

Applying Evidence

by Sophia



WHAT'S COVERED

This tutorial covers applying evidence in essays—how to determine what kind of evidence to use and when to use it, how integrate quotations and evidence into sentences, and how and why to cite. The specific areas of focus include:

1. Evidence in Writing
2. Ways of Incorporating Evidence
 - 2a. Summarizing
 - 2b. Paraphrasing
 - 2c. Quoting
3. Rules for Integrating Evidence
4. Citing Your Sources
 - 4a. Where to Cite
 - 4b. Citations in Practice

1. Evidence in Writing

Recall that **evidence** is facts and details that support an argument. When you're writing an essay, particularly an argumentative essay, each paragraph should make one main point. As you're working to prove that point, you want to ask yourself what your readers need to know in order to believe that point.

Maybe they'll need hard statistics from an expert; findings from an experiment, or maybe they'll need some historical context.

The kind of evidence you use will depend on:

- What your main point is
- What your authorial tone is
- What rhetorical appeals you're making

Depending on what each paragraph needs, you can direct your research and choose your type of evidence accordingly.



TERM TO KNOW

Evidence

Facts and details that support an argument.

2. Ways of Incorporating Evidence

Once you've found your evidence, you need to decide how to use it.

There are three ways that you can present evidence:

- Summarizing
- Paraphrasing
- Quoting

2a. Summarizing

Summarizing means giving a brief overview of the main points or ideas of a piece of writing without relying on specific details or language. This would mean writing something very general about a whole piece of text.

You could summarize the entire US National Anthem by saying something like the following:

The U.S. National Anthem, "The Star Spangled Banner," is a song describing the fate of a flag during a major military battle.

Notice that by summarizing, you're giving a general overview of the whole piece without using any details or specifics.



TERM TO KNOW

Summarizing

Giving a brief overview of the main points or ideas of a piece of writing without relying on specific details or language.

2b. Paraphrasing

Paraphrasing means restating a passage in your own words, keeping the author's original intent and meaning.

This would mean rewriting something that a piece of writing has already said using different words entirely, usually to increase clarity. Paraphrases are therefore only of specific lines or sentences, and they must keep the author's original meaning intact.

A way of paraphrasing the national anthem might be reading the lines in quotation marks and then writing the following:

*"And the rockets' red glare, the bombs bursting in air
Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there."*

The song describes the red light made from exploding rockets and bombs, which illuminated the darkness to show that the flag was still flying.



TERM TO KNOW

Paraphrasing

Restating a passage in your own words, keeping the author's original intent and meaning.

2c. Quoting

Quoting is repeating the exact words of a piece of writing using quotation marks surrounding the quote.

This would mean writing the exact words from a piece of writing and enclosing those words in quotation marks so that it's clear which words are yours and which come from somewhere else.

Quoting might look like this:

The song describes "the rockets' red glare [and] the bombs bursting in air" that illuminated the night to show "that [the] flag was still there."



TERM TO KNOW

Quoting

Repeating the exact words of a piece of writing, using quotation marks surrounding the quote.

3. Rules for Integrating Evidence

When integrating evidence into your sentences clearly, there are some rules for using quotations in particular that are important to know.

However, these rules can still apply if you're summarizing and paraphrasing as well:

- Quotation marks always go before and after a quotation.
- You can never change the author's original meaning by removing important context or mischaracterizing the main point.

- You can quote a whole sentence or part of a sentence, and you don't need to show that with ellipses (three little dots) on the outside.
- You can use ellipses on the inside of a quotation to replace a portion of the quotation that you don't want to include, as long as you don't change the meaning.
- You can use brackets to enclose your own words within the quotation, either to add pertinent information or to allow the author's phrasing to fit into your grammatical structure better, as long as you don't change the meaning.
- You must always cite your source by giving credit to the original author.

4. Citing Your Sources

A **citation** is an indication that words, ideas, or facts came from another source. This means simply giving credit where it's due by making sure that you include the author's name or the title of the original text among other details in your essay.

Specifically, **citation format** is the way academics, journalists, etc., choose to identify their sources. Citation formats include Modern Language Association (MLA), Associated Press (AP), Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS), and more.

Each of these citation formats is different and asks for slightly different information in a slightly different organizational structure, so it's more important to understand the theory behind when and where to include citations than it is to memorize all of these formats.

For guidance on the specifics about each of these citation formats, the website Purdue OWL and the book *Rules for Writers* are great tools. The examples in this tutorial will be given in AP format.



TERMS TO KNOW

Citation

An indication that words, ideas, or facts come from another source.

Citation Format

The way academics, journalists, etc., choose to identify their sources. Citation formats include MLA, AP, Chicago, and more.

4a. Where to Cite

In an essay, you need to cite in two places:

- In a reference page
- Inside the text

Reference pages are also called bibliographies or works cited pages. They come at the end of an essay, and they include all of the relevant information about where you can find each book, article, movie, etc. that you're

citing, usually in alphabetical order by the author's last name.

The goal of a reference page is to provide enough information that readers can find that book if they want to read it in full.

In-text citations come inside your essay after each paraphrase, summary, or quotation. They contain just a small amount of information, usually the author's last name, and—depending on whether you're quoting or paraphrasing—the page number where you got that quotation.

The goal of an in-text citation is to provide enough information that readers can look up that text in your reference page to find all the details they need.

4b. Citations in Practice

The most important thing to remember about citation is that it is necessary to always give credit where credit is due. If you are using ideas, words, or images that someone else came up with, you need to cite that person.

Lack of appropriate citation is called plagiarism, and it can have real consequences, both legally and academically.

Each citation format requires slightly different information in a slightly different organization, so it's important to always refer to the unique rules of each form. Remember again that Purdue OWL is a great resource for checking out each format.

For in-text citations in AP style, you need:

- The author's last name
- The year the text was published
- The number of the page where the quotation can be found

With an electronic source, you're going to need the name of the author and the year that the website was made or last updated. Because this is an electronic source, it might not have page numbers. You can instead count the paragraphs and include that number. You put all this information in parentheses, and separate each piece of information with a comma.

As the experts say, "building boats requires time, patience, and steady hands" (Chatwick, 2013, para. 7).



HINT

Note that if the citation is at the end of the sentence, the parenthetical citation comes after the right quote mark, and the period comes after the right parenthesis. There is no period at the end of the quotation. You may also integrate some citation information, like the author's name, into the sentence. If you do, you do not need to repeat it inside the parenthesis.

As Chatwick (2013, para. 7) says "building boats requires time, patience, and steady hands.



Note that when the quotation is at the end of a sentence without the citation, the period goes inside the quote mark.

For the reference page in AP style, you need:

- The author's full name
- The date of the source's publication
- The title of the source
- The full web address, if applicable

You create a reference page that comes after your essay by putting in the author's full last name, then a comma, and then the initial of the author's first name. You put a period after this information. Then in parentheses, you put the date, again followed by another period.

Then, using italics, you put in the title of the source and another period. Finally, you write "retrieved from" and enter the full web address. Notice that there's no period at the end of the citation if a web address is provided.

References

Chatwick, A. (2013). How to build boats. Retrieved from <http://howtobuildboats.com>

If you have any other citations, they will need to be added in alphabetical order, like this:

References

Chatwick, A. (2013). How to build boats. Retrieved from <http://howtobuildboats.com>

Grant, Z. (2009). A beginner's guide to the art and style of building boats. *The International Journal of Boat Crafts*, 3. Retrieved from <http://boatcraft.journal.org/123/>

Take a closer look at the second citation because it's a little different from the first one. This second citation is for an online periodical, which is a different kind of source. You can see that the title of the article isn't in italics because there's another title in italics—the title of the journal that the article comes from. There's also a volume number for the journal.

You probably also noticed that this second citation is long enough that it takes up more than one line in this document. In a reference page, you need to use what's called a hanging indent, which indents any line after the first.

Each different kind of source also needs slightly different information, so again, always refer to your style guide for help.



SUMMARY

In this tutorial, you learned that **evidence in writing** is facts and details that support an argument, and can be either personal or researched. There are three **ways of incorporating evidence** in your writing: **Summarizing** is when you give a brief overview of the main points or ideas of a piece of writing without relying on specific details or language; **paraphrasing** is when you restate a passage in your own words, keeping the author's original intent and meaning; **quoting** is when you repeat the exact words of a piece of writing, using quotation marks surrounding the quote.

You also learned that some important **rules for integrating evidence** are that quotation marks always go before and after a quotation, you can never change the author's original meaning by removing important context or mischaracterizing the main point, you can quote a whole sentence or part of a sentence, you can use ellipses and brackets if needed as long as you don't change the meaning, and you must always cite your source.

Finally, you learned the importance of **citing your sources**. When using someone else's ideas, you must always give credit where credit is due; plagiarism has serious legal and academic consequences. In terms of **where to cite** your sources, you will need both in-text citations and a reference page. While there are many different citation formats, this tutorial looked at **AP citations in practice**. Different sources can require different information in their citations, so always consult your style guide if you're unsure.

Good luck!

Source: This tutorial was authored by Martina Shabram for Sophia Learning. Please see our [Terms of Use](#).



TERMS TO KNOW

Citation

An indication that words, ideas, or facts come from another source.

Citation Format

The way academics, journalists, etc., choose to identify their sources. Citation formats include MLA, APA, Chicago, and more.

Evidence

Facts and details that support an argument.

Paraphrasing

Restating a passage in your own words, keeping the author's original intent and meaning.

Quoting

Repeating the exact words of a piece of writing, using quotation marks surrounding the quote.

Summarizing

Giving a brief overview of the main points or ideas of a piece of writing without relying on specific details or language.