

USING SOURCES EFFECTIVELY

1. Material from secondary sources should be used to help you support and develop your own ideas—look for insightful comments from other writers that you can “borrow” and use in your own paper, but be careful not to crowd yourself out of your own paper by allowing material from the sources to take over. The paper is your own, and the thesis statement and topic sentences should be yours. However, the sources should help you develop and support your ideas more fully than you could do without the use of those sources.
2. Do not use material from a secondary source if it simply retells something that happens in the play, poem, story or other primary source you are analyzing or states something that is obvious from the primary source itself.
3. Give the author’s name and page number(s) when you quote, paraphrase, or summarize material from a source. If no author is given for your source, use the title of the source or the first few words of a long title.
4. Use short, well-integrated quotes. Avoid long quotes.
5. Clearly distinguish your ideas from those in your sources to avoid plagiarism.
6. Never take a quote out of context. In other words, do not change an author’s meaning as you quote his or her words in your essay. You are “borrowing” the writer’s words, so you need to make sure they are accurate and that they convey the same meaning that the writer intended.
7. Always copy quotes accurately—indicate any changes to quotes with brackets ([]) or ellipses (. . .). Use both sparingly.
8. Words copied from a source always must be put into quotation marks.
9. Include an additional “Works Cited” page listing all works cited in the essay. The “Works Cited” should begin on a new page.
10. You do not need to include the title of the source in your own sentence when you cite the source in your essay—this information will appear on your “Works Cited” page. However, if you use material from a source without an author named, the title will have to appear in parentheses at the end of your sentence.
11. Your main source of support should be the primary source itself (the play, story, poem, or other text that is the subject of your paper).
12. Sources should be used to support and develop your own ideas—in general, no more than 20% of your paper should be composed of material from secondary sources.
13. Always evaluate sources carefully for credibility. Do not use material from a source if you cannot determine the credibility of the source.