Citing Sources for Research Papers

Why Should I Cite Sources?

Citing a source means that you show, within the body of your text and on a works cited/reference page, that you took words, ideas, figures, images, etc. from another place. By citing sources, you avoid "stealing" someone else's work.

In-Text Citations

When you write a research paper, you will cite all resources twice. The first place you cite your source is in the text of the paper. When using APA format, you will follow the "author-date-page number" method of in-text citation. This means that the author's last name, the year of publication and the page number(s) will appear in the text when you use it.

For example, if you quote a passage from a book, it will look like this:

> Despite his recent defeats, Napoleon refused to accept loss. He wrote, "'All is not lost by a long chalk…I shall soon have three hundred thousand soldiers under arms with which to face the enemy! Then I'll simply crush them once and for all!'" (Streissguth, 2003, pp. 90-91).

If you mention the author's name in the text, you do not have to put a citation at the end of the sentence, except for noting the page numbers for quotes. For example:

> Streissguth (2003) makes the point that despite his recent defeats, Napoleon refused to accept loss, quoting him as saying, "'All is not lost by a long chalk…I shall soon have three hundred thousand soldiers under arms with which to face the enemy! Then I'll simply crush them once and for all!'" (pp. 90-91).

In addition, a complete reference should appear in the reference list at the end of the paper.

Works Cited vs. Bibliography

Works Cited

The most common way to cite sources is to use a **Works Cited** list at the end of your research paper.

Works Cited is used as the title of your list of citations when using the MLA (Modern Language Association) **format**.

> **References** is another name for "Works Cited" and is used when citing sources using the APA (American Psychological Association) style.

No matter which style you use, you will only list items that you actually cite in your paper when creating your Works Cited or Reference page.

Bibliography

A **Bibliography** is not the same as a "Works Cited" or "Reference" list. In a Bibliography you list all of the material you may have consulted in preparing your paper, whether you actually cited the work or not. A Bibliography can also include any sources related to the topic of the research paper.

Creating Your Works Cited/Reference Page

When you create your Works Cited/Reference Page or Bibliography Page, the list of citations is commonly organized in a single alphabetical list by author last name. However, each different type of source--book, magazine article, journal article, newspaper article, article from a reference book, web page, etc.--has a precise format, depending on the style you use (MLA, APA, etc.).

Basic Rules for Creating a Works Cited/Reference Page

Here is a list of basic rules when creating your reference page:

- Your list entries should be alphabetized by the author last name.
- All citations begin with the author's name (if available). If not, use the title of the work. The author's name is inverted (last name, first initial).
- If there are multiple entries by the same author, list the entries in chronological order, from earliest to most recent.
- All lines after the first line of each entry in your reference list should be indented using a hanging indentation.
- When creating citations for books, chapters, articles, or Web pages, capitalize only the first letter of the first word of a title and subtitle and proper nouns.
- Maintain all punctuation and capitalization used by the journal title. For example, *The Journal of Military History*.
- Italicize titles of longer works only, like books and journals.
- Do not italicize, underline, or put quotes around the titles of shorter works, like journal articles.

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