

*Note these guidelines for deciding whether or not to cite an idea. If you are in doubt, CITE.*

## **1. Widely Known Facts**

- Most frequent type of common knowledge
  - Andrew Jackson was the 7th president of the United States
  - Water is H<sub>2</sub>O
- Common information that can be easily found in a dictionary, encyclopedia, or other reference book.
- Facts that are widely known to certain groups, but not to you are still considered common knowledge.
  - Ethnologists are type of anthropologists that observe cultures.
  - *You may have not known this, but it's common knowledge to anthropologists.*
  - *Note: If the audience is anthropologists you do not need to cite the information. If your audience does not know, you **do** need to cite.*

## **2. Ideas or interpretations are usually not considered common knowledge, unless they are very widely held.**

- The Civil War was partly a dispute about the slavery of African Americans. (*widely held opinion / belief; no need to cite*)
- Children learn languages easier than adults. (*widely held opinion / belief; no need to cite*)
- Standardized tests are ineffective at gauging what students actually know. (*This is an opinion that is not very widely held (plenty of people disagree with this); therefore this DOES need to be cited!*)

## **3. Verbatim language drawn from a source is rarely common knowledge, unless the formulation is widely known.**

- Well known quotes:

- John F. Kennedy said, “Ask not what your country can do with you, but what you can do for your country.”
- Confucius said, “It does not matter how slowly you go, just that you do not stop.”