Documentation[1]

Documentation is an essential part of any written term work that you will submit for credit at a university. This document explains *why* we document our sources, *when* we document, and one of the most common *styles* used in the humanities (for the purpose of this exercise, we are using the *Chicago Manual of Style*, although students may also use MLA and APA, so long as they are consistent and give specific page references when citing a work).

Documentation shows your reader the sources of the words, ideas, and data that you have used in your essays and reports (including oral reports). In all your work, you are expected to cite your sources carefully and know the rules of documentation—even when you are not provided explicit instruction within your course.

Reasons for Documentation

In Kate Turabian's *Manual for Writers*, a popular guide for students and researchers, she mentions four good reasons to document one's sources.[2]

1. Fair and Honest: It is fair to your sources and honest to your readers to give credit to the authors of the words and ideas you have borrowed for your essay. Fairness and honesty are taken seriously in the academic and professional world. Failure to properly and accurately cite one's sources can result in plagiarism, a serious academic offence with unpleasant penalties.

2. Gives Credibility: According to Turabian, documentation tells "readers the source of the facts so that they can judge their reliability, even check them if they wish. Readers do not trust a source they do not know and cannot find. If they do not trust your sources, they will not trust your argument."[3] In student writing, this type of documentation shows your instructor all the research work you have done.

3. Documentation shows how your ideas relate to the ideas of other writers. Besides showing when you have borrowed the facts or data that other writers have found, documentation also makes it clear how your ideas and opinions fit in with those of other writers. Perhaps your essay examines the differing interpretations of an event by two or more historians, or perhaps your essay agrees with some of a scholar's conclusions but argues against others. Documentation makes it clear that you understand and can engage with the scholarly conversation on your research topic.

4. Documentation helps your readers find sources useful for their own projects. When you research books and articles, the citations and bibliography lead you to resources that you can use for your own project. Likewise, your readers will find your citations useful. For example, your term paper and its research might lead your tutor to a new source for his or her research or teaching projects.

When to Cite

---

1 This skills module was written by Dr. Marc Cels of Athabasca University. It has been adapted to fit the content of this course.

2 Kate L. Turabian *et al*., *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers.* 7th ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 133-134.

3 Turabian, 134.

According to Turabian, we must cite our sources in three situations:[4]

1. when directly quoting the words of your source;
2. when paraphrasing the ideas of the source by expressing them in your own words; and
3. when using ideas, facts, or methods borrowed from your source.

Jules R. Benjamin, author of *A Student's Guide to History*, explains that we should always cite controversial facts or opinions, evidence that is critical to supporting our argument, and statistics.[5]

In addition, you may cite sources that you did not quote or paraphrase; sources which you found useful in your research and may interest your readers.[6] As you read scholarly writing, you will notice that some writers use footnotes to add comments and asides that are not necessary to the argument of the essay. These "discursive footnotes" should not distract a reader—they are best reserved for explaining an aspect of the evidence or anticipating a minor question.

Using the *Chicago Manual of Style*

When documenting sources, scholars and students must follow a standardized style for formatting the information. Most styles are similar in that a reader can easily identify the author, title, publisher, and year of a source. Researchers usually consult a particular style guide that explains how to format documentation.

Preference of disciplines in the humanities:

The notes-bibliography system most commonly used by those in the humanities to cite their sources is the *Chicago Manual of Style*.[7] Because it is a massive reference book, researchers often use shorter guides, for example, Turabian's *Manual* or Benjamin's *Guide* . Also commonly used is the *Chicago-Style Citation Quick Guide*.

Various citation styles and their rules may be found at http://library.concordia.ab.ca/services/citing.php.

Classicists prefer the humanities style (note-bibliography) form of documentation which places a little number at the end of the sentence and a corresponding numbered note at the foot of the page. The source is also listed a bibliography attached to the end of the essay. Footnotes are easier to read than endnotes, especially when reading an electronic version. Some other disciplines use an in-text citation system (such as MLA or APA) that places brief information about the source in parenthesis at the end of a sentence and the full publication information in a bibliography at the end of the essay. The MLA style, for example, gives the author's surname and page number, like this (Cels 41). The APA in-text citation gives the name, year, and page, like this (Cels, 2008, p. 41). Footnotes or endnotes are much better than a parenthetical

---

4 Ibid.

5 Jules R. Benjamin, *A Student's Guide to History*. 11th ed. (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's Press, 2010), 141. The information cited here is relevant to all disciplines in the humanities, not just history.

6 For example, a student who chooses to compare three different scholarly opinions about Julius Caesar might indicate two other scholarly opinions that could not be included in her short essay.

7 University of Chicago Press. *Chicago Manual of Style.* 15th ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).

system for classicists because classical research often involves complicated written sources, such as unpublished books, stone inscriptions, scrolls, paintings, books with unknown authors, laws, accounts, and personal papers.

There are various software systems available to help researchers automatically format (and re-format) citations. For example, "Reference Works" is an online citation application that you can use to create bibliographies. You should, however, be capable of writing or reading a citation without relying on a software system.

Citation Models

It is not necessary to memorize the minute details of your chosen citation style, but you do need to follow its citation models precisely. First, determine the type of source you are using in the citation or bibliography entry. For example, is it a journal article? a book? a book section? an edited book? Find the appropriate model in the citation guide of your choice. Follow the model appropriate for formatting the source within a footnote (N). If you miss an item or incorrectly format it, the reader may become confused.

Information for Documentation

Journal Articles: E-journals will usually provide a complete citation that can be copied or downloaded; however, you will likely have to format the citation properly. Print journals often provide citations on the bottom of the first page; otherwise, check the title page, the volume, issue and year.

Books: It is best to take information from the book itself—library catalogues can contain errors. The publication information is found on the title page of a book and the copyright page. Record the city where the publisher is based. If more than one place is given, take the first city. The copyright page will list the dates of earlier editions and sometimes reprints—this can be confusing. Each time a book is published (in a revised edition, 2nd edition, or later editions), there may be updates and changes, even just in the pagination. Your citation or bibliography must be clear about which version of the book is being referenced. If there is a list of copyright (©) dates on the copyright page, the last date usually refers to the book you are using. Reprints are exact copies and have the same page numbers; do not use re-print dates.

If Using Footnotes: According to Benjamin's guide, the note number should be placed at the end of a sentence, after all punctuation (including quotation marks) as is done in this sentence.[8] Today, creating footnotes (or endnotes) is made easier with the use of computers and software that automatically format citations. For example, in MS Word, use the Help menu for instructions on how to include footnotes (use Arabic numerals: 1, 2, 3…).

Format of Citations: Students sometimes get confused about where to place the note numbers in their essay. As Benjamin mentions in his guide, the first reference to a source should provide the full, complete information as shown in the models. In second references, use a shortened version, usually just the author's name.[9] If the essay uses more than one source by the same author, then short references should include the title in order to avoid confusion. When a note cites the same source as the previous note, some scholars will use the word "Ibid.", an abbreviation for the Latin word *ibidem*, meaning "in the same place." The notes for this module can be used as examples. You may use "Ibid." or the author's name in a short form citation—but you must be consistent.

Organizing Bibliography: In the Chicago Style (used here for the purpose of providing an example), entries for bibliographies follow a different format than entries for citations, so you must consult a style guide such

---

8 Benjamin, 173-4.

9 Benjamin, 176.

as the *Quick Guide*. It explains how each entry should be formatted (N). Some citation software will automatically create bibliography entries when a citation is inserted in a footnote. Bibliographies are single spaced with a line between each entry. Each entry is arranged alphabetically by the author's last name. After the first line, entries are indented. If you are unsure of how to apply a "hanging indent," use the Help menu of your word processor software.

Chicago style entries will look like this:

Horsley, Richard A., ed. *A People's History of Christianity Vol. I: Christian Origins*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010.

Wilkin, Robert Lewis. *The Christians as the Romans Saw Them*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984.

Tips on Organizing Citations

1. Unfinished documentation means an unfinished paper and may be considered plagiarism.
2. Note the bibliographic information of sources while taking notes.
3. Cite while you write—it is much harder to remember where citations belong after writing your essay.
4. Abide by the style guide required for the assignment, course, or discipline.