

CITATION GUIDE CHEAT SHEET

Quick reference for APA, MLA, and Chicago citation styles. Print this for easy access while writing!

□ WHICH STYLE TO USE?

Citation Style	Common Disciplines	Key Feature
APA	Psychology, Social Sciences, Education, Business	Author-Date format
MLA	Humanities, Literature, Languages, Arts	Author-Page format
Chicago	History, Some Humanities, Publishing	Notes-Bibliography or Author-Date

Always check your assignment requirements!

□ APA STYLE (7th Edition)

In-Text Citations

Scenario	Format	Example
One Author	(Author, Year)	(Smith, 2023)
Two Authors	(Author1 & Author2, Year)	(Smith & Jones, 2023)
Three or More	(First Author et al., Year)	(Smith et al., 2023)
Direct Quote	(Author, Year, p. #)	(Smith, 2023, p. 45)
No Author	("Title," Year)	("Climate Change," 2023)
No Date	(Author, n.d.)	(Smith, n.d.)
Multiple Sources	(Author1, Year; Author2, Year)	(Smith, 2023; Jones, 2022)

Narrative Citations

Type	Example
In Sentence	Smith (2023) argues that...
With Quote	According to Smith (2023), "quote here" (p. 45).

APA Reference List Format

General Rules: - Alphabetical by author's last name - Hanging indent (0.5 inch) - Double-spaced - Title: "References" (centered, bold)

BOOKS

One Author:

Author, A. A. (Year). Title of book (Edition if not 1st). Publisher.

Example:

Smith, J. K. (2023). Research methods in psychology (3rd ed.). McGraw-Hill.

Two Authors:

Author, A. A., & Author, B. B. (Year). Title of book. Publisher.

Three or More Authors:

Author, A. A., Author, B. B., & Author, C. C. (Year). Title of book. Publisher.

Edited Book:

Editor, A. A. (Ed.). (Year). Title of book. Publisher.

Chapter in Edited Book:

Author, A. A. (Year). Chapter title. In E. E. Editor (Ed.), Book title (pp. xx-xx). Publisher.

JOURNAL ARTICLES**Basic Format:**

Author, A. A., Author, B. B., & Author, C. C. (Year). Title of article. Journal Name, Volume(Issue), page-page. <https://doi.org/xxx>

Example:

Smith, J. K., & Jones, M. L. (2023). Social media and mental health. Journal of Psychology, 45(3), 123-145. <https://doi.org/10.1234/jpsych.2023.45.3.123>

With DOI: (preferred)

Author, A. A. (Year). Article title. Journal Name, Volume(Issue), pages. <https://doi.org/xxxxx>

Without DOI:

Author, A. A. (Year). Article title. Journal Name, Volume(Issue), pages.

WEBSITES**Organization Website:**

Organization Name. (Year, Month Day). Page title. Site Name. URL

Example:

American Psychological Association. (2023, January 15). Understanding depression. APA.org. <https://www.apa.org/depression>

No Author:

Page title. (Year, Month Day). Website Name. URL

No Date:

Author/Organization. (n.d.). Page title. Website Name. URL

OTHER COMMON SOURCES**Newspaper Article:**

Author, A. A. (Year, Month Day). Article title. Newspaper Name. URL

Magazine Article:

Author, A. A. (Year, Month). Article title. Magazine Name, Volume(Issue), pages.

Report:

Author, A. A. (Year). Report title (Report No. xxx). Publisher. URL

Dissertation/Thesis:

Author, A. A. (Year). Title [Doctoral dissertation, University Name]. Database Name. URL

YouTube Video:

Author/Channel. (Year, Month Day). Video title [Video]. YouTube. URL

Social Media:

Author [@username]. (Year, Month Day). First 20 words of post [Type of post]. Platform. URL

☐ **MLA STYLE (9th Edition)**

In-Text Citations

Scenario	Format	Example
One Author	(Author page)	(Smith 45)
Two Authors	(Author1 and Author2 page)	(Smith and Jones 45)
Three or More	(First Author et al. page)	(Smith et al. 45)
No Author	("Title" page)	("Climate Change" 12)
Corporate Author	(Organization page)	(CDC 23)
Multiple Sources	(Author1 page; Author2 page)	(Smith 45; Jones 67)

Narrative Citations

Type	Example
In Sentence	Smith argues that... (45).
With Quote	According to Smith, "quote here" (45).

MLA Works Cited Format

General Rules: - Alphabetical by author's last name - Hanging indent (0.5 inch) - Double-spaced - Title: "Works Cited" (centered)

BOOKS

One Author:

Author Last Name, First Name. Title of Book. Publisher, Year.

Example:

Smith, John. Research Methods in Psychology. McGraw-Hill, 2023.

Two Authors:

Author1 Last, First, and First Last Author2. Title of Book. Publisher, Year.

Three or More Authors:

First Author Last, First, et al. Title of Book. Publisher, Year.

Edited Book:

Editor Last, First, editor. Title of Book. Publisher, Year.

Chapter in Edited Book:

Author Last, First. "Chapter Title." Book Title, edited by Editor First Last, Publisher, Year, pp. xx-xx.

JOURNAL ARTICLES

Print Journal:

Author Last, First. "Article Title." Journal Name, vol. #, no. #, Year, pp. xx-xx.

Example:

Smith, John. "Social Media and Mental Health." Journal of Psychology, vol. 45, no. 3, 2023, pp. 123-145.

Online Journal with DOI:

Author Last, First. "Article Title." Journal Name, vol. #, no. #, Year, pp. xx-xx. DOI.

Online Journal with URL:

Author Last, First. "Article Title." Journal Name, vol. #, no. #, Year, pp. xx-xx. URL.

WEBSITES

Basic Format:

Author Last, First. "Page Title." Website Name, Publisher/Organization, Date, URL.

Example:

Smith, John. "Understanding Depression." American Psychological Association, 15 Jan. 2023, www.apa.org/depression.

No Author:

"Page Title." Website Name, Publisher, Date, URL.

No Date:

Author Last, First. "Page Title." Website Name, Publisher, URL. Accessed Day Month Year.

OTHER COMMON SOURCES

Newspaper Article:

Author Last, First. "Article Title." Newspaper Name, Day Month Year, p. #.

Magazine Article:

Author Last, First. "Article Title." Magazine Name, Day Month Year, pp. xx-xx.

Film/Movie:

Title. Directed by First Last, Production Company, Year.

YouTube Video:

Author/Channel Name. "Video Title." YouTube, uploaded by Channel, Day Month Year, URL.

Tweet:

Author Real Name [@username]. "Full text of tweet." Twitter, Day Month Year, Time, URL.

☐ **CHICAGO STYLE (17th Edition)**

Two Systems: Notes-Bibliography (N-B) or Author-Date (A-D)

Notes-Bibliography System (Most Common in Humanities)

Footnotes/Endnotes Format

First Citation (Full):

1. Author First Last, Title of Book (Place: Publisher, Year), page.

Subsequent Citations (Short):

2. Author Last Name, shortened title, page.

CHICAGO N-B: BOOKS

First Note:

1. John Smith, Research Methods in Psychology, 3rd ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2023), 45.

Shortened Note:

2. Smith, Research Methods, 67.

Bibliography:

Smith, John. Research Methods in Psychology. 3rd ed. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2023.

CHICAGO N-B: JOURNAL ARTICLES

First Note:

1. John Smith, "Social Media and Mental Health," Journal of Psychology 45, no. 3 (2023): 123.

Bibliography:

Smith, John. "Social Media and Mental Health." Journal of Psychology 45, no. 3 (2023): 123-145.

CHICAGO N-B: WEBSITES

First Note:

1. American Psychological Association, "Understanding Depression," APA.org, January 15, 2023, <https://www.apa.org/depression>.

Bibliography:

American Psychological Association. "Understanding Depression." APA.org. January 15, 2023. <https://www.apa.org/depression>.

Author-Date System (Common in Sciences)

In-Text Citations

Scenario	Format	Example
One Author	(Author Year, page)	(Smith 2023, 45)
Two Authors	(Author and Author Year)	(Smith and Jones 2023)
Three or More	(First Author et al. Year)	(Smith et al. 2023)

Reference List

Book:

Smith, John. 2023. Research Methods in Psychology. 3rd ed. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Journal:

Smith, John. 2023. "Social Media and Mental Health." Journal of Psychology 45 (3): 123-145.

❑ SPECIAL CITATION SCENARIOS

Multiple Authors

# Authors	APA	MLA	Chicago N-B
1	(Smith, 2023)	(Smith 45)	Smith, Title, 45.
2	(Smith & Jones, 2023)	(Smith and Jones 45)	Smith and Jones, Title, 45.
3+	(Smith et al., 2023)	(Smith et al. 45)	Smith et al., Title, 45.

No Author

Style	In-Text	Reference/Works Cited
APA	("Title," 2023)	Title. (2023)...
MLA	("Title" 45)	"Title."...
Chicago	"Title," 45	"Title."...

No Date

Style	Format
APA	(Smith, n.d.)
MLA	Use “Accessed Date” at end of citation
Chicago	Use “accessed Month Day, Year”

Corporate/Organization Author

Style	Example
APA	(Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2023) First use; (CDC, 2023) subsequent
MLA	(CDC 45)
Chicago	CDC, Title, 45.

Citing Multiple Works by Same Author

APA:

(Smith, 2022, 2023) [different years]
(Smith, 2023a, 2023b) [same year, use a, b, c]

MLA:

(Smith, Book Title 45; Smith, Article Title 12)

Chicago:

Smith, Book Title, 45; Smith, Article Title, 12.

QUICK COMPARISON TABLE

Element	APA	MLA	Chicago N-B
In-Text Style	Author-Date	Author-Page	Footnote/Endnote
Author Format	Last, F. M.	Last, First Middle	First Middle Last
Title Style	Sentence case	Title Case	Title Case
Journal Titles	Italicized	Italicized	Italicized
Article Titles	No quotes	“In Quotes”	“In Quotes”
Book Titles	Italicized	Italicized	Italicized
List Title	References	Works Cited	Bibliography
DOI/URL	Include	Include	Include
Access Date	Not required	Required if no date	Optional

COMMON CITATION MISTAKES

MISTAKE → FIX

1. **Wrong Capitalization** - □ APA: “The Effects of Social Media on Mental Health” - □ APA: “The effects of social media on mental health” - □ MLA: “The Effects of Social Media on Mental Health”
2. **Missing Hanging Indent** - □ Smith, J. (2023). Title of work. Publisher. - □ Smith, J. (2023). Title of work. Publisher. [Second line indented]
3. **Incorrect Author Format** - □ APA: John Smith (2023) - □ APA: Smith, J. (2023)
4. **Missing DOI** - □ [Journal article with no DOI listed when one exists] - □ Always include DOI when available (APA & MLA)
5. **Incorrect Punctuation** - □ MLA: (Smith 2023, pg. 45) - □ MLA: (Smith 45)
6. **URL Formatting** - □ APA: Retrieved from http://... - □ APA: https://... (no “Retrieved from”)
7. **Et al. Overuse** - □ Using “et al.” for two authors - □ Use full names for 1-2 authors; et al. for 3+
8. **Missing Commas** - □ APA: (Smith 2023) - □ APA: (Smith, 2023)

□ FORMATTING QUICK REFERENCE

General Paper Formatting

Element	APA	MLA	Chicago
Font	Times New Roman 12pt	Times New Roman 12pt	Times New Roman 12pt
Spacing	Double	Double	Double
Margins	1 inch all sides	1 inch all sides	1 inch all sides
Alignment	Left	Left	Left
Indent	0.5 inch	0.5 inch (Tab)	0.5 inch
Title Page	Yes	No (unless requested)	Yes
Page Numbers	Top right with header	Top right	Top right or bottom center
Header	Running head (shortened title)	Last name + page #	Optional

Title Page Elements

APA: - Title (bold, centered, Title Case) - Author name - Institutional affiliation - Course number and name - Instructor name - Due date - Page number (1) with running head

MLA: - No separate title page (unless requested) - Top left: Your name, instructor, course, date - Center: Title (Title Case, no bold/italics/underline)

Chicago: - Title (centered, 1/3 down page) - By [Your Name] (centered, middle) - Course, instructor, date (centered, bottom 1/3)

□ ABBREVIATIONS

Common Abbreviations in Citations

Abbreviation	Meaning	Used In
et al.	and others	All styles (3+ authors)
n.d.	no date	APA
p. / pp.	page / pages	APA, Chicago
vol.	volume	MLA, Chicago
no.	number	MLA, Chicago
ed.	edition / editor	All styles
trans.	translator	All styles
DOI	Digital Object Identifier	APA, MLA
URL	Uniform Resource Locator	All styles

□ WHEN TO CITE

□ ALWAYS CITE:

- Direct quotes (word-for-word from source)
- Paraphrased ideas (source's idea in your words)
- Statistics and data
- Theories, models, frameworks
- Research findings and results
- Specific facts not common knowledge
- Images, graphs, charts from sources
- Others' opinions or arguments

□ DON'T CITE:

- Your own original ideas
- Your own research/experiments
- Common knowledge (historical dates, basic facts)
- Widely known information
- Your own analysis and interpretation

When in doubt, CITE! Better to over-cite than under-cite.

□ PLAGIARISM WARNING

Types of Plagiarism:

1. **Direct Plagiarism:** Copying text without quotes or citation
2. **Self-Plagiarism:** Reusing your own previous work
3. **Mosaic Plagiarism:** Mixing your words with source's words
4. **Accidental Plagiarism:** Forgetting to cite or improper paraphrasing

How to Avoid:

- Always cite sources
- Use quotation marks for exact words
- Paraphrase completely in YOUR words
- Keep careful notes while researching
- Use citation management tools (Zotero, Mendeley, EndNote)
- Run plagiarism checker before submitting

Consequences: Failing grade, course failure, academic dismissal

☐ CITATION TOOLS & RESOURCES

Citation Generators (Use with Caution!)

- **Zotero** (Free, browser extension)
- **Mendeley** (Free, desktop + mobile)
- **EndNote** (Paid, comprehensive)
- **EasyBib** (Free basic, paid advanced)
- **Citation Machine** (Free)

☐ **Warning:** Always double-check auto-generated citations! These tools make mistakes.

Official Style Guides

- **APA:** <https://apastyle.apa.org>
- **MLA:** <https://style.mla.org>
- **Chicago:** <https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org>

University Resources

- Your university library website
 - Writing center consultations
 - Librarian help (citation experts!)
 - Online citation guides from your institution
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☐ MOBILE-FRIENDLY QUICK REFERENCE

In-Text Citation Formulas

APA: (Author, Year, p. #)

MLA: (Author Page#)

Chicago: Footnote number → Full citation at bottom

Reference Entry Formulas

APA: Author, A. A. (Year). Title. Source.

MLA: Author. Title. Source, Year.

Chicago: Author. Title. Source, Year.

☐ CITATION CHECKLIST

Before submitting, verify:

In-Text Citations: - ☐ Every claim from a source is cited - ☐ Citation format matches style guide - ☐ Page numbers included for direct quotes - ☐ Author names spelled correctly - ☐ Punctuation is correct

Reference List/Bibliography: - ☐ All cited sources are listed - ☐ No uncited sources in list - ☐ Alphabetical order - ☐ Hanging indent applied - ☐ Consistent formatting - ☐ All required information included - ☐ DOIs/URLs included where appropriate - ☐ No formatting errors

Overall: - ☐ Same citation style used throughout - ☐ Double-spaced - ☐ Correct page header/number - ☐ List title correct (References/Works Cited/Bibliography)

□ PRO TIPS

- 1. Start Citing as You Write** Don't wait until the end! Add citations as you draft to save time and avoid missing sources.
 - 2. Use a Citation Manager** Zotero, Mendeley, or EndNote will save hours of formatting time.
 - 3. Save Source Information Immediately** When you find a source, record ALL citation info right away (you won't find it again!).
 - 4. Create a Master Reference Document** Keep all sources in one document as you research.
 - 5. Always Use Hanging Indent** Set up your word processor to do this automatically.
 - 6. Include DOIs When Available** DOIs are preferred over URLs in APA and increasingly in MLA.
 - 7. Double-Check Everything** Citation generators are helpful but often make mistakes.
 - 8. Ask for Help** Librarians LOVE helping with citations. Use them!
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□ CITATION STYLE DECISION TREE

What's your subject?

- └ Psychology, Education, Social Sciences? → APA
- └ Literature, Languages, Arts? → MLA
- └ History, Some Humanities? → Chicago
- └ Sciences (Biology, Chemistry)? → CSE or APA
- └ Medicine, Health Sciences? → AMA or APA
- └ Engineering, Tech? → IEEE

Still unsure? → CHECK YOUR ASSIGNMENT INSTRUCTIONS!

□ HELP RESOURCES

Need Citation Help?

- 1. Your Assignment Instructions** (always start here!)
 - 2. Your Professor** (ask during office hours)
 - 3. University Writing Center** (free consultations)
 - 4. University Librarian** (citation experts)
 - 5. Official Style Manual** (APA Manual, MLA Handbook, etc.)
 - 6. Purdue OWL** (excellent free resource: owl.purdue.edu)
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□ CITATION MANAGEMENT WORKFLOW

Step 1: Find Source

Step 2: Immediately save full citation info

Step 3: Add to citation manager

Step 4: Take notes + cite as you draft

Step 5: Auto-generate bibliography

Step 6: Manually verify all citations

Step 7: Final proofread before submission

Cheat Sheet Version: 2.0

Last Updated: 2025

Print This! Keep it next to you while writing.

© Citation Guide Cheat Sheet - For Academic Use

☐ REMEMBER

Good citations: ✓ Give credit to original authors

✓ Allow readers to find your sources

✓ Demonstrate research depth

✓ Prevent plagiarism

✓ Build your academic credibility

When in doubt: → CITE IT!

→ Check the official style guide

→ Ask for help

You've got this! ☐ ☐