Greetings everyone. This is Kurtis Clements with another effective writing podcast. In this episode, I am going to talk about citation and digital object identifiers. You're probably thinking: WHAT! Digital object HUH! Don't worry, settle down, you've got this podcast to help clarify the matter, and it's really not that complicated at all. A digital object identifier, or DOI, is a string of numbers and letters or a web link (more on this later) specific to a scholarly article found online so that it can be easily located.

We all know that content found on the web one day, may not be found the next. In addition, if you are conducting research, you may have access to sources in a library database but others might not, and thus those folks have no way to access the content. The DOI system resolves these kinds of situations by providing a means to locate content that does not change and which allows access for all. To put it simply, if a source has a DOI, anyone will be able to find and access it. In a sense, a DOI is like a telephone number for a resource—no two telephone numbers are the same, and if you have the number, you can connect with the person assigned that number. DOIs work the same way.

While DOIs are becoming more and common, not all documentation styles require the use of DOIs, and not all sources will have a DOI. APA documentation style requires the use of digital objective identifiers when available, so if you use this documentation style, and a DOI is listed for a journal you use, the DOI will be included on the references page. You should include the DOI even if the journal you actually consult is a print source. Why? you ask. Using the DOI will make it easier for someone to access the content. One can actually tap into an electronic library database and enter the DOI in the search field and voila! The article appears. Using a DOI makes it easier to find something.

So where do you find the DOI? In most cases, the DOI is usually placed on the first page of a source and/or on the database landing page (presuming you are accessing the database electronically). If you are working online, it's best to copy and paste the DOI into the citation as it's a many-characters long string of numbers and letters and listing an incorrect DOI is like dialing a wrong number. The DOI should be apparent on the source, and it will appear in one of two formats: It may be a string of numbers and letters beginning with 10 or, as is recommended now, it will appear as a web link that can simply be clicked. The web link will begin with the customary http:// followed by dx.doi.org.10. and then the rest of the string. Please keep in mind that when including the DOI, do not put any punctuation after it as that will affect the functionality of the string or link.

If no DOI is available, you will need to use the URL for the main page of the journal. When adding the DOI to a full citation at the end of a paper, you include all of the bibliographic information required for the journal and the last piece of information included will be the DOI. I think it wise to look at some examples and to this end, check out the official APA Style website at apastyle.org and look for the link to DOIs. Thanks everyone, happy writing.