

## Writing Citations

**Goals:** Introduce students to the basics of writing stylistically correct citations for a variety of sources and have them produce a short, correctly formatted bibliography.

**Outcomes:**

Students will correctly format the essential elements of a citation to create five bibliographic entries, including entries for at least one book, one book essay, one journal article, one newspaper article, and one website.

**Materials:**

- Instruction room with computers and projector.
- Examples of the critical elements of a book and a journal article with the elements out of order to format in class.
- Sample sheet of each type of citation in correct format to hand out to the students.
- Lists of sources for each individual student with critical and non-critical components of the citation for them to put together as an assignment. Each student should be provided with, at minimum, an example of a book, book essay, journal article, newspaper article, and a website. As relevant, other items such as reviews, interviews or letters may be added.

**Time Required:** 25 minutes maximum/15 minutes minimum

**Lesson:**

- Prior to class, the librarian should know what style the professor prefers for the class and the students should be made aware of this. Typically Chicago for history/social science, APA for sciences and MLA for English/humanities.
- 5 min. {
  - Define what a bibliography is—a list of citations made up of all the sources you consult in preparation for a research project. Even if you do not directly quote an item, you should still cite it in the bibliography if used to gain knowledge you did not previously have.
  - Identify the essential elements of a citation. This includes, but is not limited to, the title, author, publisher, and date of publication of each work.
  - Stress that several citation styles exist and that they are similar but have different critical approaches to presentation, based on punctuation, indentation, capitalization, text effects (italics, underline), date format, and type of item.
  - Encourage students always to check with the professor to see what style he/she prefers in a bibliography.
  - Emphasize the importance of consistency, as scholars use bibliographies to communicate with one another, and they expect, for instance, that quotation marks in Chicago style indicate an article title.
- 5 min. {
  - **Action:** The librarian will show on the screen a correct example of a citation for a book (should be long enough to run on to a second line). With the sample on the screen, the librarian will provide a list of elements (out of order) for another book. The class will work together to create a correct citation for the book and the librarian will type the students' instruction on-screen. Librarian should take care to let the students drive each element of the citation, including exact punctuation and capitalization. Librarian can correct the item at the end (ask "Are you sure this is correct?").
- 3 min. {
  - **Action:** Repeat for at least one other type of source. Other sources can be covered if additional time is added to the session.
- 2 min. {
  - Inform students that librarians can help the students create and proofread bibliographies any time. Appointments encouraged.
  - Hand out sample sheets and show students the citation website.
  - A good idea if time permits: Show students how to indent easily in Word using the ruler bar.

## Creating Bibliographic Citations Assignment

Librarian: \_\_\_\_\_

Due Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Professor: \_\_\_\_\_

### Instructions:

1. You have been provided with a list of elements for 5 items that you should form into stylistically correct citations. For this class you are using the \_\_\_\_\_ format style.

Present your list of items in alphabetical order by author, as you would do for any bibliography.

2. Write down at least one thing about this lesson that was difficult, or that was not understood; and one that was new/previously unknown.

3. *Optional:* Choose two of the bibliographic entries you have created. Write a short paragraph about how they are different and why.

### Hints:

- You have been given at least one book, one book essay, one journal article, one newspaper article, and one Web site. Part of your job is to figure out which type of item you are citing and present it so that your reader can tell immediately what it is.
- Pay careful attention to the rules of indentation, capitalization, punctuation, text effects (underlining, italicizing, etc.), and date formats for each item. Date formats in particular may change depending on the type of item.
- Copies of the \_\_\_\_\_ style manual are available in the reference section of the library. You may make an appointment with your librarian for help, although he or she is not permitted to give you direct answers for this assignment.
- You may not need to use all of the elements that have been provided for each item.