

1. Each >eld accepts other kinds of data, if presented properly, but each is also likely to disfavor certain kinds. Literary critics do not expect bar charts to represent an author's development; most psychologists are suspicious of self-reported anecdotes about mental processes.
2. Don't accept a claim just because an authority asserts it. For decades researchers cited the "fact" that the Inuit peoples of the Arctic had many terms for types of snow. But another researcher found that they have just three (or so she claims).
3. Writers regularly write to the New York Review of Books and the "Book Review" of the New York Times, pointing out how reviewers distorted their ideas or made factual errors criticizing them.
4. You don't have to agree with a source to use its data; in fact, its argument does not even have to be relevant to your question, so long as its data are. However, use statistical data only if you can judge for yourself whether they were collected and analyzed appropriately.
5. Anthropologists might interpret a whole culture in New Guinea on the basis of a deep acquaintance with a few individuals, but no sociologist would make a claim about American religious practices based on a single Baptist church in Oregon. If you don't know what researchers in your >eld judge to be sufficient and representative, ask your teacher or another expert.
6. If, for example, a source shows that creators of the King Arthur legend benefited from responses to it, ask how the Alamo legend benefited its creators and audience. You are not obliged to cite your model, but to gain credibility, you might note that it makes an argument similar to yours:
7. No research report is complete until it acknowledges and responds to its readers' predictable questions and disagreements. You can >nd some of those competing views in secondary sources. What alternatives to your claims do they offer? What evidence do they cite that you must acknowledge? Some new researchers think they weaken their case if they mention any views opposing their own. The opposite is true.
8. So copy or, better, photocopy passages more often than you think you must. Never abbreviate a quotation thinking you can accurately reconstruct it later. You can't. And if you misquote, you'll undermine your credibility.
9. You cannot entirely avoid quoting out of context, because you cannot quote all of an original. So when you draft a paraphrase or summary or copy a quotation, do so within the context that matters most—that of your own grasp of the original.
10. It is not "research" when you uncritically summarize another's work. Even if your source is universally trusted, be careful. If you rely on at least two sources, you'll almost always >nd that they do not agree entirely, and that's where your own research can begin. Which has the better argument? Which better respects the evidence? In fact, you have a research problem right there—whom should we believe?