Integrating Sources
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When writing a college-level paper, you will often be required to reference sources in order to support the main point/purpose of a paper. In order for sources to effectively provide support, you will need to contextualize every textual reference you use and explain why they’re relevant to your paper’s overarching purpose. This might look different depending on whether you’re paraphrasing or directly quoting a source, but you will need to explain the purpose of every reference you make.

Paraphrasing
When paraphrasing a source, it can be helpful to write down what you want to say in drafts. Read your source material, then paraphrase that information. Then give yourself some time to think about this information and paraphrase your original paraphrase. This will help you put the information into your own words, and it will help you avoid patchwork plagiarism.

Questions to ask yourself to contextualize your textual reference:

1. What is your main concept/point for this paragraph?
2. How does this information support the purpose of your paper?
3. What information does your reader need in order to fully understand that purpose?

These questions are helpful when you’re blending information into your own words to avoid direct quotes, but these questions can also keep you on the right track when you decide to use a direct quote.

Quoting Sources
To make sure you’re integrating sources effectively, try using what some call a “quote sandwich” or “quote trilogy.” These have three parts:

1. Introduce the quote.
   a. Discuss the author’s credibility.
   b. Set up the context; transition into the idea expressed in the quote.
2. Add in the quote.
   a. Be sure to cite it!
3. Explain the quote.
   a. Why is this quote relevant?
      i. How does this quote support the point of this paragraph?
      ii. How does this quote relate to the main point of your paper?

Even if the reason you quote a source is clear to you, you should always explain the relevance of the information you add. You know what message you’re trying to get across, but it will not always be clear to your reader. Don’t assume your reader will be able to see the connections you’re trying to make.