

# Using Sources to Accomplish Different Purposes

When evaluating a source, consider how you intend to use it in your own work. Sources are often used in four main ways:

## Background

General information or factual evidence used to provide context

Example: encyclopedia article, handbooks and manuals, etc.

## Evidence/Exhibits

Materials a writer analyzes/interprets

Example: literary or artistic works, field observations, scientific specimens, news accounts, historical documents

## Argument sources

Materials whose claims a writer engages

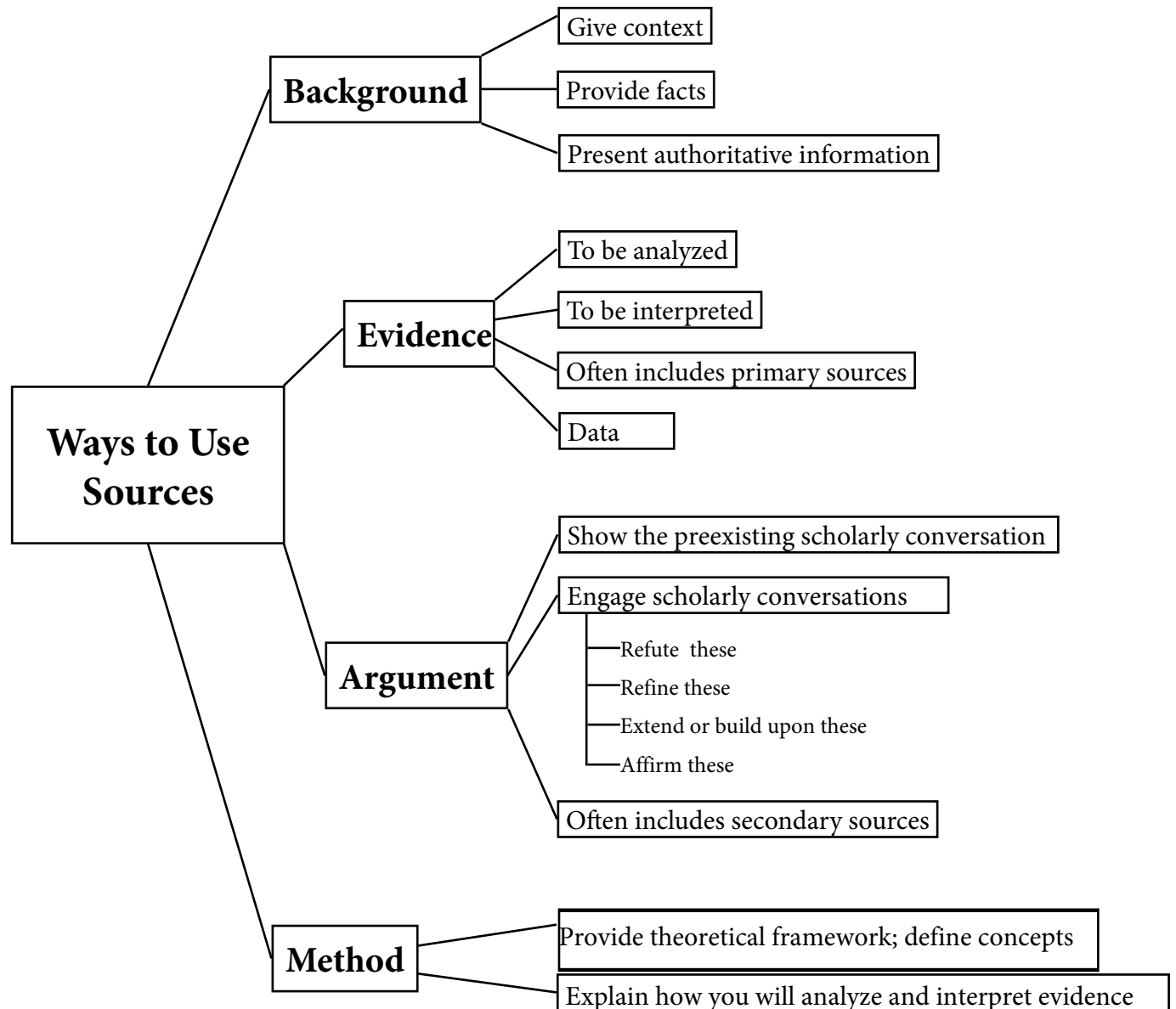
Example: scholarly articles, opinion pieces

## Method/theory sources

Materials from which a writer adopts a concept or manner of working/thinking

Examples: references to theories/methods used by scholarly authors (e.g., feminism, New Historicism, direct observation, mixed methods)

Based on: Bizup, J. (2008). "BEAM: A rhetorical vocabulary for teaching research-based writing." *Rhetoric Review* 27, 1: 72-86.



Handout adapted from Indiana University Bloomington Libraries  
<https://libraries.indiana.edu/file/evaluating-sources-rhetorically-pdf>