

Using Sources in Academic Writing

Motivations for using sources:

1. To support a point you are trying to make
2. To provide a jumping-off point for a unique idea of your own
3. To frame or ground a discussion in theory
4. To provide an opposing or alternative perspective

In each case, you need to:

1. Explain *how* the source supports your point, and cite specific data or evidence
2. Discuss the uses and limits of the source, and explain how your own ideas fill in any remaining gaps
3. Discuss and explain the theoretical lens, and use it to analyze a specific element of your topic
4. Summarize the opposing perspective, and explain why your perspective is better

Why is this important?

- In academic writing, support and documentation is essential. It's what differentiates an argument from mere opinion.
- Academic writing is the basis of *disciplinary communities*. It's the forum in which they communicate with one another. You should strive to put your own ideas *in conversation* with the ideas of other scholars in your field.
- Other scholars might want to repeat your research or check your sources. Documentation provides them with a roadmap for this work.

Writing a Quote Sandwich:

Whenever you incorporate quoted material into your own writing, it's important to integrate that material into your own original prose. The quote sandwich offers a method for doing this!

Top "slice of bread" → *Explain why you are using this source and contextualize the quote you've selected.*

Filling of sandwich → *Provide a direct quotation with correct citation*

Bottom "slice of bread" → *Explain the meaning of the quote and provide a detailed discussion of how it relates to your own project.*