In-Text Citations

In-text citations are a necessary part of the research process. Without the proper documentation, your research paper will be considered plagiarized.

What are citations?

Citations are a way of documenting where the information being presented in a research paper originated. When an author "cites" his information, then he is giving credit to the source that he gathered his information from in order to present it in his paper.

What are In-Text Citations?

In-text citations, also known as parenthetical citations, are citations that an author inserts into the document being written as opposed to listing them at the end of the paper. A Works Cited page is included at the *end* of the research paper and is a listing of all the sources cited *within* the paper.

What do citations look like?

In-text citations usually look like the sample below of a printed book with a single author:

Literature from the colonial American period was very limited in content (Smith 165).

This information is being credited to "Smith"   In-text Citation

Citations are usually the author's last name and the page number where the information was found. There should never be more than two consecutive page numbers identified. The specific location of the information must be documented precisely.

In-text citations are *always* in parenthesis following the specific source's information. The punctuation of the sentence is placed *after* the citation—think of it as your sentence not being complete until you have properly documented your information. There are a variety of ways to cite a source and you should always double-check your source's documentation style.

When do you use citations?

All information that is not original to the author of the paper or common knowledge *must be cited.* Every time a researcher changes sources or page numbers, then a citation must be placed at the end of the information presented. Occasionally, a researcher will write two to three sentences from the same source and the same two pages. If that is the case, then the researcher may put the in-text citation *at the end of the final sentence.* Otherwise, citations should mark the end of any sentence in which information was gathered from a source and presented by the author.

What is the purpose of a citation?

The purpose of a citation is to tell the reader where the author received his information. This does two things: tells the reader where she can find additional sources and gives credit to the source used. Each in-text citation must match with a source on the Works Cited page or Bibliography that is placed at the end of the document. If you look back at the sample citation, you will see that "Smith" was used as the author's last name. That means the reader should be able to go to the author's Works Cited or Bibliography and find a source written by Smith. *Every in-text citation must match a source on the Works Cited page or Bibliography.*

APA In-text Citations

The APA format uses the author-date format for in-text citations. This means that the author's last name and the year of publication for the source appear in the text. This citation format differs from MLA format by not needing the page number and not being placed at the end of the information gathered.

Citing an Author or Authors

A Work by Two Authors: Name both authors in the signal phrase or in the parentheses each time you cite the work. Use the word "and" between the authors' names within the text and use the ampersand in the parentheses.

Research by Wegener and Petty (1994) supports...

(Wegener & Petty, 1994)

A Work by Three to Five Authors: List all the authors in the signal phrase or in parentheses the first time you cite the source.

(Kernis, Cornell, Sun, Berry, & Harlow, 1993)

In following citations, only use the first author's last name followed by "et al." in the signal phrase or in parentheses.

(Kernis et al., 1993)

*Note: In *et al., et* is not followed by a period.

Six or More Authors: Use the first author's name followed by et al. in the signal phrase or in parentheses.

Harris et al. (2001) argued...

(Harris et al., 2001)

Unknown Author: If the work does not have an author, cite the source by its title in the signal phrase or use the first word or two in the parentheses. Titles of books and reports are italicized or underlined; titles of articles, chapters, and web pages are in quotation marks.

A similar study was done of students learning to format research papers ("Using APA," 2001).

*Note: In the rare case the "Anonymous" is used for the author, treat it as the author's name (Anonymous, 2001). In the reference list, use the name Anonymous as the author.

Organization as an Author: If the author is an organization or a government agency, mention the organization in the signal phrase or in the parenthetical citation the first time you cite the source.

According to the American Psychological Association (2000),...

If the organization has a well-known abbreviation, include the abbreviation in brackets the first time the source is cited and then use only the abbreviation in later citations.

First citation: (Mothers Against Drunk Driving [MADD], 2000)

Second citation: (MADD, 2000)

Two or More Works in the Same Parentheses: When your parenthetical citation includes two or more works, order them the same way they appear in the reference list, separated by a semi-colon.

(Berndt, 2002; Harlow, 1983)

Authors With the Same Last Name: To prevent confusion, use first initials with the last names.

(E. Johnson, 2001; L. Johnson, 1998)

Two or More Works by the Same Author in the Same Year: If you have two sources by the same author in the same year, use lower-case letters (a, b, c) with the year to order the entries in the reference list. Use the lower-case letters with the year in the in-text citation.

Research by Berndt (1981a) illustrated that...

Citing Indirect Sources

If you use a source that was cited in another source, name the original source in your signal phrase. List the secondary source in your reference list and include the secondary source in the parentheses.

Johnson argued that...(as cited in Smith, 2003, p. 102).

*Note: When citing material in parentheses, set off the citation with a comma, as above. Also, try to locate the original material and cite the original source.

Electronic Sources

If possible, cite an electronic document the same as any other document by using the author-date style.

Kenneth (2000) explained...

Unknown Author and Unknown Date: If no author or date is given, use the title in your signal phrase or the first word or two of the title in the parentheses and use the abbreviation "n.d." (for "no date").

Another study of students and research decisions discovered that students succeeded with

tutoring ("Tutoring and APA," n.d.).