

Research Paper Source Entries

Most research papers require that you discuss and integrate several sources in the development of your argument. Keeping track of all this information can be a difficult task! One method that might make your work easier is to create a source entry for each source you intend to use.

The entries provide an organized approach to:

- Formatting a citation for your works cited page (or list of references).
- Taking notes on the information and concepts in each source.
- Pulling out quotations you might use in your paper.
- Organizing your own ideas.
- Keeping track of where your information is coming from.
- Reflecting on how each source will support your thesis and add to your argument.

Think of how much easier the writing process can be with a set of source entries to work from! You may find that they are well worth your time in the early stages of the research process.

The following is a suggested format for a source entry:

1. Create a full citation for the source, using the proper format for the documentation style you are required to use. See our links for each documentation style (APA, MLA, and Chicago, etc.) on the Writing Resources page.
2. In paragraph or note form, summarize the *relevant* information the source is providing you with. Highlight the important ideas by considering questions such as the following: What is this author's main point? What arguments does he/she use? What evidence does he/she provide?
3. Pull out any direct quotes you think might use for your paper. Be sure to use quotation marks and page notations—this will make your later work on in-text citations much easier.
4. Write a few sentences to explain to yourself how this source is going to add to your paper. What unique contribution does this source make to your topic? How does it support your initial thesis? If it doesn't, is it leading you to a different thesis? How does this source relate to other sources you may have looked at?