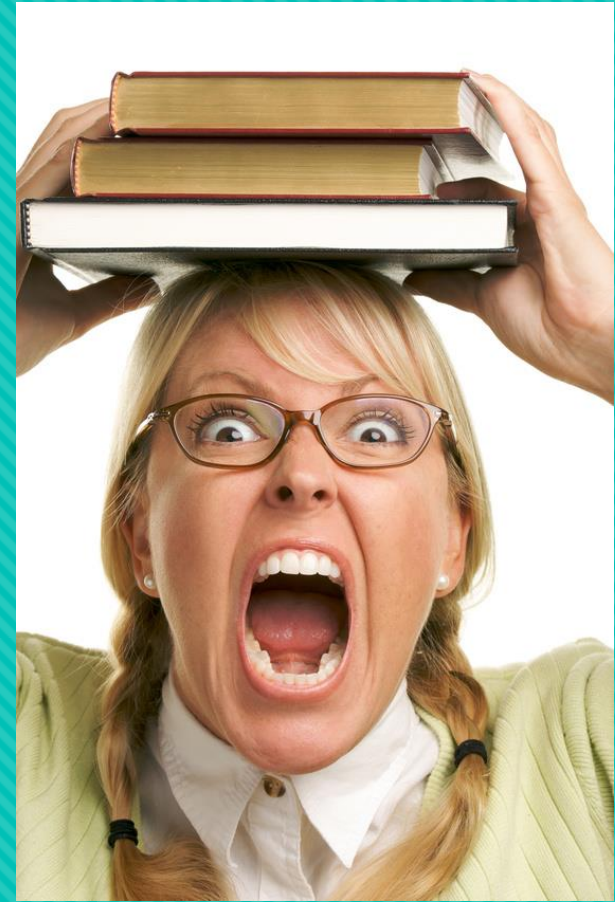# Using Sources

What **You** Need to Know

Conquering the Navigation

Unlike other presentations, this one has no links to other information and is completely self-contained. Here you will find the most basic information needed to Conquer the VPT.

If you would like to open the presentation in a new window, use the "Ctrl" key while you click.

The Basics

When students in English classes write papers, they often use sources. Sources are just books, websites, magazine articles, speeches, documentaries, musical compositions, databases, works of art, and so on.

A source is essentially any media that anyone has created that writers use in their own work.

Sources and the VPT

The VPT is going to test you to make sure you know the basics of using these sources in your work. You will learn more about sources in your college English courses, but a basic knowledge of what they are and what to do with them might show up on the test.

Important Points about Sources

There are several important points to remember about using sources:

- Anytime you use an outside source you much acknowledge the original author
- Not all the sources are credible, trustworthy, or reliable

Key Words

Plagiarize: to use someone else's original work without giving credit

Fair Use: to use someone else's original work but to give them proper credit

Cite: the act of giving credit to the original author

Copyright: the right an original author has that prevents another author from stealing his orher work

Bias: when a source takes a side in presenting a source and does not give a balanced

Reliable: the source comes from a reputable publisher and has had to go through fact checking before being presented to the public

Print Sources 101

Types of print sources

- books
- magazines
- academic journals
- newspapers

Print sources are generally more reliable than web sources because they have had to go through an editing process in which claims are verified to be true and sources used to write them are reliable.   The journey of a print source from idea to publication takes much longer than web sources and requires more fact checking.

Web Sources 101

Types of web sources are

- blogs, forums, and chat rooms
- online wikis
- online versions of news and print journals
- separate items in a series

Web sources may or may not be reliable depending on who publishes them. An article on a news or print journal website will be more reliable than a blog or a wiki, which anyone can change and edit. Web publications take much less time and fact checking before they are released to the public, and anyone with a computer can publish a blog or online wiki. The bottom line is that web sources are not as credible as print sources.

Other Media 101

Other media is define as:

- Works of art
- Musical compositions
- Film
- Speeches
- Interviews

These sources are usually reliable, since like print sources they have gone through some fact checking before they are presented to the public. However, writers should understand that these sources, like speeches, may present only one side of an argument, and are therefore biased.

The Last Word…

If a writer uses a source in a paper, he or she must **cite** the source to avoid **plagiarism** and practice **fair use** under **copyright law**.

Print sources are generally more **reliable** than web sources because they must go through more fact checking before being presented to the public.

Students must be aware that some sources are **biased**, meaning they will present only one side of an argument.