

Fall 2008 // WSU // English 101 – Introductory Writing

Sections 4, 36, 38, 43

THE SOURCE FORMULA

There is a list of steps you must take every time you bring a source into your own writing. The general formula for incorporating sources is as follows:

1. Introduce the topic.
2. State your argument.
3. Introduce source including author and title of text at the very least, and sometimes establish credibility (job title, field of work/study, pertinent biographical information), and/or talk about the context in which the person was writing.

FYI: These additional items should be included when they are relevant to your argument. You ought to have a specific reason for including them, such as if you think your audience needs to know in order to understand the importance of their contribution to *your* work, or why their voice is significant to what *you* are discussing.

4. Summarize the overall work that you're drawing from (i.e. the article, book, or story).
5. Summarize the author's position on your topic or the specific piece of the topic you're currently working on.
6. Bring in a quote and/or paraphrase that works as evidence to support what you've claimed their position is. *Be sure to embed this within your own sentence.*
7. CITE the source! In both MLA and APA styles, if you take a quote or specific piece of information, you **MUST** cite the page number! Refer to the Maimon handbook, the MLA website, or the Purdue OWL *each and every time* you give an in-text or works cited/references/notes citation to make sure you are properly citing. If you do not cite, you are at risk for plagiarism. I will say it again: CITE YOUR SOURCES.
8. Explain how the material you've just brought in from your source supports, contends with, or complicates your argument. You may also want to connect it to past sources' ideas. No matter what, be explicit about what you're intending to do with this information and how you want your reader to consider it in terms of your argument.

All of the above can be done in 2-5 sentences, and will make your paper longer and clearer.

Here's what you need to do when working with sources:

- Topic
- Argument
- Introduction of source
- Summary of source
- Summary of author's position
- Quote or paraphrase
- Citation
- Explanation