

Getting Started with Google Docs's Citing Tools

Adding citations to an essay is not only labour intensive but also very picky work. You must get all the details just perfect. If you use Google Docs, you can save yourself time by using one of their two citation tools. Google Docs has a built-in tool that auto-formats citations and bibliographies. Google Docs is also integrated with Zotero, another free tool that takes the automating process even further. This video will demonstrate how to use both.

Let's start with Google Docs's built-in tool. In the menu, click on "tools," and then "citations. Choose your style manual from one of 3 options. Now choose your format. In this example, I will choose "book." Then indicate how you accessed it. In this case "print." Here are the boxes to fill in. The complete citation sits here. Click on cite, to add the citation where you've placed the cursor. Replace the number sign with a page number. In this case we don't need one. Just keep adding citations as you write. When you've finished your paper, click "insert bibliography." And here it is instantly in the right alphabetical order.

Now let's turn to Zotero. It is a separate tool that is integrated with Google Docs. Zotero automates everything even more than the built-in tool but you need to set it up first. Sign up for a free account at Zotero.org and download the Zotero Desktop. You can add books and articles to it by clicking on the plugin that lives at the top of your browser. No more typing in all the details. Zotero automatically extracts them. Now let's return to the essay and place the cursor where the citation should go. Click on Zotero in the menu and then "add/edit citation." The Zotero toolbar will appear. Type in the name of your author and choose the right resource. Here is your citation. Continue to add citations as you go. At the end of your paper, type in the word, "References," and click on "add/edit bibliography." And here it is. Make sure you proofread your references because both Zotero and the built-in tool make the occasional error.

For more videos on citation tools go to library.wlu.ca/help/tutorials. See in particular: "Getting Started with Zotero." If you have any questions just ask us.