

Citations

What does it mean to cite something?

In the context of writing papers and conducting research, to cite something means to credit the original author of information or an idea that is not your own.

When do I need to cite sources?

So how do you know when to cite? A few basic rules apply.

1. If you quote a resource, cite it.
2. If you paraphrase someone else's idea or statement, cite it.
3. If you state a fact that is not common knowledge, cite it.

For example, the statement "the Internet has brought many changes to the field of journalism" does not need a citation because most people are aware of this. The statement "newspaper circulation has dropped by 20 percent because of the Internet" does need a citation because a specific fact has been stated that is not common knowledge. Furthermore, readers may want to know where this information came from so that they can evaluate it to see how reliable it is.

4. If you're unsure, cite it (or ask your professor).

Source: Leatherby Libraries <http://chapman.libguides.com/content.php?pid=147772&sid=1256613>

Milner Library. (2010). *Citing sources*. Retrieved from <http://ilstu.libguides.com/content.php?pid=71579&sid=533855>

APA Citation Formatting

If you've been asked to submit a paper in APA format, your instructor is asking you to format the page and present the content in a specific way.

What is APA?

Writers generally use APA formatting in fields such as psychology, sociology, criminal justice, health sciences, and education.

MLA is generally used in the humanities, foreign languages, English and literature.

How are MLA and APA different?

Let's start with APA

Here's an example of APA formatting both as it appears "in-text" and as it would appear in the "References" list:

In Text:

Critics of the cartoon have even stated that "Bugs Bunny may appear to be a cuddly wiseacre who means no harm, but the fact is that he is a hostile, destructive force" (Ellis, 1994, p. 409).

or

According to Ellis (1994), "Bugs Bunny may appear to be a cuddly wiseacre who means no harm, but the fact is that he is a hostile, destructive force" (p. 409)

Reference Page

Ellis, N. (1994). Bugs bunny is not what you think he is. *Cartoon Studies Quarterly*, 63, 406-21.

Similarities between APA & MLA

1. Papers are double spaced
2. Margins are one inch all around (Note. Graduate students may be required to use 1.5 inch margin on the left, for binding).
3. Page numbers must be included and positioned in the upper-right corner of the paper.
4. Page headings are positioned on the upper-right hand corner preceding the page number.
5. Sources must be cited at the end of the paper.

Differences

APA	MLA
Requires a title page	Does not require a title page
Requires an abstract	Doesn't require an abstract
Block quotations are indented five spaces from the left margin.	Block quotations are single spaced and double indented (10 spaces) from the left margin.
In-text citation places the author's last name, date of publication, and the page number of the reference in parenthesis.	In-text citation places the author's last name and page number of the reference in parenthesis.
Bibliography is titled "References"	Bibliography is titled "Works Cited"

APA is fairly simple, once you get the hang of it.

For more help with APA, check out <http://www.apastyle.org/>

So... why is formatting important?

Three Reasons Why Citation is Important

Reason One: Because ideas are the currency of academia

First, citing sources is important because the currency of academia is ideas. As a result, academics want to accumulate that currency; they want to get credit for their contributions. When a writer cites ideas, that writer honors those who initiated the ideas.

Reason Two: Because failing to cite violates the rights of the person who originated the idea

Second, keeping track of sources is important because, if you use someone else's idea without giving credit, you violate that person's ownership of the idea. That sense of violation you feel, the sense that something valuable has been stolen from you, suggests why failure to cite sources hurts another person.

Reason Three: Because academics need to be able to trace the origin of ideas

Third, keeping track of sources is important because academics value being able to trace the way ideas develop. Giving credit to the original source of ideas is the right thing to do, as well as the basis on which academia is built.

Basically, we cite and use proper formatting because it is respectful, proper, organized and systematic.

If you have any other questions about APA formatting, please talk to your professor, consult your textbook, or make an appointment with an OWC professional tutor. Thank you!

Source: Brandman University Online Writing Community Basic APA Formatting.