Citing Sources in History:  
A Brief Guide for Undergraduates at the University of Prince Edward Island

“Citing” or “citation” is the precise documentation of historical evidence gathered from various sources—whether print, oral, audio-visual, or electronic. You must document:

- direct quotations;
- any paraphrase or summary you make of a particular source; and
- facts that are not common knowledge, or that could not be accessed in a standard reference work.

Not documenting your evidence means you are guilty of plagiarism, or an attempt to pass off someone else’s words and/or work as your own. University students often inadvertently plagiarize by copying passages word-for-word from sources, and then later using this material in their papers without crediting the sources. To avoid committing unintentional plagiarism, take notes in your own words, identify direct quotations, and cite sources. For more information on how to avoid plagiarism, consult the Plagiarism Tutorial http://resources.library.upei.ca/plagiarism/index.htm

You will need to include both notes and a bibliography in each of your research papers.

A note precisely documents a piece of evidence. A bibliography lists the sources used in writing the paper, including the sources cited in notes, as well as any important works you found helpful, but did not cite. Full details must be included for each source, to allow your readers to locate the material you have used and to retrace the steps of your argument in more detail.

Notes provide complete publication information either at the bottom of the page (footnotes) or at the end of the paper (endnotes). Many word processing programs allow one to easily insert note numbers. A raised number in the text indicates that a quotation, summary, or paraphrase has been borrowed from a source; to find the publication information for that source, readers consult the footnote or endnote with the corresponding number. The first time you cite a source, the note should include publication information for that work, as well as the page number on which the specific quotation, paraphrase, or summary may be found.


For subsequent references to a source you have already cited, give the author’s last name, followed by a comma, and the page or pages cited.


If you cite more than one work by the same author, include a short form of the title in subsequent citations. A short form of the title of a book is italicized; a short form of the title of an article is put in quotation marks.


A bibliography appears at the end of the paper. Alphabetize the list by the last names of the authors (or editors); if a work does not have an author or editor, alphabetize by the first word of the title (other than an initial article, such as “a”, “an”, or “the”).

Examples follow for how materials should appear in both a note and the bibliography.

- book (with single author)
- book (with two or three authors)
- chapter, essay, or other part of a book
- article in a reference book
- journal article
- journal article in full text from an online database
- book review in a periodical
- newspaper article
- dissertation or thesis
- unpublished interview by writer of paper
- videorecording or film
- radio or television programme
- world wide web
- email message

**BOOK (WITH SINGLE AUTHOR)**

**Note**

**Bibliography**

**BOOK (WITH TWO OR THREE AUTHORS)**

**Note**
Bibliography

CHAPTER, ESSAY, OR OTHER PART OF A BOOK

Note

Bibliography

ARTICLE IN A REFERENCE BOOK

Well-known reference works, such as major dictionaries and encyclopedias, should usually be cited only in notes.

Note

For reference works that are less well known, include the publication details in your notes, and list the work in your bibliography.

Note

Bibliography

JOURNAL ARTICLE

Note
Bibliography

JOURNAL ARTICLE IN FULL TEXT FROM AN ONLINE DATABASE

Note

Bibliography

BOOK REVIEW IN A PERIODICAL

Note

Bibliography

NEWSPAPER ARTICLE

Note

Bibliography

DISSERTATION OR THESIS

Note

UNPUBLISHED INTERVIEW BY WRITER OF PAPER

Note

Bibliography
Pope, Peter. Interview by author, September 30, 2000, Summerside.

VIDEORECORDING OR FILM

Note

Bibliography

RADIO OR TELEVISION PROGRAMME

Cite television programmes, radio programmes, and other broadcast sources only in notes. Include at least the title of the programme and the date on which you watched or listened to it.

Note

WORLD WIDE WEB

Web sites may be cited in running text instead of in a note, and are commonly omitted from a bibliography as well. If including in a note and bibliography, use the following format:

Note
Bibliography

EMAIL MESSAGE

E-mail messages may be cited in running text (“In an e-mail message to the author on October 31, 2005, John Smith revealed…”) instead of in a note, and they are rarely listed in a bibliography.

This guide is based on:


Refer to these two publications for examples of how to cite materials not covered in this basic guide.

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