Citing Responsibly, Avoiding Plagiarism: An NPS Refresher

Citations are needed to a) validate information, b) give credit where credit is due, and c) allow other researchers to follow in your footsteps. Your readers should be able to tell where they can go for follow-up information regarding any claims, data, or facts discussed in your writing—whether it be to you, the author, or to specific works from which you gathered pertinent information you have incorporated into your text. You may want to ask yourself the following as you write and review:

- Do I know this information/term/data because I read it somewhere?

- Is this knowledge the result of emails or conversations? (Unpublished information still must be cited in the text.)

- Is this my own analysis based on my personal knowledge set and/or research, or is it analysis I borrowed from another person?

Your own experience and findings, and common knowledge, do not need to be cited. Common knowledge is usually considered something your reader already knows. As a rule of thumb, if you can find an unattributed fact in five credible sources, a citation is not needed (for example, "The average adult body contains about 250 grams of salt" or "George W. Bush served as president of the United States from 2000 to 2008"). Common knowledge also includes field-specific knowledge, so it, too, doesn't need to be cited. Consult a faculty member from your department or your reference librarian if you are unsure if something is field-specific common knowledge.

A ***citation*** or a ***signal phrase*** *is needed with every sentence that uses a source's idea, statistic, or wording.* It must be reasonably clear to the reader which pieces of information came from which sources, and which are your original thoughts and data.

One citation at the end of a paragraph cannot "cover" an entire paragraph. Cite the source completely *the first time it is used in each paragraph*. Then, throughout the paragraph, make it reasonably clear that information was gathered from the same source already mentioned. Cite the source again just before your focus moves to another source.

Make sure you are differentiating between information that is paraphrased and information that is directly quoted. Generally, a phrase that contains five or more consecutive words exactly as they appear in the source should be in quotation marks (proper nouns excluded) or paraphrased. Please remember: Both types of information require citations.

Try to limit direct quotations to information that you are unable to paraphrase adequately. While quoting can be effective (and sometimes essential for important, precise wording), relying on too many direct quotes—especially block quotations—does not demonstrate your understanding of the topic or your ability to think critically about others' work. There are exceptions, but, in general, not more than 10 percent of your document should be quoted from others.

The Graduate Writing Center is here to help with draft papers. Writing coaches can help you build up your paraphrasing, quoting, and citation skills. You may also request to have a draft paper run through NPS' plagiarism software; a writing coach will meet with you to help determine problem areas and guide your revisions.

Chicago Notes and Bibliography/Turabian Style: Citing, Paraphrasing, and Quoting

For citing in Chicago/Turabian, use in-text reference numbers and footnotes to cite, and signal phrases to help clarify the distinction between sources. It must always be clear which pieces of information came from which sources. If a sentence is not cited, the reader will assume that it is your own original thought or finding as an author (or common knowledge).

- A **full footnote** citation appears the **first** time a source is cited (see footnote 1).

- A **shortened** footnote citation appears the **second** and each subsequent time a source is cited (see footnotes 2 and 3).

- The number of note references in a sentence or a paragraph can be reduced by grouping several citations in a single note. The citations are separated by semicolons and must appear in the same order as the text material to which they pertain. Take care to avoid any ambiguity as to what is documenting what (see footnote 4).

Here's an example paragraph. The reference numbers are highlighted in yellow and the signal phrases are highlighted in blue. Note that the second sentence is common knowledge, whereas the final sentence is clearly the opinion of the author.

Red and yellow are the best colors with which to decorate your restaurant because they induce feelings of hunger.[1] Consider popular fast-food chains, which often use red and yellow in their advertising and décor. According to Smith and Lopez's study, restaurant customers felt more energized in red and yellow environments, which encouraged them to order more food.[2] The same study indicated that patrons felt relaxed in blue and purple environments, which encouraged them to "spend more time considering the menu options and eat at a slower pace."[3] Although blue décor can give your restaurant a more casual, laid-back feel, industry experts believe it encourages patrons to linger at their tables without ordering additional food or beverages.[4] Accordingly, it is difficult to identify a popular chain restaurant that decorates with calmer hues.

For reference examples and Chicago tips, visit libguides.nps.edu/citation/chicagonb.

For Turabian ground rules, see www.press.uchicago.edu/books/turabian/turabian_citationguide.html.

---

[1] Alex Yakimenko, "Color's Effect on Restaurant Patrons," *Restaurant Hospitality* 13, no. 4 (April 1999): 28.

[2] Sally H. Smith and David Lopez, *Color Me Hungry: How to Decorate Your Restaurant to Increase Profit and Patronage* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 3.

[3] Smith and Lopez, 29–30.

[4] Yakimenko, "Color's Effect on Restaurant Patrons," 18; Smith and Lopez, *Color Me Hungry*, 74.