

# Reading Response 5: Breaking Source Hunting Myths

In “Citing Sources Is a Basic Skill Learned Early On,” Susanmarie Harrington challenges the idea that citations are just a technical skill taught in schools. Rather, she argues that citing sources is about building credibility and join scholarly discussions. She notes, “Writers choose texts to quote in order to connect themselves to particular traditions of thinking... Selecting and discussing sources is a matter of savvy diplomacy, persuasion, and argumentation” (Harrington 243). This reminded me that credibility outside of school looks a lot different depending on what genre it's in. For example, in journalism, authors typically establish credibility by naming their source directly, such as Harrington using “according to Dr. Smith, a cardiologist at Johns Hopkins.” In marketing, companies often use testimonials or endorsements to give their claims more authority. As Harrington points out, “Journalists don’t use parenthetical citation systems... they simply identify it in the text by putting the source’s name and qualification. Graphs and charts... may have a legend identifying the organization that supplied data” (Harrington 244). These strategies aren’t MLA or APA, but they serve the same purpose, showing why the audience should trust the information within the writing.

James Purdy’s essay “Wikipedia Is Good for You?!” shifted my perspective on a resource I was always told to avoid. Like many students, I assumed Wikipedia was unreliable or just completely false since “anyone can edit it.” However, Purdy argues that it is valuable because of the way it models research practices, stating, “Wikipedia models useful ways to engage with research by showing how information is connected and sourced” (Purdy 208). What surprised me most was his point that Wikipedia is not meant to be the final source but a starting place as he stated, “Wikipedia directs readers to other sources through its references, which makes it a valuable place to start research” (Purdy 209). This reframing makes me more open to using Wikipedia in my research process, not as an official source, but as a guide to credible academic sources I might not have found otherwise.