

11.016 The Once and Future City: Citation Guide (updated March 2013)¹

Citation: “The action of citing or quoting any words or written passage, quotation; in *Law*, a reference to decided cases or books of authority.”

— from the *Oxford English Dictionary*

Why cite?

Citation (footnotes, bibliography, parenthetical references in the text of your paper), are all ways of showing and giving credit to the authors of your sources. Citations are also a signal that you are participating in a particular scholarly conversation, in a particular discipline. The format of the citation structure—in this case, footnotes and bibliography—are designed to help other researchers and scholars read and understand your work in context.

In effect, having your paper look like work by an Urban Studies scholar is part of the work of making sure that substantively, it is a work of Urban Studies, because even the citation format shows that you are thinking (and writing) like a researcher in this field.

When to Cite

- When you provide a direct quotation from a source. You need to be clear who gathered this material and where you found it in its original form. This also requires that you use quotation marks to signal your use of a source verbatim.
- When you paraphrase or summarize a source, either for providing facts or concepts in your work.
- When you provide data, information or facts.
- When you present someone else’s ideas or draw a concept from another discussion or study. This means you are citing or summarizing claims, interpretations, conclusions or lines of reasoning that belong, originally, to someone else. The citation allows a reader to check those sources and it gives credit to the originator.

Signal Phrases

It is also helpful to signal to your reader, through your prose, when you are using a source and how. You can do this by including the name of the author in a signal phrase that introduces or announces the facts or concepts you are drawing on, such as “Anne Whiston Spurr argues that...” or “According to Kenneth Jackson...” You should not, however, include a page reference in your signal phrase. That belongs in your footnote (or in parentheses at the end of your sentence if you are using MLA style).

¹ This Citation Guide is adapted from one provided in 2012 by Andrea Volpe.

You still need to provide a footnote to the complete source, but this habit will clearly identify your use of the source to the reader and give your prose more fluidity.

Following this habit consistently while taking notes will also speed up your citation process and give you confidence in your accuracy.

The Problem of Common Knowledge

What should you do when you don't know whether an idea or fact originates with one individual or is "common knowledge"? Here's what the *MIT Handbook on Academic Integrity* says:

"Common Knowledge"

You may have heard people say that you do not have to cite your source when the information you include is "common knowledge." But what is common knowledge? Broadly speaking, common knowledge refers to information that the average, educated reader would accept as reliable without having to look it up.

This includes:

- Information that most people know such as that water freezes at 32 degrees Fahrenheit or that Barack Obama is the first American of mixed race to be elected president.
- Information shared by a cultural or national group, such as the names of famous heroes or events in the nation's history that are remembered and celebrated.
- Knowledge shared by members of a certain field, such as the fact that the necessary condition for diffraction of radiation of wavelength from a crystalline solid is given by Bragg's law. However, what may be common knowledge in one culture, nation, academic discipline or peer group may not be common knowledge in another.

To help you decide whether information can be considered common knowledge, ask yourself:

- Who is my audience?
- What can I assume they already know?
- Will I be asked where I obtained my information?

From *Academic Integrity at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology: A Handbook for Students* (2012).

Citation Formats

If you choose citation software to help you manage your bibliography and footnotes, you should be able to opt for which citation style you prefer. However, if you don't have that option, you'll need to be sure to review the appropriate style guide. The citation style used by most historians is the *Chicago Manual of Style*, named for the University of Chicago Press where it originated. In its most expanded version, the *CMOS* is used by editors to format manuscripts. The *MLA* style is preferred by scholars in Literature. There are some practical reasons pertaining to the varying purposes for sources in these disciplines that account for the different emphases in these styles.

You can find all the rules for citing different kinds of sources and media for Chicago style, as well as sample layouts, on the official [Chicago Manual of Style](#) website.

Similarly, use the [Purdue Online Writing Lab](#) at Purdue University to access rules and samples for MLA style.

How to Cite: An Overview

Images

Illustrations can be referred to in the text, and/or they can be cited at the end of the sentence. It might be helpful to make an explicit choice about why you use each technique.

If you describe the image in depth in prose, then it makes sense to use a footnote. If you only mention the illustration by figure number in the text, then your caption will need to do more work and can provide the citation.

Maps

Example of mentioning a map figure in prose:

“In the late 1700s and early-to-mid-1800s, the attention to Cambridge’s potential as a port off of the Boston Harbor prompted a great deal of development around Central Square, then located in “Cambridgeport.”¹ The influence of Cambridge’s port potential can be read from Central Square’s modern street grid, which tends towards an orientation parallel to the Charles River Basin. One can see in figure 3 that by 1810 the West Boston Bridge connected Main Street to Boston, possibly indicating Central Square’s (then Cambridgeport’s) economic promise as a port and certainly orienting Central Square to Boston in addition to Old Cambridge.”

Example of citing a map parenthetically

“Interestingly, comparing the histories of Prospect Street to Massachusetts Avenue can test this hypothesis. It appears that the intersecting Prospect Street was developed for many of the same commercial and social connecting reasons as Massachusetts Avenue. However, Prospect does not seem to be oriented between important natural features, as noted on early maps (figure 3).”

Maps can be referred to by providing full bibliographic information in a caption.

The general formula is to name the genre of the object (a map), the title of the book in which it appears, in italics, and the place of publication, the publisher, and the year in parenthesis.

For example:

Figure 4: Map from *Survey of Architectural History in Cambridge: Northwest Cambridge* (Cambridge: Cambridge Historical Commission, 1977), showing Porter Square circa 1834.

If you are using a web source for your map, the expectations are the same, but add the full URL in your caption:

Figure 1: Map from *Clough's Atlases of Property Owners of Boston in 1798*, (circa 1930-1940), Massachusetts Historical Society, <http://www.masshist.org/online/massmaps/>.

Footnotes

Placed at the bottom of the page, a footnote details the immediate and specific sources of a paraphrase, fact, or direct quotation. A reader can quickly scan your citations to understand what kind of material you are drawing on, and what other scholars you are in conversation with.

Bibliography

The bibliography is a list of all the books you've consulted and read, even if you haven't quoted them directly in the paper. Most often, what you draw on in the footnotes and what you list in your bibliography match up closely. But if there are books you read, that you didn't draw on explicitly in the paper, or books that lead you to interesting sources that you do use, those should be in the bibliography.

(If you are used to MLA style citations, you'll know that the sources you refer to directly in your essay will be listed under Works Cited, and the sources that informed your work but that you have not cited belong in your Works Consulted section.)

Using Footnote Tools

You have the option to make use of a variety of tools to help you streamline the citation process.

1. Use the footnote function in your word processing software. This is not hard, but it will go more smoothly if you don't wing it. Check out this link to the Word 2010 tutorial online: <http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/word-help/insert-delete-or-edit-footnotes-andendnotes-HP001226522.aspx>

And this one for Mac users: <https://support.office.com/en-us/article/Add-or-change-footnotes-or-endnotes-a58d1685-94f6-43f5-ba26-aa15aa62c6ed?ui=en-US&rs=en-US&ad=US&fromAR=1>

2. Use RefWorks. The RefWorks procedure for entering footnotes is a bit labor intensive- it requires you to have all your citations in your RefWorks personal database before you can use the program to format footnotes.

While your word processing system will place your footnotes correctly, it will not put them in the right format. That is up to you. Citation styles differ by discipline and they have much to do with how scholars think differently across the humanities and sciences.