

The 2-Sentence Rhetorical Summary

And Why You Should Integrate It into Your Source-Based Essays

In academic writing, students are often expected to include outside sources. Too often, though, student writers don't **introduce** or **summarize** their sources; instead, they jump right into **quoting** a source or **paraphrasing** a specific point the author(s) of the source make.

But academic readers (ghem ghem, your professors) as well as **any reader who may be unfamiliar with your sources** (aka: like everybody) will often expect (and need!) two things:

1. a **rhetorical introduction** to the source (so as to gauge its context and credibility), and
2. a **brief summary** of the source (so as to make better sense of the more specific points or quotes from the source that you, the writer, intend to share to make *your own* points).

Thus, a good rule of thumb for academic writing is*:

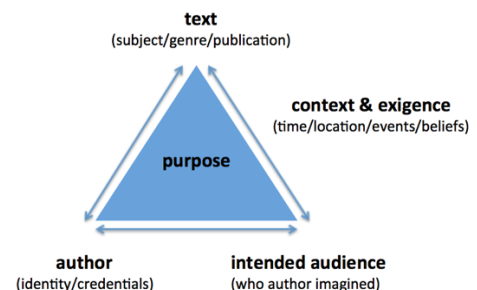
If you're going to include sources in your academic writing, be sure to first introduce and briefly summarize them for your reader.



*There is at least one exception, however: when you're writing in the **sciences**, sometimes only [parenthetical citations](#) are called for. So do check with your science professors about their preferences for source uses.

Helpful handouts to refer back to as is helpful:

- To **guide** your writing of the rhetorical summaries:
 - The Rhetorical Situation
 - Annotating a Text for What it Does
 - Rhetorical Strategies
- To **format** your writing assignments:
 - Formatting Academic Writing
 - Citing Sources



A Breakdown of a Highly Structured 2-Sentence Summary

SENTENCE 1 – include the following: - the name of author, - a phrase describing the author’s credentials, - the type (genre) and title of work (and sometimes the publication title and date of the publication), - a rhetorically accurate verb (such as “assert,” “argue,” “suggest,” “imply,” “claim,” “posit,” etc.) that describes what the author is <i>doing</i> in the text, - a <u>THAT</u> clause in which you state the major assertion (thesis statement/claim/purpose) of the author’s text.	EXAMPLE: Toni Morrison, a well-known scholar in the humanities, in her essay, “Disturbing Nurses and the Kindness of Sharks,” implies <u>THAT</u> racism in the United States has affected the craft and process of American novelists.
SENTENCE 2: - An explanation of how the author develops and/or supports the thesis (for instance, <i>comparing and contrasting, defining, narrating, illustrating, defining, using humor or sarcasm, relating personal experience, depending on facts /statistics /opinion, etc.</i>). - Consider the author’s organization, use of evidence, and/or strategies used to construct his/her argument. - Note how after the author’s full name is used once, the writer refers to them only by last name.	EXAMPLE: Morrison supports her implication by describing how Ernest Hemingway writes about black characters and by illustrating his strategies for plot development seen within his novels and short stories.

And there you have it, folks:

a two-sentence rhetorical summary
that can be integrated into your essay to introduce a source!

But wait! There’s more! Sometimes you may want to emphasize a point that has to do with the source’s purpose and audience. In that case, you can go for a third **OPTIONAL** sentence:

SENTENCE 3 (optional): A statement of the author’s apparent purpose, followed by an IN ORDER TO phrase in which you explain what the author wants their <u>specific audience</u> to do or feel in response to the text.	EXAMPLE: Her purpose is to expose the cruel reality of racism underlying some of the greatest works of American literature IN ORDER TO encourage <u>any reader who has read such literature</u> to examine the far-reaching effects racism has not only on those discriminated against but also on those who discriminate.
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Templates for the Rhetorical 2-Sentence Summary

Now it's your turn! Provided below are three templates you can refer to when introducing a source in your essays. You should refer to these for guidance, but use your best judgment about how to reform and vary your sentences so as to not appear formulaic / robotic. If your sentences get too long and unwieldy, just break them up into multiple sentences. NBD.

1. (Author's credentials), (author's first and last name), **in his/her/their** (type of text), (title of text), **published in** (publishing info), **addresses the topic of** (topic of text) **and argues that** (argument).
2. **S/he/They support(s) this claim by** _____, **then** _____, **and finally** _____.
3. (Author's last name)'s **purpose is to** (author's purpose in writing) **in order to** (goal the author wants to achieve) **for his/her/their audience, the readers of** (publication) **and others interested in the topic of** _____. (OPTIONAL SENTENCE)

1. **In the** (type of text), (title of text) ((year)), author (author's first and last name), (author's credentials), **asserts that** (argument) **and suggests** (explanation of sub-claims or resolution).
2. **S/he/They back(s) up this claim by doing the following: first, s/he/they** _____; **next, s/he/they** _____; **last, s/he/they** _____.
3. (Author's last name) **appears to write for** (author's intended audience) **in order to** (author's purpose in writing/the change in society they aim to achieve). (OPTIONAL SENTENCE)

1. **In his/her/their** (type of text) (title of text) ((year)), (author's credentials) (author's first and last name) **asserts that** (argument) **by addressing** _____, _____, and _____.
2. **By supplying information about** _____ **and** _____, (author's last name) **builds his/her claims about** _____.
3. (Author's name)'s **audience likely consists of those interested in** _____; **the author wishes to convey to these readers the importance of** (author's purpose in writing) **in order to** (change in reader/society the author wants to achieve). (OPTIONAL SENTENCE)