



Using and Citing Sources

Why Cite?

Citing sources is important for a number of reasons:

- Citations allow readers of your work to find the sources you used in your paper. (This is often how we as writers find sources to use in our own work!)
- Citations give credit to those whose ideas you reference.
- Citations help readers distinguish which ideas in a paper are yours and which come from other sources. They allow readers to determine your contributions to a topic.
- Citations provide evidence that you are familiar with the scholarly community in which you are writing, which helps to build your credibility as a writer. They show an awareness of what other people are saying about your topic.

Citation Styles

Citation styles differ with each academic discipline. Two of the most common are Modern Language Association (MLA) style and American Psychological Association (APA) style. There are several others (e.g., Chicago, CBE) used in specific disciplines (e.g., history, biology). Preference may vary by instructor, so be sure to ask which your instructor wants you to use.

All citation styles ask writers to provide two kinds of citation: in-text and bibliographic. In-text citations can take the form of footnotes or parenthetical citations. Bibliographic citations can take the form of a works cited page or a references page.

MLA in-text citation: (Author last name Page #); example (Smith 79)

APA in-text citation: (Author last name, Date, p. Page #); example (Smith, 2003, p. 79)

The main difference between MLA and APA is the privileging and placement of date and author name. APA privileges date and MLA privileges author. There are also differences in capitalization and page number use. See below for examples of bibliographic entries done in both citation styles. For each example MLA is followed by APA.

Book

Gitelman, Lisa. *Scripts, Grooves, and Writing Machines: Representing Technology in the Edison Era*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 1999. Print.

Gitelman, L. (1999). *Scripts, grooves, and writing machines: Representing technology in the Edison era*. Stanford: Stanford UP.

Article

Hawisher, Gail E., and Cynthia L. Selfe. "The Rhetoric of Technology and the Electronic Writing Class." *College Composition and Communication* 42.1 (1991): 55-65. Print.

Hawisher, G. E., & Selfe, C. L. (1991). The rhetoric of technology and the electronic writing class. *College Composition and Communication* 42(1), 55-65.

Each of these citation styles has a print style manual that outlines how to cite nearly every conceivable type of source you can imagine. So you don't need to memorize the styles. It is best to familiarize yourself with the reference resources. There are also online versions that allow you to check how to cite a particular type of source. Below are several such online versions.

Online Resources

Gumberg Library

<http://www.sites.duq.edu/library/research/citation-style.shtml>

Gumberg Library at Duquesne University offers a number of resources on citing sources, including links to online resources for APA, MLA, Chicago, and Legal citation styles. This is a good first stop for your citation questions.

APA Style: Electronic References

<http://www.apastyle.org/elecref.html>

The APA web site provides the most up-to-date information on how to cite electronic sources in APA style. Because guidelines regarding electronic sources can change rapidly, this site provides a useful resource for the latest conventions.

Long Island University APA Citation Style

<http://www.liu.edu/cwis/CWP/library/workshop/citapa.htm>

This web site from Long Island University offers clear examples of APA citations for different types of sources.

University of Illinois APA Citation Handbook

<http://www.cws.illinois.edu/workshop/writers/citation/apa/>

The APA citation handbook provides explanations of how to cite specific kinds of sources in APA style. It provides examples of each that offer models for what these citations look like. These examples are broken down into easily searchable categories (e.g., citing articles in weekly periodicals, citing a chapter in an edited collection).

Ohio State MLA Citation Style Guide

<http://library.osu.edu/sites/guides/mlaqd.php>

This web site from the Ohio State libraries offers clear examples of MLA citations for different types of sources. It is available in pdf format for easy printing.

University of Illinois MLA Citation Handbook

<http://www.cws.illinois.edu/workshop/writers/citation/mla/>

The MLA citation handbook provides explanations of how to cite specific kinds of sources in MLA style. It provides examples of each that offer models for what these citations look like. These examples are broken down into easily searchable categories (e.g., citing corporate authors, citing items in an anthology).