Rhetorical "Moves" Defined

You want to use your sources; you don't want your sources to use you. To ensure that sources are used purposely and effectively, writers make conscious choices in how they are integrating sources into writing. Writers make "moves" in their writing that conveys to readers that the writer is using that source for a specific purpose. Here are several "moves" that you can make.

**Grounding:** Situating a claim within a particular context
- *Defining:* Establishing a shared definition for a key concept
- *Framing:* Locating a claim within the context of prior scholarship
- *Illustrating:* Showing an example to explain a claim
- *Authorizing:* Lending the weight of authority to a claim

**Forwarding:** Extending or re-purposing the ideas or expertise of others between contexts
- *Borrowing:* Applying a scholar’s claims or methodology as a lens to help you work through your inquiry
- *Extending:* Transforming a scholar’s claims or methodology to work through your inquiry
- *Synthesizing:* Combining two or more pieces of scholarship (note: the process doesn’t stop at synthesizing; writers must then ground, forward, or counter the synthesized component)

**Countering:** Presenting alternative perspectives or uncovering gaps in others' views
- *Arguing another side:* Offering a claim that others have not yet considered
- *Uncovering values:* Examining how biases or gaps in thinking may have influenced others' claims

To figure out what "move" to make each time you want to use a source, ask yourself the following questions:
- Why am I bringing in this source? What is my rationale for including this source?
- In what way am I using to help me work through my inquiry and sub-questions?
- In what way does it work in connection with my other sources?
- What do I want my reader to take away from my integration of this source?

**Rhetorical Example Illustrations**

Here are several example "moves" that you can make, along with example phrases that tell your reader which move you’re using.

**Grounding:** Situating a claim within a particular context
- *Defining:* Scholars A, B, and C define Concept X as [paraphrase of concept].
- *Framing:* Historically, scholars have examined [concept] through [identify a lens or theoretical framework].
- *Illustrating:* We can look to Scholar D, who illustrates many of the complexities embedded in Concept X.
- *Authorizing:* Scholar C echoes what I’ve argued for, saying that [quote or paraphrase of claim].

**Forwarding:** Extending or re-purposing the ideas or expertise of others between contexts
- *Borrowing:* Although Scholar C exclusively focused on [original context], the same idea can be applied to [context of subquestion].
- *Extending:* While I agree with Scholar A’s main premise, I would argue that A does not go far enough and that [new idea].
- *Synthesizing:* Scholars A, B, and C offer similar insights, Scholars D and E go against the grain, and Scholar F offers an entirely new explanation. Taking these valuable perspectives collectively, I conclude that [new perspective].

**Countering:** Presenting alternative perspectives or uncovering gaps in others' views
- *Arguing another side:* However, Scholar A seems to have overlooked [present alternative perspective].
- *Uncovering values:* If Scholars A and B had also taken [gap in thinking] into consideration, they may have reached a different conclusion.