

THE RESEARCH REPORT

In a short research report, as in a longer research paper, we bring together evidence from different sources. We assemble related information from different sources in the same passage or paragraph. We compare different opinions to find a common element, or we balance off conflicting testimony. The following example shows how a writer may bring together related material from three different sources in the same paragraph:

Like other endangered species, the American eagle is threatened by the toxic chemicals that we have introduced into the environment. The high concentration of pesticides found in many areas causes the eagles to lay infertile eggs. In New England and around the Great Lakes, breeding success has been reported to be as low as 5 percent (Mathisen 48). DDE, a substance related to the now banned DDT, causes egg shells to be not porous enough, so that the oxygen supply to unhatched chicks is reduced ("Pesticides" 20). Ed Christopherson reported in Outdoor Life that, in a single year, twenty-five eagles were found dead or dying in Jackson's Canyon, Wyoming. Lab tests showed that they had eaten bait laced with thallium sulfate, a poison used by ranchers to control predators (39-41).

Study the way the writer has used parenthetical references to help identify the three sources of information used in this paragraph. For the first source of information, a parenthetical reference identifies the author of the article and shows the exact page. For a complete description of the article, we would turn to the final bibliography or list of works cited. Under "Matheson," listed in alphabetical order, we would find a standard entry for a magazine article. It includes name, publication, date, and inclusive page numbers for the whole article:

Mathisen, John E. "The American Bald Eagle." American Forests Sept. 1974: 48-49.

For the second source used, the parenthetical reference gives us the shortened title of an unsigned (anonymous) article instead of the author's name. Complete information would appear in the list of "Works Cited" under "Pesticides":

"Pesticides and Birds." Chemistry Sept. 75: 19-24.

For the third source used, the writer has identified the author as well as the publication in the text. Only the page numbers appear in parentheses at the end of the material used. Complete information would appear in the final list of works cited, under "Christopherson":

Christopherson, Ed. "The Massacre of Johnson's Canyon." Outdoor Life Feb. 1972: 39-43