

# HOW TO CITE

In this video, we are going to look at how to cite sources properly in your papers. We'll cover where you need to cite, what information you need, and how to format your citations.

## WHERE DO YOU NEED CITATIONS?

First, where do you need to put citations?

When you cite sources, your citation always needs to have two parts. The first part is in your paper, at the end of every sentence that uses a source. This lets readers know which source you used, and is called an in-text citation. The second part of your citation is the list of all the sources you've used, which goes at the end of your paper. This part contains all the information that you would need if you wanted to locate a copy of each source.

The two parts work together. The in-text citations refer to the full information about the source listed in the list of references at the end. You need to have both parts to cite correctly and avoid plagiarism.

## WHAT INFORMATION DO YOU NEED?

Next, we'll look at what information you need to create a citation.

Each citation style requires specific pieces of information about each of your sources. These include the author, the title, the title of the item that the source is located in, the publisher, date, and the information you need to locate a copy of the source. These pieces of information look a bit different for different types of sources.

For a scholarly journal article, you'll need the author and title of the article. You'll also need the title of the journal the article is published in, and the date. The location information includes the volume, issue, pages, and the DOI, which is a unique ID number assigned to the article. The same information is required for articles whether they are print or online. Don't list the database you found the article in, like Proquest.

For a book, you'll need the authors, the book title, the publisher, the place of publication, and the publication year.

Some books have chapters written by different people. If that's the case, you'll need to cite the individual chapter rather than the book. You'll need information on the chapter's author and title, the title of the book that the chapter is published in, the editors of the book, the publisher, place of publication, year, and the chapter pages.

Web sites don't always have as much information available, but you'll need whatever information you can find. This includes the author, the title of the page, the title of the web site or the organization the site is published by, the publication or revision date, and the page url. Just because you find a source online, it doesn't mean you should cite it as a web site. If you're using an online article or book, you'll need to cite it as an article or a book, not as a web site.

## HOW DO YOU FORMAT THE INFORMATION?

Next, we'll look at how you format your citations. The way you format your citations depends on the citation style you're using.

A citation style is a specific way to format all this information about each source, both for the in-text references and for the bibliography. The main advantage of citation styles is consistency. If we know the author is always first, and the title is in italics, it is much easier to interpret a citation.

There are lots of different citation styles. Some of the most common ones are APA, Chicago, and MLA. You will likely be asked to format your citations using one of these styles at some point.

All the styles use the same basic pieces of information about each source, but formats that information a bit differently. For in-text citations, for example, APA requires you to put the author's last name, publication year, and page number in brackets at the end of your sentence. MLA is similar, but you don't need the date. In Chicago style, you often use footnotes at the bottom of the page rather than references in brackets.

There are also some differences in formatting citations in the bibliography or works cited list you provide at the end of your paper. For example, in APA, you only use the author's first initial, and you only capitalize the first word of the title. In Chicago and MLA, you use the author's whole first name, and capitalize all the words in the title.

If you are told to use a specific style, make sure you use it. If you aren't told to use a specific style, make sure you pick one and use it correctly. You need to pay attention to all the details when doing citations. The order, spaces, italics, punctuation, and capitalization all matter.

There is a link to some guides for different citation styles on the same page as this video. Find the one for the style you are using and follow the examples it has to be sure you get it right.

## CITATION TOOLS

Finally, let's look at some tools that make citing easier.

There are lots of automated tools out there to help make citing easier. Some are a lot more accurate than others. The Library supports two, [Mendeley](#) and [Zotero](#). You can use these tools to insert citations as you write and automatically format both the in-text citations and list of references in whatever style you choose.

None of these tools are perfect, though, so you'll still need to double check to be sure all your citations are properly formatted.

## QUESTIONS & FEEDBACK

If you have any questions, please ask us at [library.wlu.ca/help/askus](https://library.wlu.ca/help/askus)

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