

Integrating and Synthesizing Sources

- ✦ Rule of thumb: All sources used **MUST** be cited
- ✦ Sources are not meant to substitute your ideas but to support your ideas
- ✦ Thus, a reader should hear your voice in the essay, not the voice of sources
- ✦ To ensure the voice in the essay is actually your voice, you need to have a clear thesis that states your stand/position in the issue being addressed. Your thesis should be stated in an argumentative tone.
- ✦ Also, the reasons you provide to support your thesis should be your own, or if gotten from a source should be refashioned to fit your argument, and should be articulated using your voice. You should not be shy to assert your views concerning the issue under discussion, but always ensure you use a tone that is appropriate for your intended audience
- ✦ The topic sentences should, therefore, represent your ideas-reasons that you have to support your thesis
- ✦ Use sources to support/back-up your ideas. This can be done by using sources to reinforce or amplify your idea, or as an example to clarify or illustrate a point. Sources can also be used to generate ideas (support for your thesis or counterarguments).
- ✦ As you use sources, you need to make sure the sources you use are relevant to your argument. Thus, avoid forcing in sources where they don't fit
- ✦ Choose credible sources, more so when it comes to Internet sources or magazines
- ✦ Sources can be used in the form of direct quotes, paraphrases, or summaries. Although many people prefer using quotes, it is easier to maintain your voice if you used paraphrases. Thus, quote directly only when it is necessary.
- ✦ Also, in order to maintain your voice in the essay, be sure to explain the sources you use. That is, show how the source builds or relates with your idea.
- ✦ Where several sources are used to support one idea, always establish the connection between these sources. Show the relationship between the sources you have used to support an idea. Do they agree with each other/one another, do they disagree, does one further an idea made by the other, and overall, how the sources relate to your argument. This is what **synthesis** is all about.
- ✦ Always frame your sources appropriately. This is done by using appropriate metadiscourse. It is also good to mention the title of the book, article etc being cited, and credentials of an author for this adds credibility to the source. Consider this example: According to Sherry Turkle, a professor of the Sociology of Science at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the author of *Cyberspace and Identity*...
- ✦ Always remember to follow stipulated citation conventions in the text and the Works Cited page, in our case MLA

Paragraph Structure

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Topic Sentence (your own idea)❖ Explain/develop the idea (in your own words)❖ Bring in the first source (remember to introduce the source)❖ Explain/interpret the source (in light of your argument)❖ Bring in second source (as you introduce this source connect/synthesize it with the first)❖ Interpret the second source❖ Wrap up the paragraph (tie together your argument in this paragraph and the sources you have used) |
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