From Rhetorical Precis to Body Paragraphs: Incorporating Research Effectively

When we incorporate research into our papers, we want to do so with purpose. Our purpose is usually to include evidence to support our claims. (Think of the TEE paragraph structure- the final E is evidence, and is what ties everything in our argument together.)

In order to effectively include evidence, we want to make sure that we appropriately contextualize our sources. When I say that, what I mean is that you should introduce the author, title of the source, and give a brief explanation of the source's content. This may seem familiar to you, because it's what you do in the first sentence of your rhetorical precis. Because we have already begun to work with our sources in this way, we should be able to take the information from our rhetorical precis and revise it so that it appropriately contextualizes our source text for us within our paper. Let's look at an example from our Sample Annotated Bibliography:

"**Donald J. Trump, in the executive order "Executive Order: Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States" (2017) states that immigration must cease from Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen because of concerns of terroristic threats to the United States.** Trump further supports his claim by citing the tragedy of September 11th and stating that nineteen foreign nationals were responsible for the deaths of almost 3,000 Americans on that day. Trump is decreeing that immigration from these countries must be temporarily banned so that he and his administration have time to assess the vetting process in order to ensure the safety of the United States. The document is written pedantically, utilizing a dry tone with a hint of pathos to address its dual audiences of the federal government, who need to enforce the order, and the American people, whom he wishes to support it."

I have made the first sentence bold for clarity. Does the first sentence introduce the author, title of the source, and give a brief explanation of the source's content? Yes. The first sentence contextualizes the source for you.

You should always contextualize your source because you want your reader to understand where the evidence is coming from. If they understand where you have gotten your information, they can then deem whether it is credible or not. If your information is not credible, they will be hard pressed to believe it and you will not persuade effectively.

If we continue to look at the rhetorical precis, we can see that we have already begun to discuss some of the specific supporting details within it, as well as the source text's purpose. These supporting details, found here in the second and third sentences, may possibly be helpful places for us to begin considering what we can use as evidence. You can see the information in the second and third sentences in bold below:

"Donald J. Trump, in the executive order "Executive Order: Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States" (2017) states that immigration must cease from Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen because of concerns of terroristic threats to the United States. **Trump further supports his claim by citing the tragedy of September 11th and stating that nineteen foreign**

nationals were responsible for the deaths of almost 3,000 Americans on that day. Trump is decreeing that immigration from these countries must be temporarily banned so that he and his administration have time to assess the vetting process in order to ensure the safety of the United States. The document is written pedantically, utilizing a dry tone with a hint of pathos to address its dual audiences of the federal government, who need to enforce the order, and the American people, whom he wishes to support it."

This information may work to support some claims that could be made about the topic, but not all. You should only include information from the source texts that is relevant to the claim you are making. Do not add information from your precis just because you have already written it and can copy and paste it into your body paragraphs. This is not effective.

Information written about the functionality of the piece is most likely not going to fit well into your paper. This includes who the audience is and what tone it is written in. Before including this information, please ask yourself whether it is useful. Odds are, it probably isn't. See the conversation about functionality in bold below:

"Donald J. Trump, in the executive order "Executive Order: Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States" (2017) states that immigration must cease from Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen because of concerns of terroristic threats to the United States. Trump further supports his claim by citing the tragedy of September 11th and stating that nineteen foreign nationals were responsible for the deaths of almost 3,000 Americans on that day. Trump is decreeing that immigration from these countries must be temporarily banned so that he and his administration have time to assess the vetting process in order to ensure the safety of the United States. **The document is written pedantically, utilizing a dry tone with a hint of pathos to address its dual audiences of the federal government, who need to enforce the order, and the American people, whom he wishes to support it.**"