

Craft of Research (CoR): Chapter 6 – Engaging Sources

The 10 **salient sentence strings** presented below are lifted from the chapter without modification. They are presented in order of appearance in the chapter.

Ten Salient Sentence Strings

1. Historians and literary critics typically comb primary sources for passages they can use as evidence. Other researchers, however, don't use primary sources at all: depending on their fields, they might analyze soil samples in a lab, or conduct a survey, or build a computer model. But every field has its body of secondary sources, sometimes called its *literature*, that document the field's conversation. (Quote – top of page 85).
2. First things first: once you decide a source is worth reading, record all of its bibliographical information. Do this before you do anything else: it only takes a moment, and we promise that no habit will serve you better for the rest of your career. (Quote – top of page 86).
3. If you scan or photocopy a passage from a book, also scan or photocopy its title page and the bibliographic information on the reverse side. Then add the library call number if you know it. You won't need to include the call number when you cite the source, but knowing it will allow you to find the source again easily if you need it. (Quote – middle of page 87).
4. First, read generously. Pay attention to what sparks your interest. Reread passages that puzzle or confuse you. Don't look for disagreements right away, but read in ways that help the source make sense. Otherwise, you'll be tempted to emphasize its weaknesses if it presents an argument that rivals yours. (Quote – top of page 88).
5. If you believe what a source claims, try to extend that claim: What new cases might it cover? What new insights can it provide? Is there confirming evidence the source hasn't considered? (Quote – bottom of page 89).
6. If you read actively, you'll inevitably find yourself disagreeing with your sources. Don't brush those disagreements aside, because they often point to new research problems. (Quote – bottom of page 90).
7. When you acknowledge the views of others, you show that you not only know those views, but have carefully considered and can confidently respond to them. Experienced researchers also use those competing views to improve their own. You can't really understand what you think until you understand why a rational person might think differently. (Quote – bottom of page 92).

8. You can use secondary sources in another way as well: as models of reasoning and analysis. If you have never made an argument like the one you plan to, you might follow the pattern of other arguments that you find in your secondary sources. You can't use specific ideas (that would be plagiarism), but you do not plagiarize a source when you borrow its ways of arguing or of analyzing data. (Quote – top of page 93).
9. Most important: what approach best suits your own ways of writing, thinking, and working? As you grow as a writer and researcher, you will develop ways of working that are particular to you. Others may find them cumbersome or confusing or even incomprehensible. No matter. Remember that your goal is not to create an elaborate set of notes but to research and write capably and intelligently. (Quote – bottom of page 97).
10. So when taking notes, you must choose as you go whether to quote, paraphrase, or summarize. In general, researchers in the humanities quote most often; social and natural scientists usually paraphrase and summarize. But every choice depends on how you plan to use your source. (Quote – middle of page 98).