

Academic Writing Guide: Integrating Sources

Academic writing needs to be supported with evidence, which can be incorporated into your own writing through direct quotations, paraphrased ideas, summaries, statistics, graphs, or other external sources. **Remember, sources cannot do the work for you. You must use your sources to support your own ideas.** You also need to clearly show how ideas relate to each other and contribute to the central point you are making. This is what is meant by providing a context for your sources. Remember that good paragraphs should be unified, coherent, and well developed. Keep these points in mind as you integrate your sources.

Tips for Integrating a Source

- Use direct quotations when original words are more effective or when you need exact wording for accuracy.
- Provide some background information or a context for the quotation.
- Follow information from a source with an explanation that interprets the information according to your argument (as expressed in your topic sentence and thesis statement).
- Use a lead-in phrase to introduce a quote, paraphrase, or summary.
- Only cite words that help develop an idea or support a point.
- Use ellipses (...) to eliminate unnecessary words or sentences from original source & square brackets ([]) to add words to maintain grammatical sense.
 - **Example:**
 - The International Center for Academic Integrity (ICAI) "defines academic integrity as a commitment to [the values of] ... honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, and courage" (4).
- Provide the author's title, or affiliation, and full name the first time you cite a source to establish the authority of your source and add support to the claim.
 - **Examples:**
 - Dr. Arthur W. Foshay asserts that...
 - Health and Social Science Researchers Dahl et al. claim...
- Introduce the articles, book, or resources you're using throughout your paper by providing their titles. Doing so will help form the relevance between the resources and your argument.
 - **Examples:**
 - In *The Fundamental Values of Academic Integrity*, ...
 - The article, "Why Academic Integrity is Important to Teaching and Learning," explains...
- In subsequent citations, only mention the last (family) name of the author.

- **Examples:**
 - Lee also argues that...
 - Eaton’s research means that...

Make Sure it Makes Sense

Sometimes when you are using a partial quote it is necessary to insert a word or explanatory phrase to avoid quoting out of context, or to maintain correct grammar in your text. Use **SQUARE BRACKETS []** when you need to insert your own comment into quoted material to clarify an idea or term.

- **Example:**
 - **Original source:** “He contends that subsumed within this broad statement is the idea that education develops human intellect, serves social needs, contributes to the economy, creates an effective workforce, prepares the young for careers or jobs and promotes political and social ideologies” (Foshay qtd. in Baker-Gardner).
 - **Student’s Example:** Dr. Arthur W. Foshay, who was the president of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development in America, argues that “education [related to academic integrity] develops human intellect, serves social needs, contributes to the economy, creates an effective workforce, prepares the young for careers or jobs and promotes political and social ideologies” (qtd. in Baker-Gardner).

Introducing a Summary or Paraphrase

Lead-in phrases are used to indicate that an idea belongs to someone else; they also provide information, explain a concept, support a claim, or refute an argument.

- **Examples:**
 - As Eaton et al. have noted, “...”
 - Sharpe answered the objections with the following analysis: “...”
 - Lee pointed out that “...”

The lead-in phrase in the following example helps link the entire paraphrase or summary to the main argument. By omitting the lead-in phrase at the beginning, readers may assume that only the sentence at the end is being cited.

EXAMPLE: Unsuccessful Integration of a Quote

Students will develop both problem-solving and critical-thinking skills by writing their own exams and effectively using sources to support their own argument. "Scientific essay writing has been recognized as a valuable tool for learning, development of critical thinking, and assessment among undergraduate nursing students" (Lavelle et al. qtd. in Dahl et al.).

EXAMPLE: Successful Integration of a Quote

Students will develop both problem-solving and critical-thinking skills by writing their own exams and effectively using sources to support their own argument. According to Lavelle et al.'s research on undergraduate nursing students, they have found that essay writing “has been recognized as a valuable tool for learning, [and] development of critical thinking” (qtd. in Dahl et al.). Academic essays, whether research-based or persuasive, all require students to develop their own thoughts while utilizing the skills and knowledge that they have learned.

Remarks

The second example is better because the lead-in phrase, “According to ...” helps blend the quotation better with the author’s words. It also includes the name of the researchers and a brief introduction of what the research was on, which lends some extra credibility to what the student writer is saying. Furthermore, the quote is followed by a commentary that helps interpret it and shows its significance. Since this is a quote from an e-book without page numbers, page numbers were not used for the in-text citations.

The first example was unsuccessfully integrated because the quotation is a standalone sentence; it does not have any introduction to show where it’s from, why it’s important to the essay, who wrote the article the quote is from, and more.

Integrating Statistics and Other Facts

You do not need to use a lead-in phrase to introduce numerical information or statistics, as it is generally assumed that the citation refers to the numerical facts.

Across four universities in Canada (University of Calgary, University of Guelph, University of Waterloo, and University of Manitoba), roughly 40% of the faculty believe that academic integrity has been implemented as a key value at their campuses (Eaton et al. 48).

For additional help, please make an appointment with a Writing & Learning Centre Humanities specialist at: <https://alexander.mywconline.com/>

Works Cited

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