

# English 197: Writing Link with Comparative Literature 272

## Using and Documenting Sources

### Why Use Sources?

Academic essays in the humanities typically require you to integrate ideas presented in course readings, films and lectures as you develop your own argument. Referencing sources:

- Demonstrates engagement with the texts you've read or lectures you've attended,
- Helps situate your paper within a discipline, genre or context,
- Adds authority to your argument, and
- Provides evidence for your argument.

You may incorporate the work of other scholars into your essays by directly quoting, paraphrasing or summarizing their words. **Quote** when exact wording is necessary to develop your argument, when the name of the author lends credibility to your point, or when you wish to highlight the author's opinion or phrasing. Otherwise, **paraphrase**, casting specific ideas from the source in your own words. When you discuss an author's main argument or a large portion of his or her article, **summarize** ideas. Remember that quotation, paraphrase and summary all require documentation.

When evaluating whether to include a particular source in your paper, consider the following questions:

- Does it help you develop your argument?
- If you want to use a direct quotation, does the quote fit where you're planning to include it? Will it flow smoothly into your paper, or will you need to alter word form, add to or omit part of the quotation?
- How will you analyze the material you incorporate? What connection will you have to make between your argument and ideas expressed in the source?

### Integrating Sources

Using sources in your writing involves taking material out of one context—the author's argument—and putting it into another, your argument. Consequently, you should incorporate sources in a way that indicates the connection between the source and your analysis. The reader should understand *why* and *how* you're drawing upon other authors' work. Whether you quote, paraphrase or summarize, an effective way to integrate sources is to:

- 1) Introduce the source,
- 2) Provide a quotation, paraphrase or summary, and
- 3) Connect the source's ideas to your analysis.

### Step One: Introducing the Source

There are many different methods for introducing quoted, paraphrased or summarized material into your paper. Generally, one uses an **identifying tag** such as:

- "In her analysis of contemporary horror films, Modleski finds . . ."
- "Halberstam notes that . . ."
- "Writing on the horror genre's monsters, Carroll explains . . ."

The following verbs will help you introduce source material: acknowledges, admits, affirms, argues, asserts, believes, comments, claims, concludes, concurs, contends, critiques, defines, describes,

discusses, explains, finds, illustrates, implies, indicates, insists, lists, notes, observes, outlines, posits, predicts, proposes, recognizes, recounts, reports, reviews, speculates, states, suggests, summarizes, warns.

These verbs have different meanings and connotations. Use the introductory word that best fits the material you're incorporating (Is the author making an argument? Identifying a trend in the genre? Discussing a film's mise-en-scene?). Also note that you can and should vary the placement of the identifying tag when you introduce source material.

Examples:

- **Quotation:** Modleski **asserts** that contemporary horror films “are engaged in an unprecedented assault on all that bourgeois culture is supposed to cherish—like the ideological apparatuses of the family and the school” (694).
- **Paraphrase:** Horror films, **in Noell Carroll's view**, either fuse psychologically conflicting impulses into a single monster or divide them among two or more characters separated in space and/or time (226).
- **Summary:** The slasher film features a distinct type of killer, setting, weapons, victims, and shock effects, **according to Carol Clover**.

### **Step Two: The Source**

While paraphrased or summarized source material will reflect your prose style, using quotations presents a challenge. When you quote, it's important to integrate the other author's words smoothly and grammatically into your writing. To do so, you may have to slightly alter or omit some of the language. You may also have to add content to clarify the author's references to other parts of his or her argument (for example, if the quote includes words like “this problem,” you must identify what the problem is).

Examples:

- Tania Modleski critiques theorists who see mass cultural forms like film as supporting dominant ideologies. Low-culture horror films, Modleski argues, “are engaged in an unprecedented assault on all that bourgeois culture is supposed to cherish . . .” (694).
- Noel Carroll parallels the horror film to the nightmare, whose imagery “enunciate[s] both a wish and its inhibition”; therefore, horror monsters, like nightmare images, are “simultaneously attractive and repellent” (224).

### **Step Three: Connecting the Source to Your Argument**

After you introduce and quote, paraphrase or summarize the source, link the ideas expressed in the source to your argument. Doing so may involve applying an author's point about the horror genre to a specific film or expanding upon his or her discussion of the film you're analyzing. You may also find yourself disagreeing with the source and examining a shot, scene, or pattern to support your alternative interpretation.

Example:

- Not only does Hannibal come from inside society, but he is in other characters as well. He is literally inside the skin of the policeman whose face he borrows. Furthermore, Hannibal uses his knowledge of psychology to get inside Starling's head. As Judith Halberstam observes, Lecter “extracts [each piece of Starling's past] surgically and then confronts her with it” (262). He has possession of her thoughts and memories and is a spectator of her intensely private past experiences. During one of their interview scenes, Hannibal is reflected in the glass of his cell so that he actually appears right beside Starling. There is no longer any distance between the two. Hannibal is truly inside Starling.

## Documenting Sources

The Modern Language Association (MLA) establishes parameters for proper documentation of sources for writing in the humanities. It is your task as a writer to use these rules correctly, both to avoid plagiarism and to allow the reader to investigate the validity of your sources. You should cite—identifying the author or title of the work you’re using—when you:

- Quote directly,
- Paraphrase,
- Summarize
- Incorporate ideas from an author that are not common knowledge
- Use statistics

MLA citation style consists of two parts: a page or author/page reference that appears in parentheses at the end of the sentence in which you use source material, and a Works Cited page. (Note that you will not be able to include a page number for a non-print source or non-paginated electronic works.) The important element to use is the last name of the author or, in the case of film, the title, because it tells the reader how to find the citation alphabetically in the Works Cited page, which gives full publication information at the end of your essay.

Examples:

- Quotation  
Contrasting sharply to her oversexed friends’ oblivious diversions, Laurie in Halloween personifies the Final Girl. Despite openly not wanting to be, Laurie ends up a volunteer social outcast as she rejects the other girls’ attempts to find her a companion. She is the Final Girl as described by Clover: “unattached and lonely, yet declin[ing] male attention” (243).  
  
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- Paraphrase  
Judith Halberstam remarks that Clarice Starling’s authority slips during her “quid pro quo” discussions with Hannibal Lecter in *The Silence of the Lambs* (259).  
  
Carrie’s deployment of her powers during the prom scene reflects viewers’ repressed desire to enact violent revenge, as Leah Staub notes.
- Summary  
Jennifer Bean observes that *Videodrome*, with its dissolution of the boundary between reality and representation or hallucination, underscores the impossibility of securing meaning.

## Guidelines for the Works Cited List

### Course Packet Article

Author (last name, first name). “Article Title.” *Packet Title*. Ed. Editor’s Name. City: Publisher, Year. Pages.

Clover, Carol. “Her Body, Himself: Gender in the Slasher Film.” *Comparative Literature 272 Course Packet*. Ed. Jennifer Bean. Seattle: RAMS Copy Center, 2008. 200-230.

### **Films on DVD or Video**

*Title*. Director. Performers. Original release year. Format. Studio or distributor, DVD or Video Release Year.

*Halloween*. Dir. John Carpenter. Perf. Donald Pleasence, Jamie Lee Curtis. 1978. DVD. Anchor Bay Entertainment, 1997.

### **In-Class Lectures**

Speaker's name. "Title of the lecture" (if known). Course. Institution, Location. Date.

Bean, Jennifer. "'See You in Pittsburgh': *Videodrome* and the Death of Meaning." Comparative Literature 272. University of Washington, Seattle, WA. 18 October 2008.

### **Postings**

Author (if given). "Title of document" (as given in subject line). Online posting. Date. Name of forum (if known). Access date <URL>.

Student, A. "Response to Questions for *The Silence of the Lambs*." Online posting. 20 Nov. 2008. English 197 Discussion Forum. Retrieved 25 Nov. 2008 < <https://catalysttools.washington.edu/gopost/board/kgb/7587> >.