

Understanding Why Writers Use What *Others* Say

One Page Reference Guide

Some writers of expository texts are interested in what *others* say. Writers commonly incorporate and discuss the beliefs, viewpoints, and ideas of other writers (or speakers). As readers, we should learn to identify places in the texts where writers cite what individuals (and groups) say and analyze why writers do this type of work.

Writers will use what *others* say in order to...

- Support a claim;
- Corroborate a story or idea;
- Provide first hand accounts;
- Illustrate an idea being presented;
- Provide information about an event or experience;
- Summarize a view held by an individual or collective group;
- Establish an accepted view or belief;
- Identify prominent voices in the discussion;
- Challenge or criticize what someone has said;
- Offer opposing viewpoints;
- Demonstrate awareness of opposing groups;
- Identify errors in someone's reasoning or logic;
- Demonstrate the breadth of research that went into writing the text;
- Align with a particular way of thinking;
- Identify a space for further research;
- Establish themselves in a particular discourse community;
- Acknowledge someone for saying or doing something;
- *and other reasons that are not listed here.*

Analyzing How Writers Use What *Others* Say

Student Activity 1

The chart below will help you analyze how writers use source material—in this case—what *others* say, in their own writing. The term “cited author” refers to the individual or group that is being cited in the text. A group may be defined as two or more authors; it can also mean an organization or institution.

Title of text: _____ Author: _____

What is the name of the
cited author?

What do we (the readers) learn about the cited author?

Directly quote or paraphrase what the cited author says.

Why did the writer choose to use this individual (or group)?	How is the writer using what has been said?

Analyzing How Writers Use What *Others* Say

Student Activity 2

Title of Text: _____ Author: _____

On the lines below, record a passage from the text where the writer cites what someone has said. If the passage will not fit, consider paraphrasing what has been said.

First passage:

What is the name of the cited individual (or group)? Who is this?	Why did the writer choose to use this individual (or group)?

Second passage:

What is the name of the cited individual (or group)? Who is this?	Why did the writer choose to use this individual (or group)?