

What Is Citation?

A "citation" is the way you tell your readers that certain material in your work came from another source. It also gives your readers the information necessary to find that source again, including:

- information about the author
- the title of the work
- the name and location of the company that published your copy of the source
- the date your copy was published
- the page numbers of the material you are borrowing

Why should I cite sources?

Giving credit to the original author by citing sources is the only way to use other people's work without plagiarizing. But there are a number of other reasons to cite sources:

- citations are extremely helpful to anyone who wants to find out more about your ideas and where they came from
- not all sources are good or right -- your own ideas may often be more accurate or interesting than those of your sources. Proper citation will keep you from taking the rap for someone else's bad ideas
- citing sources shows the amount of research you've done
- citing sources strengthens your work by lending outside support to your ideas

Doesn't citing make my work seem less original?

Not at all. On the contrary, citing sources actually helps your reader distinguish your ideas from those of your sources. This will actually emphasize the originality of your own work.

When do I need to cite?

Whenever you borrow words or ideas, you need to acknowledge their source. The following situations almost always require citation:

- whenever you use quotes
- whenever you paraphrase
- whenever you use an idea that someone else has already expressed
- whenever you make specific reference to the work of another
- whenever someone else's work has been critical in developing your own ideas.

Why is Referencing Important?

Citations are not used simply to avoid plagiarism; they have other important roles too.

Referencing allows you to acknowledge the contribution of other writers and researchers in your work. Any university assignments that draw on the ideas, words or research of other writers must contain citations.

Referencing is also a way to give credit to the writers from whom you have borrowed words and ideas. By citing the work of a particular scholar, you acknowledge and respect the intellectual property rights of that researcher. As a student or academic, you can draw on any of the millions of ideas, insights and arguments published by other writers, many of whom have spent years researching and writing. All you need to do is acknowledge their contribution to your assignment.

Referencing is a way to provide evidence to support the assertions and claims in your own assignments. By citing experts in your field, you are showing your marker that you are aware of the field in which you are operating. Your citations map the space of your discipline and allow you to navigate your way through your chosen field of study, in the same way that sailors steer by the stars.

References should always be accurate, allowing your readers to trace the sources of information you have used. The best way to make sure you reference accurately is to keep a record of all the sources you used when reading and researching for an assignment.

Citations also make your writing more persuasive.

What kind of information do I need to reference?

Printed books are not the only sources that require acknowledgement. ANY words, ideas or information taken from ANY source requires a reference.

Reference when you are using words or ideas from:

- books and journal articles
- newspapers and magazines
- pamphlets or brochures
- films, documentaries, television programs or advertisements

- websites or electronic resources
- letters, emails, online discussion forums
- personal interviews
- lecturers or tutors. (Not always necessary but check with your lecturer or tutor about their preferences before you draw on their ideas.)

You also need to reference when you reprint any diagrams, illustrations, charts or pictures.

No need to reference when you are:

- writing your own observations or experiment results, for example, a report on a field trip
- writing about your own experiences, for example, a reflective journal
- writing your own thoughts, comments or conclusions in an assignment
- evaluating or offering your own analysis
- using 'common knowledge' (facts that can be found in numerous places and are likely to be known by a lot of people) or folklore
- using generally accepted facts or information. This will vary in different disciplines of study. If in doubt, ask your tutor.

What's a Bibliography?

A bibliography is a list of all of the sources you have used (whether referenced or not) in the process of researching your work. In general, a bibliography should include:

- the authors' names
- the titles of the works
- the names and locations of the companies that published your copies of the sources
- the dates your copies were published
- the page numbers of your sources (if they are part of multi-source volumes)

OK, So What's an Annotated Bibliography?

An annotated bibliography is the same as a bibliography with one important difference: in an annotated bibliography, the bibliographic information is followed by a brief description of the content, quality, and usefulness of the source.

OK, So How Is a Bibliography Different from a "Works Cited" or "References" List?

The Works Cited or References list is only comprised of references to those items *actually cited* in the paper.

