**USING SECONDARY SOURCES IN A LITERARY ESSAY**

|  |
| --- |
| **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!

1. **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:

* + 1. Start off with a clear research topic
    2. Consider the questions you would like answered
    3. Prepare a list of key-words to guide your research

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

**DO’S DON’TS:**

* bring scholarly perspectives into body paragraphs for critical insights, and as evidence to support analyses and arguments.
* start a body paragraph with your argument and insights about your primary text before moving on to the secondary sources so that your voice leads the reader in the essay
* ensure that your essay focuses on your perspective(s) and not on those of your sources
* try to be concise by paraphrasing what a source says
* **CITE ALL RESOURCES PROPERLY IN MLA FORMAT!!**
  + discuss articles in introduction of essay
  + forget to explain how a specific insight is relevant to your argument
  + begin a body paragraph with a secondary source

1. **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 creditable 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 |

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