

# Art and Craft of References and their Styles

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## 1. Introduction

Any standard used in any field for any activity results into a standardized input, process and output. Standards not only help bring the uniformity but a kind of universal appeal too. In academics, we follow many standards to initiate and sustain the uniformity. We follow National Assessment and Accreditation Council's (NAAC) standards and those are complied by the accredited colleges and universities in India. In libraries, books are classified according to their subjects using Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC). Even our curriculum is based on the standards set by concerned university or the respective academic regulatory body.

In the context of academic research writing and publishing, citation standards are used to write papers, research projects, articles, monographs, books etc. You need to adhere to specific citation standards and guidelines meant for manuscript structure, style, and crediting sources. Crediting the sources, as per the citation standard, is one of the important tasks of an author. To do this, standardized citation styles need to be followed to bring uniformity in quoting sources and formatting the paper.

The popular and most widely used citation styles are American Psychological Association (APA) style, Modern Language Association (MLA) style, Chicago style, Harvard style etc. These styles belong to particular discipline/s and are being used by authors, publishers, librarians and readers. For instance: APA is used in social sciences and behavioral studies and MLA in humanities. Apart from these styles, there are many publication firms and academic establishments that follow their own 'self-devised citation standards'. For instance: *Economic and Political Weekly*, a popular Indian journal, follows their self-devised citation standard i.e. 'EPW style sheet' (Economic and Political Weekly, 2014). The authors writing to this journal need to adhere to this style sheet to cite the sources in their papers.

The importance of the citations should be understood and the citation styles in paper writing need to be mastered by all those who involve in research and publication activities. Therefore, it is advisable to use the citation manuals (of different citation styles) to know how to present different kind of documents and other bibliographic details. This article has used APA style for citing different sources. The terms: 'citations' and 'references' are used interchangeably in this article. They can be treated as synonyms. You can observe the 'parenthetical in-text citations' in the paper and sources

presented alphabetically under 'references' at the end of this paper. The article aims to help you understand the ins and outs of citations, their utilities, acceptance, presentation styles etc.

## 2. Terms and definitions

First of all, understanding the basic and allied terms related to citations/references are necessary. This helps you use the particular terminology for a particular purpose, while writing any research report/article.

- a) **Cite:** We use this term quite often. This is used for quoting or referring "to an authority outside oneself, usually in support of point or conclusion or by way of explanation or example. In scholarly publication, the source of such a reference is indicated in a footnote or endnote. Also used as a shortened form of the term citation" (Reitz, 2004, p. 143).
- b) **Citation:** The citations and references are commonly used as synonymous. "In literary sense, any written or spoken reference to an authority or precedent or to the verbatim (as it is) words of another speaker or writer..." (Reitz, 2004, p. 142) is termed as citation. Again, "the frequency with which a work is cited is sometimes considered a measure of its importance in the literature of the field. Citation formats vary from one field of study to another but includes at a minimum, the author, title and publication date. An incomplete citation can make a source difficult, if not impossible, to locate" (Reitz, 2004, p. 142).
- c) **In-text citation:** Generally, in-text citations are seen in a paper in two forms viz. parenthetical referencing system and Vancouver referencing system (see point 6). This indicates the source of the document referred to. This is also considered as the main guiding tool to the sources listed at the end of article. For instance: you have taken two sentences from a thesis and quoted the same in your article in a second paragraph. And you mention the name of the author in parenthesis with year of publication of that thesis. This indication is called as in-text citation. This form of in-text citation complies with APA style. And the style you used is APA style. You can see such in-text citation in this article itself. Such in-text citation system is called as parenthetical referencing system (PRS).
- d) **Self-citation:** If an author cites his own paper in his article or thesis and gives credit to it is termed as self-citation. Even though the author is referring to his own paper and making in-text citation/s, the source of that paper needs to be acknowledged by listing the source under references/bibliography (at the end of the paper).
- e) **Reference:** In scholarly publication, references are those items that we have read and specifically referred to (or cited) in our assignment, and the list of sources at the end of the assignment are presented under the head 'references' (Neville, 2011, p. 3).

- f) **Bibliography:** “Strictly speaking, a bibliography is a list of everything you read in preparation for writing an assignment, whether or not you referred specifically to it in the assignment. A bibliography will, therefore, normally contain sources that you have cited in your assignment and also those you found to be influential, but decided not to cite. A bibliography can give a tutor an overview of which authors have influenced your ideas and arguments even if you do not specifically refer to them” (Neville, 2011, p. 3).
- g) **Note-Taking:** This is a useful method for recording any idea or data or information while writing any literary work. According to MLA style there are generally, three types of note-taking methods (MLA, 2009 p.39). They are discussed, in brief, as below.
- a) **Summary:** Summarize if you want to record only the general idea or large amounts of material.
  - b) **Paraphrase:** If you require detailed notes on specific sentences and passages but do not need the exact wording, you may wish to par-phrase- that is, to restate the material in your own words.
  - c) **Quotation:** When you believe that some sentence or passage in its original wording might make an effective addition to your paper, transcribe that material exactly as it appears, word by word, comma for comma. Whenever you quote verbatim from a work, be sure to use quotation marks scrupulously in your notes to distinguish the quotation from summary and paraphrase.

### 3. Are references necessary in research writing?

Yes, references are the integral part of research writing. The sole purpose of referencing “is to synthesize previous research and scholarship with your ideas on the subject. Therefore, you should feel free to use other persons’ words, facts, and thoughts in your research paper, but the material you borrow must not be presented as if it were your own creation” (MLA, 2009 p.55). To be specific, the following five reasons highlight the importance of referencing. References are needed while writing any article/research report to:

- a) support your arguments and give credibility to the information you present in assignments;
- b) (as a means) to separate your own ideas, perceptions, and experiences from the work of others;
- c) enable your tutors to check the accuracy and validity of the evidence presented;
- d) enable your tutors and other interested readers to trace the sources you cite and to use the same evidence for their own purposes and
- e) to avoid accusations of plagiarism (Neville, 2011 p. 2).

#### 4. Which citation style should I follow?

For any piece of writing of any form (article, research paper, thesis, dissertation etc.), you need to follow one specific citation standard. You need to know that the citation styles differ from university to university and journal to journal (see point 5). Therefore, it is important to find out what specific style the university asks its researchers or authors in project writing. For instance: You are doing PhD from University of Mumbai, while report writing, you need to stick to the citation standard recommended by this university. Guidelines may ask you to prepare your references in APA or MLA or university's self-devised style. As discussed in Introduction, this applies even to journals where you need to follow their self-devised citation standard (like EPW's style sheet). So before you begin report writing, find out the citation style your university or a publication firm or journal demands and work accordingly.

#### 5. Who devises the citation styles?

As stated before, generally, the academic/research institution/association or publication firm devises the citation styles. For example: a) APA style by American Psychological Association, the "world's largest scientific and professional organization.. in the United States" (APA, 2014). b) *Economic and Political Weekly's* 'EPW style sheet'

#### 6. What are international citation standards?

There are many international citation standards and each is different from one another in their format and presentation style. The following table (1) gives basic details about the popular citation styles and methods of making in-text citations as well as listing them under references (if it is APA style), works cited (if it is MLA style) and bibliography (if it is Chicago style).

Table-1: International reference styles and their use

<i>Citation styles</i>	<i>Subject areas</i>	<i>Examples of in-text citations</i>	<i>Listing of full citations (at the end of article) under the head:</i>
APA	Social sciences and behavioral sciences	"Research is the key to the expansion of knowledge frontiers" ( <b>Mukherjee, 2014 p.26</b> ).	References
MLA	Humanities	"Research is the key to the expansion of knowledge frontiers" ( <b>26</b> ).	Works Cited
Chicago	Social sciences, humanities and historical studies	"Research is the key to the expansion of knowledge frontiers" <sup>1</sup> .	Bibliography

There are two important segments stated in the above table (see third and fourth columns). Let us understand them in detail.

(a) If you use APA style then your in-text citation (at the end of the derived sentence, phrase, paragraph, word, idea) should carry the name of the author and year of publication in parenthesis. This is considered as PRS (see also 2.c). And you need to put all the citations at the end of the article (based on the type of style you have used) under 'References', if you follow APA style. (b) The MLA uses page numbers in parenthesis in in-text citation and works cited at the end of the article. This style also falls into PRS. (c) The Chicago style uses superscripts in in-text citations and lists citations under bibliography at the end of the article. This system is called as vancouver referencing system (VRS). Let us discuss the above styles:

- a) The APA Style is one of the widely used citation styles in social sciences and behavioral sciences. Many of the Indian educational institutes and publication firms follow APA style. As we discussed in the previous example (see 6.a), "in an APA-style paper, the writer identifies the author and year of each source in parentheses after every reference. That information then directs the reader to more detailed entries on a Reference List at the end of the paper" (ISU Writing Centre, 2014a, p. 1).
- b) *The MLA style* "is often used in the humanities" (ISU Writing Centre, 2014, p. 1). As explained before (see 6.b), "in an MLA-style paper, the writer identifies the author and 'page' of each source in parentheses after every reference. That information then directs the reader to more detailed entries on 'works cited' list at the end of the paper" (ISU Writing Centre, 2014b).
- c) *The Chicago style* "is used in some of the humanities and social sciences and is often used outside the university. In this, the writer directs the reader to entries in a bibliography or reference list by using one of two basic forms of documentation: notes and author/date. However, Chicago style is actually very flexible, and offers writers a choice of several different formats. It even invites the mixing of formats, provided that the result is clear and consistent. For instance, the fifteenth edition of Chicago style permits either footnotes or in-text citation styles; it provides information on in-text citation by page number (like MLA style) or by year of publication (like APA style); it even provides variations in footnote style, depending on whether or not the paper includes a full Bibliography at the end" (Yale College Writing Centre, 2014). Considering its flexibility, it is necessary to go through Chicago style manual.

## **7. Are these styles only about references?**

There is a misconception among the researchers and authors that the citation styles discuss only about making in-text citations and references at the end of the paper, in fact, majority of the guidelines help know various aspects of paper writing apart from guiding how to credit sources. Therefore, citing sources is one of the components of a particular style than the whole itself, be it APA, MLA or even Chicago style. For instance: (a) The APA manual covers, manuscript structure and content; writing clearly and concisely; different mechanics of style; displaying results, crediting sources, reference examples, publication processes (VendenBos, 2010). (b) The MLA style not only teaches you about its style, it also helps you at all stages of your project. It guides you through virtually any

question you may have about writing a research paper, from formulating a topic to adding references at the end of the work (MLA, 2009 p.xiii). So MLA style discusses about research and writing papers, plagiarism and academic integrity, different mechanics of writing, format of the research paper, documentation i.e. preparing the list of works cited, citing sources in the text, abbreviation, guides to writing etc.

## **8. When do I need to cite?**

According to Neville (2011 p.5) you should always cite sources (of documents) in your assignments/projects in the following situations:

- a) To give the reader the source of tables, photos, statistics and diagrams included in your assignment. These may be items directly copied or which have been a source of collation for you.
- b) When describing or discussing a theory, model or practice associated with a particular writer. This would include the names of authors who coined words to label particular phenomena or situations.
- c) To give weight or credibility to an argument presented by you, or supported by you, in your assignment.
- d) When giving emphasis to a particular idea that has found a measure of agreement and support amongst commentators.
- e) To inform the reader of sources of direct quotations or definitions in your assignment.
- f) When paraphrasing another person's idea that you feel is particularly significant or likely to be a subject of debate.

## **9. What is references and bibliography?**

These are the most confused words for researchers and often they are mistaken as synonyms. Generally, *references* are listed out at the end of a literary work. The titles in such lists are actually referred by taking the exact word or phrase or sentences or paragraphs or even paraphrased text and then made in-text citations. On the other hand, *bibliography* is a list of documents listed at the end of the paper. This list comprises both in-text citations (means actual referred citations) as well as the titles that are read and referred by the author to build the background (scene) for his/her article.

## **10. How can I learn and practice citations?**

Indeed, practice makes your citations perfect. Therefore thorough knowledge about any one of the reference styles is imperative. Initially, it is good to start with basics about references and their different styles. The following citation style manuals/handbooks are helpful for understanding the reference styles in detail.

Table-2: Manuals and handbooks of international citation styles

<i>Citation Styles</i>	<i>Titles</i>
APA	VendenBos, G. R (Ed.). (2010). <i>Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association</i> (6 <sup>th</sup> Ed.). Washnigton, DC: American Psychological Association. ISBN: 978-1-4338-0561-5
MLA	Modern Language Association of America, (2009). <i>MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers</i> (2009) (9 <sup>th</sup> Ed.). New York: The Modern Language Association of America. ISBN: 978-1-60329-024-1
Chicago	University of Chicago Press. (2010). <i>The Chicago Manual of Style: The Essential Guide for Writers, Editors and Publishers</i> (16th Ed.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press. ISBN: 978-0-226-10420-1

You can visit your library and read them in detail. The concise manuals of the above styles are also available on Internet. You can find them through any of the search engines.

### **11. How to generate machine-aided references?**

There are two ways to generate machine-aided references. Firstly, you can start working on any one of the reference managers (RMs) online. The RM is a software or computer application that helps manage the sources of citations referred for any research work. This helps add citations as per the conventions and generate automatic bibliographies or references. The popular RMs are: Zotero (<https://www.zotero.org/>) and Mendeley (<http://www.mendeley.com/>). These RMs help generate references or bibliography especially while you are using online resources. You can add, edit, delete and update the citations as and when you want. Secondly, working on Microsoft Office Word by using its ‘Reference’ module, helps devising the references automatically and more clearly. But before using any of such automatic tools, one must have a clear idea about any one of the citation standards. Because if you feed in wrong metadata (bibliographic details like author, title, publisher etc.) you may get a wrong output.

### **12. Can I cite any kind of document or an idea?**

We refer to certain documents that are crucial for our study but we do not know how to cite them in a standard format. The sources like interviews, lectures, telephone conversations, blogs, blog comments, reviews, abstracts, unpublished works, acts, web links etc. are different from the usual sources (like books, articles, conference proceedings etc.). These can be cited formally and majority of the citation styles provide solutions to all such sources. It is interesting to note that, APA manual provides citation solutions/formats to 77 type of sources (VendenBos, 2010). Therefore, one must be inquisitive to refer the required style manual and find necessary solutions to cite different forms of documents.

### 13. How to cite works more convincingly?

Citing of sources is an art. It is presenting your ideas coupled with the thoughts of others (expressed in different sources and forms), for which you are citing and acknowledging them formally. Yet, your paper needs to look original and well presented. Colin Neville’s (2011 p.21) handy manual prepared for School of Management, University of Bradford gives invaluable tips, while quoting the different sources, as stated in Table-3. It is important as we need not use ‘I’ in the academic work, yet we can use the following methods. It really makes our writing more convincing, appealing and impressive too.

Table-3: Methods of citing the sources effectively

<i>When citing work of others</i>	<i>When suggesting that the idea is your own</i>
It has been argued that...(state by whom)	It may be argued that...
...has argued/asserted/suggested/IMPLIED/claimed/stated that	It can be argued that...
Recent evidence suggests... (state who has suggested it).	The problem with this perspective is, however, that...
It has been shown by (state by whom) that...	Another perspective on this topic is that...
Strong evidence was found by (state by whom) that...	It may/might/could be that...
A positive correlation was found by (state by whom) between ...	One question that needs to be asked, is...
The relationship between X and Y has been explored by (state by whom)	However, a contradiction to this argument could/might/may be is that...

Apart from these methods, it is also important that “references in the text must clearly point to specific sources in the list of works cited. The information in your parenthetical references in the text must match the corresponding information in the entries in your list of works cited” (MLA, 2009 pp.214-215).

### 14. Four ‘Ws’ and one ‘H’ of citations:

With the above discussion, as a gist of this paper, the following table helps understand the citations and their use.

Table-4: Four ‘Ws’ and one ‘H’ of citations

<i>Ws and H</i>	<i>Answers</i>
What to cite?	Cite any form of data, information, idea that (is not yours and) supports your study.
When to cite?	Cite (when you want) to support your argument, separate your own ideas, maintain accuracy of facts and of course, avoid accusations of plagiarism (Neville, 2011).
Why to cite?	To authenticate your work as well studied, reviewed and original (in its approach).
Where to cite	Cite in your work appropriately that could be any type of document.
How to cite?	Use standard reference style that is prescribed or followed by any university, publication firms any other literary establishment.



## **15. How do I avoid plagiarism?**

Many of the plagiarism cases are the result of poor understanding and improper use of citation styles by the researchers. You forget to acknowledge the source or wrongly cite the source, then you are bound to make your paper as plagiarised one. So, whether you end up doing intentional or unintentional plagiarism, both lead you to plagiarism only. Therefore we need to understand, how one needs to avoid such an embarrassment. Let us go through the tips given by MLA handbook (MLA, 2009 p.61) to avoid plagiarism. The author needs to do the following:

- a) make a list of writers and viewpoints you discovered in your research and use this list to double-check the presentation of material in your paper;
- b) keep the following three categories distinct in your notes: your ideas, your summaries of others', material, and exact wording you copy;
- c) identify the sources of all material you borrow- exact wording, paraphrases, ideas, arguments, and facts and
- d) check with your instructor when you are uncertain about your use of sources.

## **16. Conclusion**

Quoting a piece of literature or an idea makes your paper more authentic. When you acknowledge the source, you are not only making your paper authentic but original too. Original work is which that refers sources and acknowledges them in a defined and definite standard.

The only solution to write a seemingly beautiful article and systematic presentation of citations there in, is mastering at least one well accepted citation style. What if you refer a lot and write a wonderful article but do not acknowledge the sources? Therefore, practice with the standards and build references accordingly. But more often, you need to “check with your instructors about the style they (university/publisher) want you to use. When in doubt, remember that the goal of your citations is to help a reader who wishes to consult your sources directly. Give enough information to make such retrieval easy” (Yale College Writing Centre, 2014).

As discussed above, the citation standards differ from institute to institute and journal to journal (publications). In the paper/research report you write for any journal or university, first check the reference standard they follow. Researchers and authors ought to try to use quotation marks when they take the exact word or phrase or sentence or paragraph from a source. This helps differentiate your own writing with the cited source. In such cases, it is also necessary to quote the page number from where the information is cited verbatim. You can make your article more authentic when you put page number for both direct quotations and paraphrases too.

It is advisable to work on Microsoft Office Word by using ‘Reference’ module. It is also advisable to learn RMs like Zotero or Delicious or Mendely. The RMs help you bring

accuracy in using citations in your works. But as said before, knowing one citation standard thoroughly helps using these tools more effectively. Above all, never ever forget to acknowledge if referred to anything because many plagiarism cases are unintentional.

The art and craft of references greatly depend on what, when, why, where and how you 'acknowledge' the sources and that too with a 'style'. Therefore master the art of acknowledging so that readers acknowledge your work as worth reading and referring to.

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