

## Using Sources Effectively

There are three ways that you can use a source in a paper.

- **Summary** condenses the main idea of a source in your own words.
- **Paraphrasing** uses the ideas from the source using your words, but the length is about the same as the original.
- **Quoting** taking the exact words of the author. (Quotes must be encompassed in “quotation marks.”)

### *How should you decide on a quotation for your paper?*

Quotations are used sparingly and should not be overused in your paper.

When to avoid quotes:

- Because they are long and will take up space
- Because you don't want to take the time to put the quote into your own words.

Here are some places when quotations would be necessary:

- When the author has stated the idea particularly well
- When demonstrating what someone else thinks
- When highlighting important ideas
- When it is valuable to add personality or originality to the argument
- When showing various opinions
- When illuminating a point of contention about the topic
- When showing the intricacy of a topic

Source:

Ruszkiewicz, John, Daniel Seward, Christy Friend, and Maxine Hariston, ed. *The Scott, Foresman Writer*. 5th ed. Boston: Longman, 2011.

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### *How should you incorporate sources into your paper?*

Any information you supply for a reader from an outside source should be properly introduced and should emphasize the significance of the material to the reader.

This can often be accomplished by supplying a signal phrase, which is often the author, the title of the work, and occasionally the author's credentials when necessary.

Ex. **In his article “Rock n Roll for Amateurs,” famous rock star John Smith says**, “It is important to have confidence in your own abilities as a guitarist” (3).

**Remember:**

**Avoid Plagiarism!**

**Use the Proper Format!**

## Researching and Using Sources



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## So you have to write a research paper. Where do you begin?

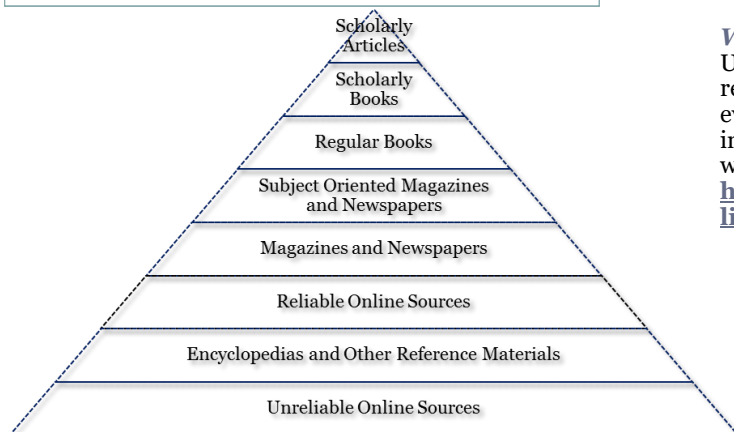
Writing a research paper is not just about trying to meet that pesky page requirement, but it is also about finding, evaluating, and incorporating all of the research.

If you have never done this before, the process can seem overwhelming and stressful. Here are some helpful tips to make this process go smoother.

### Finding Sources

*What types of sources work best for a research paper?*

Often this depends on the type of research paper that you are trying to write. The following pyramid may be helpful. Keep in mind, while the sources like scholarly articles at the top of the pyramid may be harder to find and are more difficult to understand, they will also offer the most reliable information, so try those first.



One of the most helpful resources we have on campus is the Library, in BLRC. However, if you can't get to the Library in person use the following link to access library resources:

<http://libguides.hccfl.edu/brlibrary>

The 125+ subscription databases and thousands of e-books require a log in. Your student ID number is your user name, and the last four of that number is your password.

To chat with an academic librarian visit:

<http://www.askalibrarian.org>

OR

Call 813-253-7941

### Finding Scholarly Articles

*A scholarly article can be recognized by the following characteristics:*

- Written by experts in the field
- Appears in a scholarly journal
- Has been peer reviewed
- Written at an advanced reading level
- Includes its sources in a Reference, Works Cited, or Bibliography page

#### *Where can you find a scholarly article?*

Use the library research databases of course! On the library website, go to subject databases> general and select Academic Search Complete (an excellent general database). You can select the "scholarly (peer reviewed) journals" box to limit to academic journals within the database.

#### *What about internet sites?*

Using an internet site can sometimes be helpful, but remember it may not always be reliable. Make sure you evaluate the site before using and check with your instructor to make sure it is okay. See the following website for more information:

<http://libguides.hccfl.edu/brlibrary/libraryresearch>

**Avoid Wikipedia unless you are using it as a starting point. Consider using Encyclopedia Britannica (library database) instead.**

## Evaluating Sources

While the type of information that you find on your subject may vary depending on what topic you choose, here are some helpful questions to ask when looking at sources:

- ⇒Is the information current for your topic?
- ⇒If it is a website, are the links functional?
- ⇒Do you feel comfortable using this source?
- ⇒Can you understand what you are reading?
- ⇒Does it relate to your topic?
- ⇒Is the author/publisher credible?
- ⇒Is the author qualified to write on this topic?
- ⇒Does the URL reveal anything about the author or source?
- ⇒Where is this information from?
- ⇒Is there verifiable evidence to support the author?
- ⇒Has it been peer reviewed?
- ⇒Does the author avoid careless spelling and grammar errors?
- ⇒What is the author's reason for writing this?
- ⇒Are the intentions of the author clear?
- ⇒Does this source avoid promoting a specific agenda?

Source:

Stark State Digital Library. "Tips for Evaluating Information." *Stark State College*. n.d. Web. 27 April 2011.

