

# ENG 4U1 - USING SECONDARY SOURCES IN A LITERARY ESSAY

(some of info for this handout taken from <http://www.queensu.ca/>)

## SOME COMMON WAYS TO INCORPORATE SECONDARY SOURCES IN AN ENGLISH ESSAY ARE:

1. using a theory (for ex. Freudian, feminist, Marxist) as a lens to examine your topic or primary source (text)
2. drawing from scholarly articles to give critical insights on your topic and to support your arguments
3. defining a term using the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) which is a reputable source for definitions

### 1. Using a theory (for ex. Freudian, feminist, Marxist) as a lens to examine your topic or primary text.

- ✓ research should focus on gaining a clear understanding of the lens
- ✓ discussion within the paper should focus on connecting lens to arguments.
- ✓ introduce lens in introduction or subsequent paragraph of essay; define, explain, or contextualize the theory and how it relates to topic or primary text....subsequent analysis throughout the body of your essay will make sense to your audience if you do this!

### 2. Using scholarly articles to provide critical insights and support arguments

Do this by selecting a couple of academic articles written on your topic or primary text.

Finding articles is sometimes a challenge, but if you prepare well for research, it will be easier:

- A. Start off with a clear research topic
- B. Consider the questions you would like answered
- C. Prepare a list of key-words to guide your research

### If you choose to use scholarly articles as a secondary source.....

#### DO'S AND DON'TS:

Don't discuss articles in Introduction of essay.

Do bring scholarly perspectives into body paragraphs for critical insights, and as evidence to support analyses and arguments.

Do use scholarly viewpoints to show how an argument agrees or disagrees with a point you are making, to give context to your topic or define a critical term in your essay.

Do ensure that your essay focuses on your perspective(s) and not on those of your sources.

Do try to **be concise** by **paraphrasing** what a source says

Don't forget to **explain** how a specific insight is **relevant** to your argument.

Don't begin a body paragraph with a secondary source.

Do start a body paragraph with your argument and insights about the primary text before moving on to the secondary sources so that your voice leads the reader in the essay.

#### DO CITE ALL RESOURCES PROPERLY (MLA FORMAT)!!!

(McDougall, Aislinn. OnQ post, ENGL271. February 22, 2017)

### 3. Using the Oxford English Dictionary or other source as a secondary source to define a term:

- ✓ define a critical term in your essay using a scholarly text
- ✓ define a minor term used in topic or peer-reviewed articles by looking up the word in the OED (Oxford English Dictionary).
- ✓ the OED is a **credible secondary source**, and it would show you all the definitions of a word and how its meaning has changed over time.

**FOR GENERAL RESEARCH, THERE ARE A NUMBER OF RESOURCES AVAILABLE. MAKE SURE YOU COMPLETE THE PRE-RESEARCH STEPS FIRST. THEN.....**

**FOR BRITANNICA ONLINE:**

- Go to the Iona website
- Find the 'Learning' heading on the teal bar and select 'Library' from the dropdown menu
- Scroll down until you find 'Useful links' on the bar to the left of the page and click on it
- Select Britannica Online Reference Centre
- Click on 'high school' and type in your choices/subject

**FOR PRINT RESOURCES:**

- Go to the Iona website
- Select 'Library Catalogue' from the top black bar
- Type in key words in search

**FOR ELECTRONIC RESOURCES**

- Go to the Iona website
- Select 'Library Catalogue' from the top black bar
- Select 'All E-Resources' from the right side bar
- Type in your subject area
- For critical articles, scroll down to *Academic OneFile*
- Type in your key words
- Review the brief summary or abstract of each article before expanding it
- Read it carefully and take point-form notes on content
- Record ALL bibliographic information for articles used