

**Why Cite** (to cite is to identify in which source you found a particular quote, picture, idea, etc.)

- To avoid plagiarism—if you’re not the one who wrote the words or music, took the photograph, drew the picture, or filmed the video, you must give credit to the person who did. Citing makes clear to the reader what is original to you and what “belongs” to someone else.
- To make it possible for the reader to easily locate and check the sources you used.
- To lend credibility to your own writing.

**What to Cite**

- Direct quotations (someone else’s exact words).
- Paraphrases (someone else’s words or ideas that you have rewritten in your own words).
- Images, charts, video, and audio.
- Facts that are not considered common knowledge (this would include most statistics).

**When Citing Is Not Necessary**

Common knowledge is the term used for facts that most educated people would know, that can be easily found in an encyclopedia or dictionary, or that are found in multiple sources (5 or more). Facts that are considered common knowledge do not need to be cited. (George Washington was the first president of the U.S.—this is an example of a fact that would be considered common knowledge and therefore would not need to be cited.)

**Omitting Part of or Adding Words to a Direct Quotation**

Use an ellipsis (three periods with spaces between . . . ) where some of the original wording of a quotation has been left out.

Use brackets--[ ]—to enclose words that you need to add to a direct quotation in order for that sentence to be grammatically correct or if those words are necessary in order to make the meaning of the sentence clear.

**Footnote, Endnote, In-Text Citation? Which One?**

These terms are sometimes used interchangeably, but they’re not the same. An in-text citation is when the necessary source information for a citation is enclosed in parentheses directly following the information being cited. A footnote is when that source information is at the bottom of the page on which the cited information appears. An endnote is when all of the source information is on a separate page following the research paper. The in-text citation format is the preferred format for source information at MTHS (see the other side of this sheet for details about how to format those in-text citations).

**In Summary**

You have plagiarized if:

- you used facts without citing the source (unless those facts would be considered common knowledge).
- you copied someone’s exact wording without enclosing it in quotation marks and citing the source.
- you simply changed the original text by replacing some of the author’s words with synonyms for those words.
- you paraphrased in your own words but didn’t cite the source.
- you used someone else’s idea(s) without citing the source.
- you copied and pasted text from a web site or database without enclosing that text in quotation marks and citing the source.

## FORMATTING IN-TEXT CITATIONS

One of the main purposes of an in-text citation is to give the reader of your paper what he would need to find the information that you cited in your paper. Because this is its purpose, each in-text citation must distinguish a particular source from every other source you used and (when possible) must give the reader the exact page number(s) on which the cited information can be found. The **basic format** for an in-text citation is to enclose **the word by which that source is alphabetized on the source page and the page number(s) from the print source** in parentheses at the end of the sentence but before the period—for example, “. . . for many years” (Smith 22-23). **Exceptions to that basic format** are listed below.

### Identifying the Source in the In-Text Citation

**Author’s last name by which the source is alphabetized** (Smith 22) **except:**

- When that **name is used in the text**, use only the page number in the in-text citation. According to Smith, this theory . . . (22).
- When there are **two authors**, list both. (Freeman and Jones A2)
- When there are **more than two authors**, use et al. (Gold et al. 6)
- When more than one author has the **same last name**, include the initial of the first name (or the entire first name if necessary). (J. Coe 14)
- When the **same author** has written **more than one of the sources** being used, add a title word (or words) that will clarify exactly which source is being cited. (Brown, “Gun” 71)

**No author? Use the title word by which the source is alphabetized.** That title word may be from an article title, a book title, a web page title, a web site name, etc.—whatever word was used to alphabetize that particular source. (“Gun” C8) (*Revolutionary* 122)

- Use additional title words if they’re needed in order to distinguish one source from another—but use as few words as possible.
- When two (or more) **anonymous works** have the **same title**, add another publication fact (a publication date, a database name, etc.) to distinguish between them. (*Gun Control*, 2006 145) (“Suicide,” *Human* 64)

### Page Numbers—Or Not?

Include page numbers in an in-text citation only when you can see the pages exactly as they appear(ed) in the original print source.

**Do use page numbers** when your source is a print book, magazine, or newspaper or when your source is in PDF-file format (which is an exact copy of the original print source).

**Do not use page numbers** if you aren’t using the original print source or a PDF file of it. That means in-text citations for most subscription database articles and free-web pages **won’t** include page numbers—but when you have the option of viewing a PDF file (as you do in some databases), do so in order to have those exact page numbers to use in your in-text citations.

**Placement of In-Text Citations for Long Quotations** (more than four typed lines—indented ½” from the left side without quotation marks)

The in-text citations for long quotations should be placed after the period at the end of the quotation rather than the usual placement before the period.