



EBERLY WRITING STUDIO: CITATIONS*

Citations are a crucial aspect of all academic writing and help identify a text as “academic.” The role and purpose of citations are discipline specific. There are several theories about the purpose and role of citations in academic writing. Below are some general guidelines regarding citations that have been adapted from *Telling a Research Story: Writing a Literature Review (TRS)* and *Writing Across the Curriculum: A Critical Source Book (WAC)*.^{*} For information on MLA and APA formats, please see the Writing Center Handout Series “APA Format” and “MLA Format” handouts.

Eight Theories of the Role and Purpose of Citations: (TRS)

1. **Acknowledgment and Recognition:** Citations are used to recognize the intellectual property of authors. Citations are used as a matter of ethics and to avoid plagiarism.
2. **Respect within Discourse Communities:** Citations are used to show respect to past and current scholars in the field. Citations work to acknowledge the achievements of others.
3. **Ongoing Research Guides:** Citations operate as reading guides that point the reader to relevant works in the field/topic. This is often popular among those working in library and information sciences, as well as graduate students.
4. **As “Payment”:** Citations function as a mutual reward system. Rather than “paying” an author for the use of his/her scholarship, writers “pay” them in citations.
5. **Authority and Credibility:** Citations persuade readers that writers know what they are talking about. It gives writers a greater sense of credibility and authority.
6. **Membership:** Citations show that an author is indeed a member of a particular scholarly community. As such, citations demonstrate that an author has a familiarity with his/her chosen field.
7. **As Space Makers:** Citations work to carve out a space for an author’s contribution to his/her scholarly field. By demonstrating what had been done/said through the use of citations, an author creates space for his or her own new contributions and research.
8. **Networking:** the practice of citation actually creates and contributes the field-specific networks which work to foster a sense of community and mutual respect among scholars.

^{*}Zawacki, Terry Myers and Paul M. Rogers. *Writing Across the Curriculum: A Critical Sourcebook*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2012. Print.

Feak, Christine B. and John M. Swales. *Telling a Research Story: Writing a Literature Review*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 2009. Print.

The *Strategic* Use of Citations and Quotations within Different Fields: (*WAP*)

In academic writing, citations constitute a subtle argument regarding the importance, prominence, or centrality of certain sources. As such, texts and authors that are mentioned frequently acquire a sense of status, while those that are overlooked or disregarded may not. Citing a lesser-known or unfamiliar source can assist in bringing wider notice to a particular author or text. Such rhetorical objectives vary widely by field. Consider the following broad examples:

- ✓ Empirical Sciences: In the field of empirical science, it is more common for an author to *list* the references than to provide a detailed discussion of the source. Just naming the source provides, in the proper location within a text, is a succinct and useful form of communication that is recognized by other members within the discourse community.
- ✓ Humanities: In fields such as philosophy or literary criticism an author will typically place emphasis on the *analysis* of specific sources as opposed to merely listing the sources. A common way that this occurs is when an author selects a particular precursor for a lengthier discussion, focusing on points with which they agree and disagree.

The use of quotations within a text also varies by discipline and field. The use of frequent or extended quotations (sometimes referred to as “block” quotes) is more commonly found in the humanities. On the contrary, authors typically avoid lengthy quotes in science-related fields.

Most Commonly Used Citation Systems by Discipline: Each discipline has its own citation style. Listed below are commonly used citation styles and corresponding disciplines. This list is taken from The Owl Purdue Online Writing Lab.

The most commonly used citation systems include:

Modern Language Association (MLA): English, Humanities

American Psychological Association (APA): Psychology, Social Sciences

Chicago Manual of Style (CMS) or Turabian Notes: History, Humanities

Chicago Manual of Style / Turabian Author-Date: Physical, Natural, Social Sciences

- ✓ MLA: This style of citation tends to place an emphasis on authorship, so the name of the author is usually mentioned in the text and it comes first within the citation listed on the Works Cited Page.
- ✓ APA: This style of citation tends to place an emphasis on the date of publication. The date is commonly referenced in the body of the text. Citations are listed on a Reference Page.
- ✓ CMS: This style of citation tends to place an emphasis on source origins. As such, the source origin is often referenced in the body of the text or through the use of footnotes.

Along with MLA, APA, and CMS citation styles, many disciplines have their own citation preferences. Most publish manuals that explain proper usage. For a detailed discipline-specific list of citation manuals see, The University of Maryland’s Library Style Manuals by Discipline (<http://www.lib.umd.edu/ues/guides/citing-styles>).