

UNDERSTANDING DOCUMENTATION

(PODCAST 05 TRANSCRIPT)

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<https://kuportal-a.akamaihd.net/ascmia/wc/podcasts/05understandingdocumentation7ed.mp3>

- [\(Click here for APA 6th Edition Understanding Citation Podcast.\)](#)

Greetings, everyone. This is Kurtis Clements with another effective writing podcast.

In this episode, I am going to talk about the purpose and importance of documenting the sources that you use in a paper of your own creation. For many, documenting the sources used within the body of a paper with in-text citations and at the end on a separate page with all the necessary bibliographic information for a specific type of source is a hair-pulling matter, but it doesn't have to be, and it is my hope this podcast helps you understand the why and how of documentation just a little bit better.

First off, let's talk about exactly what documentation is. Put simply: Documentation is when the writer of a paper gives credit where credit is due when borrowing information from sources. Within the body of a paper, credit is given by way of in-text, or parenthetical, citations that provide readers with the most essential information about a source. At the end of the paper, credit is given on a stand-alone page by providing readers with more specific information about the sources used so that should readers want to locate a source, they would be able to locate it.

How sources are documented both within and at the end depends on the documentation style used--and there are many different styles such as MLA, APA, AP, Chicago, to name just some. You are probably thinking, why so many styles? Why not just ONE universal style? Well, while this makes sense on a certain level, the fact is different styles reflect different fields of study, and depending on the field some pieces of information are more or less important than other pieces of information. For example, APA style is used primarily in the social sciences which includes such fields as education, psychology, sociology, criminal justice, and business. In the social sciences new discoveries are made on an almost daily basis, so the date of publication is critical, and thus it is included in all APA citations. By contrast, MLA, which is used in the humanities, does not deal with content that changes on a daily basis, and so the date of publication is less important and is not needed for citations within the text.

The bottom line: Documentation styles vary depending on the field of study.

So now that you have some background on what documentation is, let's discuss when it is appropriate to give credit where credit is due by using in-text citations in the body.

In a nutshell, you cite any information that you borrow except common knowledge. What is common knowledge? Common knowledge is basic information that will be found in multiple

sources and that most people know—the earth has one moon, Abraham Lincoln was assassinated by John Wilkes Booth, California is on the West Coast, and so forth. You do not need to cite common knowledge.

You also do not need to cite well-known facts within a field if the audience for the paper is made up of people within that field. For example, if I were to write a paper on Sir Isaac Newton to an audience of science experts (and perhaps science students in general), I wouldn't need to cite the fact that Sir Isaac Newton discovered gravity because this information is most certainly a common fact in that field.

Content that is not common knowledge would need to be cited, and such content includes words, images, graphics, ideas, art, music, and so on. When conducting research, you need to cite content that you borrow whether you summarize, paraphrase, or quote that information.

Why do we cite? We cite for a variety of reasons. First, it is important to give credit where credit is due. If you had an idea in the workplace, let's say, and you shared that idea with your boss who then tried to pass off your idea as her own, you would not be happy, right? Of course not! You would want credit for that idea because it belongs to you. It's only fair. The same courtesy holds true when you borrow content from a source and use it in a work of your own creation.

Another reason we cite is to avoid everyone's fear [dramatic music plays]—plagiarism. If you borrow content from a source and neglect to cite it for whatever reason, you could very well be guilty of plagiarism. Including citations within the text lets readers know where that content originated, so it is important to cite such content. After all, you don't want to end up like the late 80s musical duo Milli Vanilli and receive high praise for your work only to be discovered as cheats who lip-synched their songs. So don't Milli Vanilli your paper--Be sure to cite the content that belongs to someone else.

We also document the sources we use by providing more complete information about a source at the end of the paper to demonstrate the credibility of those sources and to let readers know that you are using content from authorities on the subject, people with recognized expertise or appropriate credentials. Such documentation also lets readers know that you are using respected publications and other respected sources such as unbiased organizational web sites.

Finally, we document our sources at the end of a paper so that readers can locate those sources on their own. Sometimes the information that we include is such that others want to track down the actual source, and without appropriate documentation, one could not do that. I know that in my own research, when I encounter content that is related to my interests, I'll use the documentation information provided and then track down the source. I've discovered important information this way along with the names of key experts in a field that will lead me to more content.

As you can see, documenting sources is an important part of using information that does not belong to you. Just remember: When incorporating content that does not originate with you and is not common knowledge, you need to document that content in the body with a short, parenthetical notation set up according to the specific documentation style you are using, and you also need to include more specific bibliographic information about the source at the end of the paper. In other podcasts, I look more specifically at APA documentation style

Well, everyone, that does it for this effective writing podcast. I hope you found the information helpful. Thanks for listening. Happy writing.

UNDERSTANDING CITATION (APA 6th EDITION) (PODCAST 5 TRANSCRIPT)

Click link for Podcast 5, Understanding Citation:

<https://kuportal-a.akamaihd.net/ascmedia/wc/podcasts/05understandingcitation.mp3>

Hi everyone. This is Kurtis Clements with another effective writing podcast. In this episode, I am going to talk about the purpose and importance of citations when using outside material in your own work. For many, citation is a hair-pulling matter, but it doesn't have to be, and it is my hope this podcast helps you understand citation a little bit better.

First off, let's talk a little bit about exactly what is meant by citation. Citation is a notation provided in a paper that identifies content borrowed from a source. Citations, in general, will be found throughout the body of a paper after borrowed content and at the end of the paper in a complete list.

The format of citations is dictated by the particular documentation style used—and there are many different styles such as MLA, APA, AP, Chicago, to name a few. You are probably thinking, why so many styles? Why not just ONE universal style? Well, while this makes sense on a certain level, the fact is different styles reflect different fields of study, and depending on the field some pieces of information are more or less important than other pieces of information. For example, APA style is used primarily in the social, behavioral, and applied sciences, and as science is a field in which new discoveries are made on an almost daily basis, the date of publication is critical, so it is included in all APA citations. By contrast, MLA, which is used in the Humanities, does not deal with content that changes on a daily basis and so the date of publication is less important and is not needed for citations within the text.

The bottom line: Documentation styles vary depending on the field of study.

So now that you have some background on what citation is, let's discuss when it is appropriate to cite.

In a nutshell, you cite any information that you borrow except common knowledge. What is common knowledge? Common knowledge is basic information that will be found in multiple sources and that most people know—the earth has one moon, Abraham Lincoln was assassinated by John Wilkes Booth, California is on the West Coast, and so forth. You do not need to cite common knowledge.

You also do not need to cite well-known facts with a field if the audience for the paper is made up of people within that field. For example, if I were to write a paper on Shakespeare to an audience of Shakespearean scholars (and likely English majors), I wouldn't need to cite the fact that Shakespeare's father was a glove maker because this is a common fact.

Content that is not common knowledge would need to be cited, and such content includes words, images, graphics, ideas, art, music, and so on. When conducting research, you need to cite content that you borrow whether you summarize, paraphrase, or quote that information.

Why do we cite? We cite for a variety of reasons. First, it is important to give credit where credit is due. If you had an idea in the workplace, let's say, and you shared that idea with your boss who then implemented the idea, you would want credit for that idea, right? Of course! It's only fair. It's your idea. The same is true when you borrow content from others and use it in a work of your own creation.

Another reason we cite is to avoid everyone's fear—plagiarism. If you borrow content from a source and neglect to give credit where credit is due, you could very well be guilty of plagiarism. Including citations lets readers know where that content comes from, so it is important to cite such content. You don't want to Milli Vanilli your paper.

We also cite to demonstrate the credibility of the sources. Citations let readers know that you are using content from authorities on the subject, people with recognized expertise or appropriate credentials. The citations let readers know that you are using respected publications and other respected sources such as unbiased organizational web sites.

Finally, we cite so that readers can locate those sources on their own. Sometimes the information that we include is such that others want to track down the full source and without citations one could not do that. I know that in my own research, when I encounter cited content that is related to my interests, I'll check the full citation and then track down the source. I've discovered important information this way and names of key experts in a field that will lead me to more content.

As you can see, citation plays an important role in documenting content borrowed from outside sources. When incorporating content that does not originate with you and is not common knowledge, you need to cite that content with a notation set up according to the specific documentation style required for your course. In future podcasts, I will look more specifically at APA documentation style.

Thanks so much for listening. Happy writing!