

Academic Sources

As a student, you will likely have to write a paper for one of your courses which requires you to identify academic sources relating to your topic.

What is an academic source?

Academic sources (also known as scholarly, peer-reviewed sources) are written by subject experts. These sources share new research findings, theories, analyses, or summaries of existing information. Types of academic sources include peer-reviewed journal articles, books from academic publishers, reports from research institutes, and select websites.

Where can I find an academic source?

Academic sources are available through many resources. They can be found online, in a library, or through various databases. The Yuba College Library provides many online databases capable of assisting students with their research. You can access these databases at <https://yc.yccd.edu/academics/library/databases/>.

Online sources that are accessed from a website using a domain suffix “.gov” or “.edu” are generally considered authoritative, credible source.

Examples include www.cdc.gov or www.berkeley.edu.

Online sources using a domain suffix of “.org” will generally have reliable information, but one should exercise caution to avoid information that is not considered credible or academic.

Examples of credible sources may include www.heart.org or www.amnh.org.

Websites using a domain suffix of “.com” or “.net” should be used with caution to avoid the use of information that is not considered credible or academic.

How do I know if a source is academic?

Traditionally, the content of an academic source has undergone a peer-review process. This means it has undergone review by a board of colleagues in the author’s field. This review assesses the accuracy and quality of the author’s research and will make recommendations regarding the publication, revisions prior to publication, or reject its publication.

Ask yourself these questions to help determine if a source is academic:

Authors	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are author names provided?• Are the authors' credentials provided?• Are the credentials relevant to the information provided?
Publishers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Who is the publisher of the information?• Is the publisher an academic institution, scholarly, or professional organization?• Is there purpose for publishing this information evident?
Audience	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Who is the intended audience of this source?• Is the language geared toward those with knowledge of a specific discipline rather than the general public?
Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Why is the information being provided?• Are sources cited?• Are there charts, graphs, tables, and bibliographies included?• Are research claims documented?• Are conclusions based on evidence provided?• How long is the source?
Currency/Timeliness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is the date of publication evident?

How do I use an academic source in my paper?

When writing a research paper or essay, there are three ways to present sources in support of your central argument:

- 1. Quotes** This is when you use the exact words from a source.
- 2. Paraphrase** When you state the ideas from another source in your own words.
- 3. Summary** Similar to paraphrase, but used in situations where you are trying to give an overview of many ideas.

How does an academic source appear in my paper?

Whenever you utilize an academic source in your paper it is important to cite (give credit) to the original author for their work. Failure to properly cite information may result in your paper being considered plagiarized. An in-text citation is a brief form of the reference that you include in the body of your work. It gives enough information to allow your reader to locate the mentioned source on your reference page. You may review helpful documents online or obtain a hardcopy in the Yuba College Writing & Language Development Center for additional assistance.