand, the manuscript is deemed rigorous in its argument, it will be published. The review process is meticulous and dispassionate (since the reviewers don't know whose manuscript they're reading, they can't play favorites). In contrast, journals that are not refereed publish manuscripts that have been reviewed only by an editor or editorial collective, and these manuscripts are not reviewed anonymously. In print sources, information about the editorial process is usually available near the front matter of the journal; in electronic sources, clicking on the journal title will usually lead to a page outlining the editorial procedures.

Evaluating Web Sources

Although you should generally begin your electronic research by using e-resources available through the Harvard Library, there may be times when you will want to use Google. When you find a source online, you will need to assess whether it is a credible source.

Because web sources can be created by anyone and therefore are riskier in terms of their credibility and authority, they should always be evaluated according to the following criteria:

Who is the author of this site?

As with any source, it's important to identify the author of a website and to become familiar with the author's qualifications. Be skeptical of any web page that does not identify an author or publisher. If you are going to depend on a website as a source of information, you need to determine the author's credentials as well as the purpose and rationale for posting the site in the first place. For example, a site created to serve a particular viewpoint, or to make a monetary profit, might skew information for the author's own ends. Other sites might contain information that is incomplete or wrong. In addition to considering the author, you should also consider the publisher of the site—the place or server on which the document resides (or from which it originates). If this information isn't readily apparent, try backing up several levels (deleting from the right side of the URL). Is the web document linked to a federal agency (.gov), a non-profit site (.org), an educational institution (.edu), or a business (.com)?

Always ask whether the organization sponsoring a particular site is a known, reliable, or suitable site for the document—a research center, for example, a college or university, or a government office.

How accurate and objective is the site?

If you are going to cite information found on a website, it's important to know whether you can trust the accuracy of the facts (i.e., hard data, study results) under discussion in a particular document. First, determine if the factual information on a website can be corroborated elsewhere—through a reference to or citation of a clearly reliable source, for example. A website with data that cannot be confirmed should never be trusted, no matter how perfect it might seem for your purposes.

It's also important to understand the website's point of view or bias. How clear are its purposes? Does the language used on this site suggest a specific ideology or social or political agenda? Advocacy for a particular cause is not in itself a bad thing; when the slant of a site is deceptive or extreme, however, you should reject it as a legitimate research resource. If advertising appears on a web page, try to determine the extent to which it may be influencing informational content: Is it clear where the boundary is between the advertising and information content? Does the data seem manipulated to serve the ads, or are the ads simply used to fund the site?

Sites that have academic or educational content are often non-profit sites and generally follow certain rules. Scholarship relies upon context and usually builds on precedent, so ask these questions:

- Do you have the sense that the author is taking a position within an ongoing and serious discussion?
- Does the site demonstrate knowledge of related research—and does the author cite current and reliable sources?
- If footnotes, bibliographies, and hypertext links are used, do they add authority, credibility, or depth to the argument or only seem to do so?

What is the site's currency and coverage?

Since information on the web is so easily posted, it's especially important to make sure that the sources you consult are timely. Ask these questions:

- Is the creation date of the document (or of its most recent revision) listed?
- Is the information up-to-date? Age is relative on the Web: certain documents are timeless—their value is determined completely by their place in the historical record, and a document that is three or four years old can still be "timely" in certain disciplines. In fields where knowledge develops rapidly (the sciences, for example) or data is expected to change (statistics, for example), currency is more critical. As always, if you have questions about whether a source is current enough for your purposes, ask your instructor or a librarian.

Evaluating Online Media Content

Before you use a social media post, a YouTube or TikTok video, a podcast, or any other type of online media content as a source in your paper, it's important to make sure you understand who has created that content.

There are many self-proclaimed experts on social media, and it can be difficult to vet the information they present. While some content creators do rigorous research (many podcasts cite sources, interview experts, and employ fact-checkers, for example), others do not. If you want to use this type of source in your paper, make sure you have researched the creator of the content to find out their credentials, perspective, and sources of funding for their site or posts.

You should assess the source according to the same criteria you use to assess any source: Who is the creator of this content? What are their credentials? Do they provide any citations? Who is funding this content? How current is this content?

What's Wrong with Wikipedia?

There's nothing more convenient than Wikipedia if you're looking for some quick information, and when the stakes are low (you need a piece of information to settle a bet with your roommate, or you want to get a basic sense of what something means before starting more in-depth research), you may get what you need from Wikipedia. In fact, some instructors may advise their students to read entries for scientific concepts on Wikipedia as a way to begin understanding those concepts.

Nevertheless, when you're doing academic research, you should be extremely cautious about using Wikipedia. As its own disclaimer states, information on Wikipedia is contributed by anyone who wants to post material, and the expertise of the posters is not taken into consideration. Users may be reading information that is outdated or that has been posted by someone who is not an expert in the field —or by someone who wishes to provide misinformation. While Wikipedia editors do correct misinformation, observers have found that they don't catch everything—at least not right away.

Sometimes inaccurate information is posted to Wikipedia on purpose, as a hoax. In some well-documented cases, this inaccurate information continues to spread when people take it from Wikipedia and use it in books and articles.

If you do start with Wikipedia, you should make sure articles you read contain citations–and then go read the cited articles to check the accuracy of what you read on Wikipedia. For research papers, you should rely on the sources cited by Wikipedia authors rather than on Wikipedia itself.

You can find more information about the errors that have been caught on Wikipedia on the Wikipediocracy site.

There are other sites besides Wikipedia that feature user-generated content, including Quora and Reddit. These sites may show up in your search results, especially when you type a question into Google. Keep in mind that because these sites are user-authored, they are not reliable sources of fact-checked information. If you find something you think might be useful to you on one of those sites, you should look for another source for this information.

The fact that Wikipedia is not a reliable source for academic research doesn't mean that it's wrong to use basic reference materials when you're trying to familiarize yourself with a topic. In fact, the Harvard librarians can point you to specialized encyclopedias in different fields that offer introductory information. These sources can be particularly useful when you need background information or context for a topic you're writing about.

Making Decisions Based on Your Discipline

When you're trying to figure out whether a source is appropriate for your project, you should keep in mind the expectations and conventions of your discipline. The types of questions asked in a particular field will determine the types of sources consulted, and what is a useful source for one project may not be a useful source for a different project. For example, while you wouldn't consult Aristotle's outdated writings on physics if you were trying to learn about gravity, you might well consult these writings if you were writing a paper for a History of Science course.

If you have questions about the types of sources that are valued in a particular course, ask your instructor or a librarian. You should also consult departmental websites for information about research and writing, as well as the writing guides published by the Harvard Writing Project.

Several Harvard departments and programs have published their own online writing guides, which contain excellent advice about research and writing:

- GovWrites offers advice about writing and research in government courses.
- AnthroWrites offers advice about writing and research in anthropology.
- ScienceWrites offers advice about writing and research in the life sciences.

Integrating Sources

In order to use a source effectively in your paper, you must integrate it into your argument in a way that makes it clear to your reader not only which ideas come from that source, but also what the source is adding to your own thinking. In other words, each source you use in a paper should be there for a reason, and your reader should not have to guess what that reason is. When you're finished drafting your paper, you should always go back and make sure that you have made conscious decisions about how and where to use each source and that you've made the reasons for those decisions clear to your readers. The following section offers guidance about how to make these decisions, as well as advice on the nuts and bolts of integrating sources into your paper.

Sources and Your Assignment

The first step in any research process is to make sure you read your assignment carefully so that you understand what you are being asked to do. In addition to knowing how many sources you're expected to consult and what types of sources are relevant to your assignment, you should make sure you understand the role that sources should play in your paper.

For example, a common assignment at Harvard will ask you to test a theory by looking at that theory in relation to a text or series of texts. In this type of assignment, one source—i.e., the source that lays out the theory—will play a large role, as will the text or texts you're considering in relation to that theory. You may not be expected to consult any other sources. On the other hand, for an assignment that asks you to stake out a position for yourself in an ongoing debate, you may need to consult a number of sources to figure out the major positions in that debate before you can decide where you stand on the issue. For this type of assignment, you may also rely on sources to help you understand the context of the debate, to find the evidence that you will analyze to figure out where you stand on the issue, and to learn the definitions of relevant terms. Yet another assignment might ask you to formulate your own question on a broad topic and then answer that question. In this case, you will likely use sources in several different ways— as background information that will help you arrive at a question, as evidence and expert commentary that will help you answer that question, and as opposing views that you will take into consideration as you formulate your argument.

Many assignments will ask you to perform a combination of tasks, with the expectation that sources will play multiple roles in your paper and that you will make your own decisions about how to use at least some of your sources. If you don't understand what you're expected to do with the sources you find for a particular assignment, consult your instructor or a writing tutor. Understanding your instructor's expectations will help you to choose appropriate sources and to use them effectively in your paper.

A Source's Role in Your Paper

When you begin to draft your paper, you will need to decide what role each of your sources will play in your argument. In other words, you will need to figure out what you're going to do with the source in your paper. As you consider what role each source will play in your paper, you should begin by thinking about the role that source played in your research process. How did the source shape your thinking about the topic when you encountered it? If a source provided you with context for a particular problem or issue, then it may well do the same thing for your reader. If a source provided you with evidence that supports your claim, then you will probably want to lay out that evidence to your reader and explain how it leads you to the position you've staked out in your paper. If a source made an argument that challenged your own argument and made you refine your thinking, then you'll likely want to introduce that source in your paper as a counterargument before explaining why you have concluded that your own argument is stronger. On the other hand, if a source offered evidence or ideas that complicated your own thinking and made you shift your argument, you should explain how the source has led you to your new position.

Some assignments will ask you to respond in a specific way to a source. For example, you might be asked to test a theory developed in one source by using a body of evidence found in another source. Or you might be asked to respond to a claim or assumption laid out in a particular source. Other assignments may specify the number of sources you should use, but will not include instructions on how you should use those sources.

Here are some common roles that sources can play in your argument:

- <u>Provide primary evidence</u>: a source can serve as the main object of your analysis, or offer evidence that has not yet been analyzed by others.
- <u>Establish what's at stake</u>: a source can present or highlight a problem, question or issue that provides a "so what" for your essay.
- <u>Serve as a lens</u>: a source can offer a theory or concept that gives you a framework or focus for analyzing your evidence and building your argument.
- <u>Provide key terms/concepts</u>: a source offers a central concept or key term that you apply to your own argument.
- <u>Provide context</u>: a source can offer background (historical, cultural, etc.) that readers need to understand the argument you're making or the issue you're analyzing.
- <u>Serve as a supporting expert</u>: you want to offer a claim, and you cite a scholar or researcher who notices the same or similar idea, thereby supporting your claim.
- <u>Advance your argument</u>: a source provides a new insight that helps establish a main supporting claim to your overall argument; your use of that source should usually agree

with and extend the idea or insight, demonstrating its application to your own analysis.

- **Provide a complication or counterargument**: a source introduces an idea or raises a question that presents a problem for your argument, or an objection to contend with; your response to that complication enriches and adds nuance to your discussion.
- **Create a critical conversation**: one source offers an idea that another source can respond to, sometimes in a very direct way (i.e. critic A explicitly disagrees with critic B), or by providing a different angle on or approach to the question (i.e. source A offers a new way of thinking about an idea raised in source B, a different "take" on the issue).

Remember that a source can—and often will—play more than one role in your argument. Each time you mention a source in your paper, you should make sure you have a clear sense of what you're doing with that source in your paper.

Choosing Relevant Parts of a Source

When you use sources in a paper, remember that your main focus should always be on what **you** are saying, rather than on what any individual source is saying. You will, of course, devote portions of your paper to what your sources have to say, but these sources should always be discussed in the context of your own argument. Your reader will be interested in the ideas the source offers, but this interest will be primarily in terms of how that source contributes to, or is relevant to, your own argument.

In order to make the strongest argument you can, you should always be trying to strike a balance between your sources and your own voice. Remember that your paper is just that—your paper— and you don't want it to be overwhelmed by source material. Say, for example, you were asked to apply Marx's theory of labor alienation to the case of McDonald's service described by Robin Leidner, as Joanna Li did in an Expos essay. While you'd certainly want to devote a section of your paper to summarizing the relevant parts of Marx's work and the relevant discussion of McDonald's workers, you would not want your paper to be overwhelmed by your summaries of other people's ideas. Your instructor will be interested in hearing how you think Marx's work applies to or illuminates the case studied by Leidner–and how you think the theory applies to a category of workers Marx did not discuss.

When you consult multiple sources for a research paper, you might find yourself trying to strike a delicate balance between the voices of those sources and your own voice. In that situation, it might be helpful to think of yourself as part of a conversation among scholars who are interested in the same topic. Your paper is your chance to speak in the conversation, but you also need to accurately and clearly represent the other participants in the conversation.

As you think about what portion of a source to use in your paper, keep thinking back to what you're trying to do in your paper—and how the source helps you accomplish this goal. When you choose the parts of a source that are most relevant to your argument, you may be surprised to find that you are using less of that source (and therefore spending more time analyzing how it fits into your argument) than you originally imagined you would.

Summarizing, Paraphrasing, and Quoting

Depending on the conventions of your discipline, you may have to decide whether to summarize a source, paraphrase a source, or quote from a source.

Scholars in the humanities tend to summarize, paraphrase, and quote texts; social scientists and natural scientists rely primarily on summary and paraphrase.

When and how to summarize

When you summarize, you provide your readers with a condensed version of an author's key points. A summary can be as short as a few sentences or much longer, depending on the complexity of the text and the level of detail you wish to provide to your readers. You will need to summarize a source in your paper when you are going to refer to that source and you want your readers to understand the source's argument, main ideas, or plot (if the source is a novel, film, or play) before you lay out your own argument about it, analysis of it, or response to it.

Before you summarize a source in your paper, you should decide what your reader needs to know about that source in order to understand your argument. For example, if you are making an argument about a novel, you should avoid filling pages of your paper with details from the book that will distract or confuse your reader. Instead, you should add details sparingly, going only into the depth that is necessary for your reader to understand and appreciate your argument. Similarly, if you are writing a paper about a journal article, you will need to highlight the most relevant parts of the argument for your reader, but you should not include all of the background information and examples. When you have to decide how much summary to put in a paper, it's a good idea to consult your instructor about whether you are supposed to assume your reader's knowledge of the sources.

Guidelines for summarizing a source in your paper

- Identify the author and the source.
- Represent the original source accurately.
- Present the source's central claim clearly.

- Don't summarize each point in the same order as the original source; focus on giving your reader the most important parts of the source
- Use your own words. Don't provide a long quotation in the summary unless the actual language from the source is going to be important for your reader to see.

Example

> Stanley Milgram (1974) reports that ordinarily compassionate people will be cruel to each other if they are commanded to be by an authority figure. In his experiment, a group of participants were asked to administer electric shocks to people who made errors on a simple test. In spite of signs that those receiving shock were experiencing great physical pain, 25 of 40 subjects continued to administer electric shocks. These results held up for each group of people tested, no matter the demographic. The transcripts of conversations from the experiment reveal that although many of the participants felt increasingly uncomfortable, they continued to obey the experimenter, often showing great deference for the experimenter. Milgram suggests that when people feel responsible for carrying out the wishes of an authority figure, they do not feel responsible for the actual actions they are performing. He concludes that the increasing division of labor in society encourages people to focus on a small task and eschew responsibility for anything they do not directly control.

This summary of Stanley Milgram's 1974 essay, "The Perils of Obedience," provides a brief overview of Milgram's 12-page essay, along with an APA style parenthetical citation. You would write this type of summary if you were discussing Milgram's experiment in a paper in which you were not supposed to assume your reader's knowledge of the sources. Depending on your assignment, your summary might be even shorter.

When you include a summary of a paper in your essay, you must cite the source. If you were using APA style in your paper, you would include a parenthetical citation in the summary, and you would also include a full citation in your reference list at the end of your paper. For the essay by Stanley Milgram, your citation in your references list would include the following information:

> Milgram, S. (1974). The perils of obedience. In L.G. Kirszner & S.R. Mandell (Eds.),
>
>   The Blair reader (pp.725-737).

When and how to paraphrase

When you paraphrase from a source, you restate the source's ideas in your own words. Whereas a summary provides your readers with a condensed overview of a source (or part of a source), a

paraphrase of a source offers your readers the same level of detail provided in the original source. Therefore, while a summary will be shorter than the original source material, a paraphrase will generally be about the same length as the original source material.

When you use any part of a source in your paper—as background information, as evidence, as a counterargument to which you plan to respond, or in any other form—you will always need to decide whether to quote directly from the source or to paraphrase it. Unless you have a good reason to quote directly from the source, you should paraphrase the source. Any time you paraphrase an author's words and ideas in your paper, you should make it clear to your reader why you are presenting this particular material from a source at this point in your paper. You should also make sure you have represented the author accurately, that you have used your own words consistently, and that you have cited the source.

Example

This paraphrase below restates one of Milgram's points in the author's own words. When you paraphrase, you should always cite the source. This paraphrase uses the APA in-text citation style. Every source you paraphrase should also be included in your list of references at the end of your paper. For citation format information go to the [Citing Sources](#) section of this guide.

> **Source material**
>
> The problem of obedience is not wholly psychological. The form and shape of society and the way it is developing have much to do with it. There was a time, perhaps, when people were able to give a fully human response to any situation because they were fully absorbed in it as human beings. But as soon as there was a division of labor things changed.
>
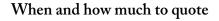> --Stanley Milgram, "The Perils of Obedience," p.737.
>
> Milgram, S. (1974). The perils of obedience. In L.G. Kirszner & S.R. Mandell (Eds.),
>
> The Blair reader (pp.725-737). Prentice Hall.
>
> **Paraphrase**
>
> Milgram (1974) claims that people's willingness to obey authority figures cannot be explained by psychological factors alone. In an earlier era, people may have had the ability to invest in social situations to a greater extent. However, as society has become increasingly structured by a division of labor, people have become more alienated from situations over which they do not have control (p.737).

When and how much to quote

The basic rule in all disciplines is that you should only quote directly from a text when it's important for your reader to see the actual language used by the author of the source. While paraphrase and summary are effective ways to introduce your reader to someone's ideas, quoting directly from a text allows you to introduce your reader to the way those ideas are expressed by showing such details as language, syntax, and cadence.

So, for example, it may be important for a reader to see a passage of text quoted directly from Tim O'Brien's *The Things They Carried* if you plan to analyze the language of that passage in order to support your thesis about the book. On the other hand, if you're writing a paper in which you're making a claim about the reading habits of American elementary school students or reviewing the current research on Wilson's disease, the information you're providing from sources will often be more important than the exact words. In those cases, you should paraphrase rather than quoting directly. Whether you quote from your source or paraphrase it, be sure to provide a citation for your source, using the correct format. (see Citing Sources section)

You should use quotations in the following situations:

- When you plan to discuss the actual language of a text.
- When you are discussing an author's position or theory, and you plan to discuss the wording of a core assertion or kernel of the argument in your paper.
- When you risk losing the essence of the author's ideas in the translation from their words to your own.
- When you want to appeal to the authority of the author and using their words will emphasize that authority.

Once you have decided to quote part of a text, you'll need to decide whether you are going to quote a long passage (a block quotation) or a short passage (a sentence or two within the text of your essay). Unless you are planning to do something substantive with a long quotation—to analyze the language in detail or otherwise break it down—you should not use block quotations in your essay. While long quotations will stretch your page limit, they don't add anything to your argument unless you also spend time discussing them in a way that illuminates a point you're making. Unless you are giving your readers something they need to appreciate your argument, you should use quotations sparingly.

When you quote from a source, you should make sure to cite the source either with an in-text citation or a note, depending on which citation style you are using. The passage below, drawn from O'Brien's *The Things They Carried*, uses an MLA-style citation.

Example

Source material

On the morning after Ted Lavender died, First Lieutenant Jimmy Cross crouched at the bottom of his foxhole and burned Martha's letters. Then he burned the two photographs. There was a steady rain falling, which made it difficult, but he used heat tabs and Sterno to build a small fire, screening it with his body holding the photographs over the tight blue flame with the tip of his fingers.

He realized it was only a gesture. Stupid, he thought. Sentimental, too, but mostly just stupid. (23)

--O'Brien, Tim. *The Things They Carried*. New York: Broadway Books, 1990.

Quotation

Even as Jimmy Cross burns Martha's letters, he realizes that "it was only a gesture. Stupid, he thought. Sentimental too, but mostly just stupid" (23).

If you were writing a paper about O'Brien's *The Things They Carried* in which you analyzed Cross's decision to burn Martha's letters and stop thinking about her, you might want your reader to see the language O'Brien uses to illustrate Cross's inner conflict. If you were planning to analyze the passage in which O'Brien calls Cross's realization stupid, sentimental, and then stupid again, you would want your reader to see the original language.

The Nuts & Bolts of Integrating

In order to make a clear, effective argument, you need to make sure to distinguish between your ideas and the ideas that come from your sources. A reader should always know when you are speaking and when your source is speaking. Once you've decided whether to paraphrase, summarize, or quote from a source, you should make sure your source material is clearly integrated into your paper.

Topic Sentences

When you are using sources in a paper, it's important to keep your readers focused on what you are saying about the sources rather than on the sources themselves. A useful way to keep your paper focused is to begin each paragraph of your paper with a topic sentence that sets up the point of that paragraph in your own words rather than beginning with a quotation or an idea

from a source. Even when you are summarizing source material to provide background for your argument, you should make it clear what that summary is doing for your argument by introducing the paragraph with a sentence in your own voice.

Example

If you were summarizing part of Michael Sandel's article "The Case Against Perfection" for an essay about his argument, you could begin with a sentence like this to let your reader know why they need this summary:

> In order to understand why genetic enhancement could actually have different effects than those Sandel suggests, it's important to first understand his main claims.

If you were analyzing Michael Sandel's argument and arguing that parts of it are not convincing, you might begin with a topic sentence like this:

> Sandel's claim that widespread genetic enhancement would lead to a decrease in social solidarity is flawed because he does not acknowledge that society already lacks solidarity.

In both of these examples, the topic sentence helps the reader see what the author of the paper is doing with Sandel's arguments rather than simply summarizing those arguments.

Framing Source Material

Make sure that every time you use material from a source, you introduce it in your own words and follow it with your own analysis or discussion so that your readers understand what purpose the material is serving in your essay. You should always make it clear where your ideas end and the source's ideas begin. Your paper should never contain a paragraph that is solely based on a source without any commentary from you.

Every quotation you use in your paper should be introduced with a sentence of your own that alerts the reader to your reason for using the quotation. You should then follow the quotation with your own discussion so that your readers understand why you have quoted from the source and what you want them to take away from the quotation. Your paper should clearly focus on your argument, and your readers need to know how each source helps to develop that argument.

Example

In her Exposé essay about the composer Glenn Gould, Lucy Caplan creates clear boundaries between her own voice and the voices of her sources. In the following paragraph, she introduces the theories of two music critics, summarizing their debate in her own words and then following it with her own idea. Caplan's ideas are in bold; note that she begins and ends the paragraph

with her own discussion of the sources rather than letting the source material take over the paragraph.

> **The question of how to interpret music of the past is a matter of perpetual controversy.**[1] **Should performers play in a way that recreates the music as the composer would have heard it, or should they adjust to modern conventions?** One point of view, represented by longtime New Yorker music critic Andrew Porter, advocates what is known as performance practice, a style based on the premise that the most valuable performances aim to recreate, as exactly as possible, the sounds the composer would have heard (160).[2] According to this theory, musicians should follow a composer's textual directions about tempo, dynamics and other details of performance; in this sense, performance practice aims for what may be called "historical fidelity," in which an ideal musical performance attempts to recreate, as authentically as possible, the very sounds a composer intended. But other critics, such as musicologist Richard Taruskin, counter that "authentic" performances do not necessarily have any greater aesthetic value (74).[3] Since musical performance necessarily involves a degree of interpretation on the part of the musician, he argues, performers should be able to interpret music freely, without feeling bound to strict conventions. **The debate between these two points of view remains unresolved; indeed, it has only intensified as the music at the center of the debate moves further into the past. The debate over historical fidelity, in other words, becomes more difficult to resolve as modern musical traditions become less similar to its historical predecessors.**[4]

Caplan does the following to frame her source material:

- Caplan's topic sentence sets up the debate that she is going to discuss.
- In the third sentence, Caplan summarizes Andrew Porter's point of view and cites her source.
- Caplan begins her summary of Richard Taruskin's point of view in the fifth sentence of the paragraph. She cites her source at the end of the sentence.
- In the final two sentences of the paragraph, Caplan makes it clear that she is moving beyond her sources to state her own idea.

Later in her essay, Caplan quotes both Porter and Taruskin. Each time she quotes from one of these sources, she integrates the quotation into a sentence of her own so that her readers will know who is speaking and also what the quotation adds to her argument. If Caplan had simply reproduced the quotations without constructing her own sentences, her readers wouldn't know why she was sharing the quotations with them.

In the example below, Caplan embeds the quotation from Porter in a sentence that clearly contrasts Porter's view with Taruskin's view. In the next sentences, she expands her discussion of

Taruskin's views. She finishes the paragraph by explaining what these quotations illustrate about the performance practice debate.

> Whereas Porter claimed in his New Yorker review that "Beethoven's music rang out…more beautifully…on the early instruments," Taruskin suggests that performance practice may yield musicians who passively rather than actively read musical compositions. In a passive interpretation, he writes, "the notes and rests are presented with complete accuracy and an equally complete neutrality" (72). Early music, in this context, can become "a positivistic purgatory, literalistic and dehumanizing, a thing of taboos and shalt-nots" (Taruskin 76). These terms may be extreme, but they do give an idea of the intensity of the performance practice debate; Taruskin's concerns were shared to some extent by many critics of performance practice.

Signal Phrases

A signal phrase is an introductory clause that signals to the reader a shift in point of view from you to your source. The appropriate use of signal phrases varies from discipline to discipline. Writers in the humanities often signal a quotation or paraphrase with the author's name (as in "Chen argues…" or "Cole notes…"). The choice of verb in a signal phrase can give your readers information about the disposition of the source. For example, the phrase "Sandel argues" signals that Sandel is making a claim, while the phrase "Sandel notes" signals a more neutral reporting of information.

Social scientists may use signal phrases more sparingly, introducing the names of authors or researchers when they want to place particular emphasis on the credibility of the source or to draw attention to the importance of the source author. Pay close attention to how the authors you read in your courses use signal phrases; these models will provide you with clues about the conventions of a particular discipline. When in doubt, ask your instructor whether you should name authors in the body of your paper rather than leaving that information for your citations.

Here are some examples of signal phrases you might use:

Allen *argues*

Sandel *notes*

Lewis *confirms*

Gates *emphasizes*

Wilson *contends*

Patterson *acknowledges*

Mukherjee *observes*

Carpio *suggests*

Banaji *claims*

Example

In her [essay about alienation among McDonald's workers](#), Joanna Li quotes from and paraphrases a book by Robin Leidner. In the selection below, Li uses signal phrases to indicate when she is paraphrasing from and quoting from Leidner's book.

> Quick, standard exchanges, **Leidner reveals**, had the added benefit of protecting workers from intrusive or uncomfortable personal conversations (146). Given the long lines and customer expectation for speedy service, highly personalized conversations were often desired by neither party and workers preferred customers who were "ready to give their order" (Leidner 143). As **Leidner notes**, McDonald's management valued a friendly atmosphere but emphasized speed as their first priority; routines helped workers who "prided themselves on their speedy service" (143) to stay efficient and professional.

By saying "Leidner reveals," Li signals that the idea that follows is Leidner's idea. The second signal phrase, "Leidner notes," signals to the reader that the idea and the quotation in this sentence are Leidner's ideas.

Quoting and Grammatical Sentences

When you introduce a quotation with a signal phrase, that quotation becomes part of your own sentence. It's important, then, to make sure that the sentence is grammatically correct. If you are having trouble molding the grammar of the quotation to the grammar of your paper, you can use brackets to help you. In the following sentence from Peter Bozzo's Exposé essay about the documentary film *Paradise Lost: The Child Murders at Robin Hood Hills*, Bozzo adds brackets to make the quotation fit grammatically into his own sentence.

Example

> The filmmakers highlight Echols's vanity by suggesting that it consumed him even when issues of his guilt or innocence and life or death were at stake; in actuality, however, his actions may have represented a typical response to correct for what Echols refers to in the second film as a "haircut [that] was actually given to me about five minutes before the hearing by a woman in the back room with a pair of plastic scissors."

In the original quotation, Echols says "a haircut was actually given to me about five minutes before the hearing…" In order to make his sentence read smoothly, Bozzo has added the "that" in brackets to fit the grammar of his sentence.

Be careful not to overuse brackets in your paper. If you find yourself needing to change most words in a quotation to bracketed substitutes, you should reconsider either the quotation or your own sentence.

Ellipses

If you're quoting from a long passage and you don't want to use the whole passage, you can omit parts of it by using the ellipsis mark. The ellipsis is three periods, with spaces between them, and indicates to your reader that words have been omitted. Remember that you are obligated to represent a quotation accurately and that you should only omit words if those words do not change the meaning of the quotation. You don't need to use the ellipsis at the beginning or the end of a quotation since it will be clear to your reader that you have not quoted the entire source.

Example

Le Coney and Trodd explain that

> the frontier loomed large as early as 1960, when John F. Kennedy's Democratic Party Nomination acceptance speech observed: "From the lands that stretch 3000 miles behind me, the pioneers of old gave up their safety, their comfort and sometimes their lives to build a new world here in the West . . . But the problems are not all solved and the battles are not all won, and we stand today on the edge of a new frontier."

Be careful not to allow your use of ellipses to alter the meaning of a passage. If you omit too much from a quotation you risk misrepresenting the original source.

Block Quotations

Block quotations should be used when the quotation you have chosen to include is too long to go into the body of your paragraph. When you use a block quotation in MLA, APA, or Chicago style, you should introduce the quotation with a sentence of your own that sets up the context for the quotation. You should also follow a block quotation with a sentence or more of your own that explains what you want your reader to understand about the quotation. You do not need to put quotation marks around the block quotation because the indentation shows readers that this is a quotation.

MLA Block Quotations

If you are using the MLA citation style you should use block quotations for any quotation that is more than four typed lines of prose or three lines of poetry. In the MLA style, block quotations should either be introduced with a sentence that ends with a colon or with punctuation that allows you to connect the quotation with the rest of your sentence. The quotation should be indented one inch from the left margin. You do not need to use quotation marks around the quotation. The citation (name and/or page number if this information does not appear in the body of the paper) comes after the final punctuation in the quotation. No additional punctuation follows.

Examples

Block quotation introduced by a sentence ending with a colon

> The author investigated the different tours that Harvard students offer visitors and described her experience with Crimson Key in an article for Harvard Magazine:
>
>> At no point in our official travels did anyone scream, which I suppose I should have expected. Crimson Key focuses, above all, on accuracy. The training handbook for the guides clarifies confusing details and corrects popular myths. For instance, one rule states, "The Polaroid Story is FALSE" (referring to the belief that the Science Center was designed to look like a Polaroid camera). "We have been explicitly asked not to tell this story. DO NOT MENTION IT." (Lasky)

Block quotation introduced by sentence that continues into the quotation

> The author pulls the curtain back on the official Harvard tour, explaining that
>
>> At no point in our official travels did anyone scream, which I suppose I should have expected. Crimson Key focuses, above all, on accuracy. The training handbook for the guides clarifies confusing details and corrects popular myths. For instance, one rule states, "The Polaroid Story is FALSE" (referring to the belief that the Science Center was designed to look like a Polaroid camera). "We have been explicitly asked not to tell this story. DO NOT MENTION IT." (Lasky)

APA Block Quotations

If you are using the APA citation style, you should use block quotations for any quotation that is 40 or more words, and you should indent the passage one-half inch from the left margin. Citations should come after the final punctuation of the quotation, and you should not include any punctuation after the citation.

Block quotation introduced by a sentence ending with a colon

> Margaret Klein Salamon describes an alternative to panic as a response to the climate emergency:
>
> > But aside from panic, individuals and groups can also respond to emergencies with reason, focus, dedication, and shocking success. Emergency mode is the mode of human psychological functioning that occurs when individuals or groups respond optimally to existential or moral emergencies. This mode of human functioning — markedly different from "normal" functioning — is characterized by an extreme focus of attention and resources on working productively to solve the emergency. (2017)

Block quotation introduced by sentence that continues into the quotation

> Margaret Klein Salamon explains that
>
> > aside from panic, individuals and groups can also respond to emergencies with reason, focus, dedication, and shocking success. Emergency mode is the mode of human psychological functioning that occurs when individuals or groups respond optimally to existential or moral emergencies. This mode of human functioning — markedly different from "normal" functioning — is characterized by an extreme focus of attention and resources on working productively to solve the emergency. (2017)

Chicago Block Quotations

If you are using the [Chicago citation style](#), you can decide whether to set off your block quotations or to run them into the body of your essay. If you do use block quotations in Chicago style, indent the quoted passage one-half inch from the left margin.

Don't float the quotation! Follow quotation with your analysis of the quotation.

When you quote from any source, you should always be showing your readers how you are using the quotation in your paper by introducing it with your own sentence and following it with your own discussion. Here's an example:

In her Expos essay about composer Glenn Gould, Lucy Caplan uses a block quotation from an article by music critic Andrew Porter. Caplan introduces her block quotation with a sentence of her own that provides the context for the quotation. This sentence ends with a colon.

> Andrew Porter, in a 1986 New Yorker concert review, compared two performances of a Beethoven cello sonata, one of which took place on period instruments and one on modern instruments:
>
>> Polite discussion followed [the performances], but it was apparent to anyone with ears that Beethoven's music rang out more bravely, more beautifully, and in better balance on the early instruments. In that direct comparison, the modernized cello sounded chocolate-coated and the little Yamaha piano loud and coarse. (142)

Caplan follows the block quotation with an entire paragraph of analysis in which she makes it clear to her readers how Porter's words add to her argument.

> According to Porter, "anyone with ears" could hear the values of performance practice. In this sense, the standards of performance practice were important not only for their historical significance, but for their aesthetic value as well. Whether such standards were achieved with the use of early instruments or through strict interpretation, Porter seems clear: historically faithful performance sounded superior to the "loud and coarse" version offered by modern instruments. Performances on early instruments had more aesthetic value – they simply sounded better. For advocates of performance practice, then, period instruments were themselves essential in producing authentic interpretations of music.

Single vs. Double Quotation Marks

For MLA, APA, and Chicago, you should use double quotation marks when you quote material from a source. If you are also quoting passages from that source that were quoted in the original source, use single quotation marks to indicate that the original source contained the quotation.

If you are using a block quote, then you should use double quotation marks around the quoted material and no quotation marks around the block quote.

Example

In her review of Joan Didion's book *Let Me Tell You What I Mean*, Maia Silber quotes several passages from Didion's book. If you were quoting from Silber's review and you included those passages, you would need to indicate that the quoted language comes from Didion's book rather than from Silber. In that case, you would use single quotation marks to indicate the quoted material:

> Silber writes that "Didion begins in her familiarly sardonic tone, observing that 'the wives had pretty dresses, and everyone liked Las Vegas.'"

Punctuating Quotations

In the system of punctuation used in the United States, periods and commas go inside quotation marks except when you use in-text citations. In those cases, periods and commas go outside the quotation marks after the parenthetical citation.

Example

> *Punctuation inside the quotation marks*
>
> In his review of the performance, Owen Torrey described the moment that the musician "leaned back as the noise towered above, the crowd moving behind him in a moment of pure sound."[1]
>
> _____
>
> [1] Owen Torrey, "Alex G Kept the Mystery Alive in Toronto," *Exclaim!*, November 6, 2022, https://exclaim.ca/music/article/alex_g_concert_review_toronto_history.

Because this sentence contains a footnote rather than an in-text citation, the period goes inside the quotation marks.

> *Punctuation outside the quotation marks*
>
> Batkin argues that "what is needed to shore up essential protections for low-income people is a principle behind wealth-based equal process" (2021, p.1553).

Because this sentence includes an in-text citation, the period goes outside the quotation marks.

Exclamation points and question marks go inside the quotation marks when they are part of the quotation, and outside when they are part of your own sentence that contains the quotation. With in-text citations, the question mark or exclamation point goes inside the quotation if it is part of that quotation, and a period follows the parenthetical citation.

Example

Inside

In an interview, Peter Singer expressed concern about whether he should have spent so much time writing about his family history, saying, "And I still have that feeling a little bit. Which of my works have done the most good?" (Gross).

Outside

But what are we to make of Harding's admonition to "write while you can no matter the sacrifice"?[1]

Colons and semicolons go outside quotation marks unless they are part of the quotation

Example

Sandel argues that "the problem is not the drift to mechanism but the drive to mastery"; in other words, he is more concerned about the implications of trying to control nature.

Because the semi-colon was introduced by the author of the sentence and not by Sandel, it appears outside of the quotation marks.

Using *Sic*

Use the Latin word *sic* to indicate that a grammatical or spelling error appears in the source that you are quoting and is not your error. *Sic* should be enclosed in brackets within the quotation. APA style and Chicago style require *sic* to be italicized; MLA style does not.

Example

In his letter to the editor, Harding admonishes his audience to "rite [sic] while you can, no matter the sacrifice" (23).