

How to Cite Resources

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Instructor's note

This activity includes reading about why citations are important to academic integrity, when we should cite our sources, and how to cite sources. This activity should be paired with a research assignment, for example the [Group Presentation on Learning](#), in order to have students practice the citation skills they have learned.

Objectives

Students should be able to:

- Determine which sources need to be cited and which do not;
- Use paraphrases vs. quotes when necessary and know how to cite them, and
- Add in-text citations and create a reference list to their writing with the help of a citation generator.

Preparation

Materials needed:

- Copies of [Do I need to Cite this Source](#)
- Copies of [Crediting Sources](#) text
- [Citations Mini-Lesson](#)

Warm-Up

Ask students to respond to the following prompt first in writing or pairs and then in whole group discussion:

- What are the different ways our society gives people credit for their ideas, words, art?

Then ask, “For a college assignment, why is it important to cite, or identify where the sources came from?” Write down students’ responses on the board or type them and project them on the screen.

Reading About the Ethics of Scholarship and Citation

1. Ask students to read and annotate [Crediting Sources](#) text.
2. Use 3-2-1 strategy to ask students to elicit findings from the text. Ask students to write down three things they discovered, two things they found interesting, and one question they still have.
3. Ask students to share one idea they found interesting or discovered. Write down ideas on the board as students share until all of the main ideas have been covered. Ask what questions students still haven’t been answered, and answer them as a class.

How to Cite in An Academic Paper

1. Review [Citations Mini-Lesson](#) slides 4-16 to go over when, how, and in which instances students should cite sources in a research paper.
2. Project [slides 4-10](#) to cover the basics of citations, including when to cite, the details of an in-text citation, and how citations connect to a reference list. Then use the links to the APA-style reference examples and citation generator on Slide 11 to walk students through how to format their reference list.
3. If useful, review slides 12-16, to show students when to use direct quotes versus paraphrases.

Closing

1. Ask students to complete the [Do I Need to Cite This Source](#) handout.
2. In small groups or pairs, have students compare answers. If students have different answers, one person should explain and try to convince their partner(s) about why their choice is correct using evidence from the text.
3. As a whole class, discuss any answers that students are still unsure about.

References, Licenses, and Attributions

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Crediting Sources

Honesty and transparency are essential for scholarship. Citation is perhaps the most important concept as it relates to college-level work. Citation is the process of identifying and giving credit to the sources you have used. When do you need to cite information? What kind of information requires a citation? Basically, if it is not your idea or creation, you need to cite it and give credit to the source where you found the information. This can include books, articles, websites, movies, and social media posts.

Citation directs the reader to the work you used; it spans time and geography to represent all of the information you used in order to come up with your ideas. It is also a tool that makes it easier for a reader to scan through the research you did. It is a standard, uniform way of presenting information that creates predictability. Putting the two ideas together, formal citation allows your readers to build upon your hard work researching a topic; it also gives you a way into the work that others have done.

CUNY students are most likely to use two forms of citation: in-text and works cited. The first, in-text citation, is included in the body of your writing. It is shorter than a full citation because you are acknowledging a source when it is quoted, paraphrased, or summarized in your writing (more on that soon). Then, at the end of your essay you should include a list of complete citations for all of your sources. The particulars of in-text and works cited lists will vary depending on what citation style you need to use. MLA and APA are the most common. How you incorporate your sources into your writing is also very important. Below are examples of how to effectively quote, paraphrase, and summarize sources.

Paraphrase

Paraphrasing is restating someone else's original ideas or findings in your own words, at the same level of detail. The successful paraphrase below shows how to take a longer paragraph and put it in your own words, while providing a citation for the original source. The example of plagiarism below does not change the original enough to count as a paraphrase, nor does it include a citation.

Take, for example, this quote from a book about writing academic papers:

"Students frequently overuse direct quotations in taking notes, and as a result they overuse quotations in the final [research] paper. Probably only about 10% of your final manuscript

should appear as directly quoted matter. Therefore, you should strive to limit the amount of exact transcribing of source materials while taking notes.” (Lester, 1976, pp.46-7)

Acceptable APA Paraphrase

In research papers students often quote excessively, failing to keep quoted material down to a desirable level. Since the problem usually originates during note taking, it is essential to minimize the material recorded verbatim (Lester, 1976, p. 46).

Plagiarism

Students often use too many direct quotations when they take notes, resulting in too many of them in the final research paper. In fact, probably only about 10% of the final copy should consist of directly quoted material. So it is important to limit the amount of source material copied while taking notes.

Summary

Summarizing is a bit different than paraphrasing in that you are simplifying the original source to get the main point across. In the below example, the successful summary is short and cites the original source. The example of plagiarism does little to change the original language, nor does it include a citation.

How Would You Summarize the Same Quote?

“Students frequently overuse direct quotation in taking notes, and as a result they overuse quotations in the final [research] paper. Probably only about 10% of your final manuscript should appear as directly quoted matter. Therefore, you should strive to limit the amount of exact transcribing of source materials while taking notes.”

Acceptable APA Summary

Students should take just a few notes in direct quotation from sources to help minimize the amount of quoted material in a research paper (Lester, 1976, p. 46).

Plagiarism

Students frequently overuse direct quotation in taking notes, which often leads to overusing quotations in the final paper. Therefore, you should limit the amount of exact transcribing of source materials while taking notes.

Direct Quote

While direct quoting may seem simple and straightforward, it is challenging in practice. As the example you were shown above states, it is best to limit the amount of direct quotes in your writing. Your professor wants to read your writing, not your sources' writing! Be strategic and pick the shortest quote that best supports your words and ideas.

Effective APA Quote

Student essays should showcase the words and ideas of the author, not the sources consulted. However, many students rely on others' ideas when writing for an academic audience. In fact, "only about 10% of your final manuscripts should appear as directly quoted matter" (James, 1976, p. 46).

Less Effective APA Quote

Students rely too much on direct quotes in their essays. "Probably only about 10% of your final manuscript should appear as directly quoted matter. Therefore, you should strive to limit the amount of exact transcribing of source materials while taking notes" (James, 1979, p. 46).

Do I Need to Cite This Source?

Directions: Decide whether you need to cite each of the following sources in order to maintain academic integrity.

| Type of Source | Yes, Cite this! | No need to Cite |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|
| Water freezes at 32 degrees fahrenheit | | |
| Pollution is bad for the environment | | |
| Quote from a peer reviewed article | | |
| Photo of the 7 train | | |
| Summary of an idea from a New York Times article | | |
| Graphs and Charts from a Book | | |
| The earth is round | | |
| United States Census data from 2020 | | |
| Song lyrics by Beyonce | | |
| Anti-Vaccine YouTube video | | |
| Quote from a U.S. Government website | | |
| Your own words and ideas | | |