Basic Citation Guidelines

Consider times when someone has taken credit for your work whether at school, in the workplace, or in other situations. Ideas, words, artwork, music, videos, and other tangible products you create are yours, and no one has the right to take those products and pass them off as their own, whether intentionally or unintentionally. To do so is simply stealing and the people doing this are misrepresenting themselves. When it comes to writing, this principle is adhered to strictly in both school and the workplace. In fact, there have been several highly publicized instances where people have suffered severe consequences for using others’ ideas or words without permission. They have lost millions of dollars, and they also have been publicly humiliated by being called out on national television, in addition to facing the prospect of no one ever publishing their work again. People lose jobs and ruin careers when they do not provide proper credit for work they borrow from someone else. This handout is designed to help you avoid such problems by providing you with the basics behind citation, such as why and when we cite. While you are in school, you will be asked to apply this information to your own writing assignments by using a particular style guide. There are numerous style guides, and although no one style guide is used as a standard across the University, you will be shown how to look up and cross-reference source information you use for your own papers against a style guide.

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What Is Plagiarism?

Plagiarism occurs when you steal words, ideas, or artwork by using someone else’s work and not giving credit to the original authors or artists. When you do not cite where or whom you borrowed ideas, words, or artwork from, you are passing those ideas, words, or artwork off as your own, as your original creations; thus, you are stealing and taking credit for work you did not do. Whether intentional or not, that is plagiarism. Think of it this way: If you don’t mean to cheat on your taxes but you calculate your taxes wrong, the IRS still penalizes you. The same concept holds true for plagiarism. You might not intend to plagiarize; however, if you don’t know how or when to cite when you borrow information, you are still guilty of stealing someone else’s work. Therefore, it is crucial to learn the rules and use citation properly to avoid plagiarism.

The University has a firm plagiarism policy and you should be aware of what that policy is. You will find this policy in the syllabus of most, if not all, of your courses.

The University Plagiarism Policy (2010)

The University considers academic honesty to be one of its highest values. Students are expected to be the sole authors of their work. Use of another person’s work or ideas must be accompanied by specific citations and references. Though not a comprehensive or exhaustive list, the following are some examples of dishonesty or unethical and unprofessional behavior:

- Plagiarism: Using another person’s words, ideas, or results without giving proper credit to that person; giving the impression that it is the student’s own work.
- Any form of cheating on examinations.
- Altering academic or clinical records.
- Falsifying information for any assignments.
- Submitting an assignment(s) that was partially or wholly completed by another student.
- Copying work or written text from a student, the Internet, or any document without giving due credit to the source of the information.
- Submitting an assignment(s) for more than one class without enhancing and refining the assignment, and without first receiving instructor permission. In cases where previous assignments are allowed to be submitted for another class, it is the responsibility of the student to enhance the assignment with additional research and to also submit the original assignment for comparison purposes.
• Assisting another student with reasonable knowledge that the other student intends to commit any act of academic dishonesty. This offense would include, but would not be limited to providing an assignment to another student to submit as his/her own work or allowing another student to copy answers to any test, examination, or assignment.

In essence, plagiarism is the theft of someone else’s ideas and work. Whether a student copies verbatim or simply rephrases the ideas of another without properly acknowledging the source, it is still plagiarism. In the preparation of work submitted to meet course requirements, whether a draft or a final version of a paper or project, students must take great care to distinguish their own ideas and language from information derived from other sources. Sources include published primary and secondary materials, electronic media, and information and opinions gathered directly from other people.

A discussion thread, computer program, marketing plan, PowerPoint presentation, and other similar work produced to satisfy a course requirement are, like a paper, expected to be the original work of the student submitting it. Copying documentation from another student or from any other source without proper citation is a form of academic dishonesty, as is producing work substantially from the work of another. Students must assume that collaboration in the completion of written assignments is prohibited unless explicitly permitted by the instructor. Students must acknowledge any collaboration and its extent in all submitted coursework. Students are subject to disciplinary action if they submit as their own work a paper purchased from a term paper company or downloaded from the Internet.

The University subscribes to a third-party plagiarism detection service, and reserves the right to check all student work to verify that it meets the guidelines of this policy.

Academic dishonesty is a serious offense and may result in the following sanctions:
1st offense: Failure of the assignment in which the action occurred.
2nd offense: Failure of the class in which the action occurred.
3rd offense: Expulsion or permanent dismissal from the University.

Plagiarism charges remain on a student’s record permanently. Any offenses a student accumulates while completing a program will be carried over if and when a student reenrolls in a program or begins a new program at the University.
Procedures for processing plagiarism offenses are as follows:

Charges of academic dishonesty brought against a student shall be made in writing by the instructor to the Provost’s Office. When an offense has been committed, the Provost’s Office sends the student a copy of the plagiarism policy and a letter of the action taken, and informs the Academic Department Chair, the Academic Advisor, and the course instructor of any plagiarism charges. The Provost’s Office maintains a database of plagiarism offenses and a file of all plagiarism charges.

Self-Plagiarism

Self-plagiarism occurs when you present previously published work as if it were brand new. If you look at the University plagiarism policy, it states that submitting the same paper for more than one assignment is considered plagiarism. Although your paper from a previous class might not be published, you still cannot use it for credit for more than one assignment. If you would like to use and expand on an assignment from a previous class, you must first submit your original assignment to your instructor and ask for permission to continue your research on the topic; however, your new assignment should be significantly different from the previous one.

In a professional sense, self-plagiarism is a serious offense because journals that publish your work want the most current research; they usually do not want to print previously published research. If you do not let publishers know that your work was previously published and they run your piece only to find out later that it was published in another journal, you will likely not ever be considered for publication again by either journal. This is also called multiple submissions and such practice is not acceptable in the publishing world unless a publisher specifically says that multiple submissions or previously published manuscripts are acceptable.

What Is a Citation?

Citing sources or providing citation means to include select information about books, articles, or other sources you read and included information from in your paper. The reasons you provide citations are (a) to give proper credit for words, ideas, graphics, or other information you borrow from others, and (b) to help readers find sources you used in case they want to read more from those pieces for themselves.

Two main terms are associated with citation: in-text citation and full citation, both of which are explained in the following sections.
In-Text Citation
An in-text citation is a shortened notation that is inserted right into the text of a paper and indicates to readers that the information you just used was borrowed from someone else. It is shortened because a full entry with all of the information needed to look up a source would interfere with reading your paper. In most cases, an in-text citation is simply the author’s last name and date of publication or a page number. However, as you will learn shortly, in-text citation format varies depending on the style guide you use, and for some style guides, in-text citations vary between paraphrases and quotations, as well as what information is available to you on the original document that you are using. A couple of examples are as follows:

For APA, you use the author’s last name and date of publication for a paraphrase, as in (Martinez, 2008).

In MLA, you use the author’s last name and page number, whether or not you paraphrase or quote, as in (Martinez 3).

If an author’s name is not available, you would include the title enclosed in quotation marks and then either the date of publication or page number depending on whether you are using APA or MLA, or some other guide. Here’s an example in APA format: (“The Good Student,” 2009).

Each style guide dictates what information to include in an in-text citation, but it is important to remember that an in-text citation is a shortened citation meant to be unobtrusive to the reader, whereas a full citation is reserved for the reference page, bibliography, or works cited page (the name depends on what style guide you are using).

Full Citation
A full citation is all of the information readers need to know if they want to retrieve an article, book, or other source cited in your paper. These citations are listed on a separate page called the reference page, works cited page, or bibliography so that the full citation information does not interfere with reading the paper. Readers use in-text citations to cross-reference the full citation at the end of the document. For instance, if an in-text citation looks like this (Smith, 2002), a reader can turn to the page with the full citation and look for a book or article written by an author with the last name Smith and published in the year 2002.

One thing to remember about full citations is that the information you provide is based on the type of source because the way you look up and retrieve a book is quite different from the way you look up
and retrieve a Web site or an article from an online database. A sample full citation in APA for a book looks like this:


whereas an APA full citation for a Web page looks like this:


As you can see from the previous examples, books are retrieved by looking up an author’s name, the year the book was published, the title, and the publisher. All of these are needed to ensure the reader has the same book that you used in your paper. A Web page, on the other hand, is a dynamic and electronic source, so it is retrieved by knowing the URL or Web address, as well as the title of the Web page or the name of the organization that sponsors the page or site, if one is provided.

### Why Do We Cite?

As mentioned at the beginning of this handout, there are two main reasons to cite sources. The first is to give credit to those whose information we borrow. The United States is an individualistic society, which means individual contributions are highly valued. This also means that when we use an individual’s ideas, words, artwork, or anything else, we give credit to that individual. Giving credit is usually the main reason you cite in your school papers, but you also cite because your readers might want more information, too.

As readers make their way through your essay, article, or whatever form of writing you put out, they might take particular interest in the topic you wrote on; thus, they might want to do more research on their own. One way they can do that is look up the sources you use in your paper. That is why there are two types of citation. The in-text citation shows readers where certain ideas or words came from, and the shortened version of citation cross-references the full citation at the end of the paper. From the full citation, they then have all of the information they need to retrieve a source.

### When Do We Cite?

Some students are confused on when they should cite information. A simple rule to follow is: Whenever information does not come out of your own head, you must cite it. This includes when you use someone’s words (quotations), ideas (paraphrases), and illustrations of ideas (graphics). The following information discusses citation in relation to quotations and paraphrases in detail.
Quotations

You use quotations when you borrow someone else’s words and you want to use those exact words in your own paper. Quotations are actually used sparingly in most academic writing because quotations must include quotation marks and a citation, which often slow down the reading. Additionally, too many quotations make a paper sound more like a summary and your own original ideas are lost in the sea of quotations.

You can use three general guidelines for when to use quotations in a paper:

1. When you are critiquing someone’s exact words. For instance, if you wanted to argue that a reviewer’s comments on your performance in the community theater last night was not as bad as the reviewer made it seem, you would want to critique, thus quote, the exact words of the reviewer.

2. When you want to include dialogue in your paper, and in that instance, you want to be sure you quote the person’s exact words.

3. When the original author’s words are so eloquent and exact that you cannot find a way to paraphrase and still maintain the same meaning and/or image that the original passage does.

When you borrow words (quotations) to include in your own paper, you have to do three things:

1. Copy the words exactly as they are written in the original piece.

2. Enclose the words you borrowed in quotation marks, which look like this: “quotation.”

3. Include an in-text citation after the quotation and a full citation on the reference page.

To help make your writing flow, it is good practice to use signal words to integrate quotations instead of just inserting them abruptly and separately. For example:

“Most conventional healthcare providers prescribe medicine that only alleviates a patient’s symptoms” (Jones, 2004, p. 3). “Alternative medicine seeks to help patients prevent illness by understanding underlying causes” (Smith, 2007, p. 99). Some people think there is a good way to balance the two for optimal health.

In this example, the quotes are related to the subject in that the paragraph is comparing conventional and alternative medicine as evidenced by the last sentence in the paragraph; but, this paragraph could be more informative and the writing could flow better if signal words were used.

Signal words help smoothly integrate a quotation into a paragraph so that the writing flows. Signal words usually indicate the position of the author on the subject you are writing about. Table 1 shows some sample signal words and phrases.
Table 1: SIGNAL WORDS

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<th>SHOWS DISAGREEMENT</th>
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When rewriting the previous example using signal phrases, it might look something like this, where the highlighted areas include signal words that help make the writing flow more smoothly than in the previous example:

*Conventional medicine is often viewed as providing immediate relief for illness.* **John Jones** (2003), a 13-year DO in New York City, **contends that** “most conventional healthcare providers prescribe medicine that only alleviates a patient’s symptoms” (p. 3). **This sentiment is echoed** by another healthcare provider who **explains that** “alternative medicine seeks to help patients prevent illness by understanding underlying causes” (Smith, 2007, p. 99). It seems logical, therefore, that optimal health can be achieved by balancing conventional and alternative approaches to medicine because they both have benefits to patients.

Long or Block Quotations

For most style guides, quotations that are 40 or more words are considered long or block quotes. They are often called block quotes because they are set off separate from a paragraph in an indented block. By setting off a long quote like this, it makes it easier for readers to differentiate the quote from the rest of the text. The following is a sample block quote using the Modern Language Association (MLA) style:

*MLA is a style guide that allows authors and readers to give credit for borrowed work in a uniform way so that there is no confusion among readers as to what information is borrowed and how to look up sources that were used in a paper.* (Martinez 3)
Paraphrasing

You are paraphrasing when you borrow only someone else’s idea but you put that idea in your own words. Paraphrasing is preferred when you want to incorporate research into your writing because too many quotations interfere with reading and often make your paper come across more like summarizing instead of putting forth original ideas of your own. Please refer back to the three guidelines for when to use quotations.

The one critical aspect about paraphrasing is that you are simply borrowing an idea, and the words in which you express that idea have to be entirely your own. If you use too many of the original author’s words in your paraphrase, that is a case for plagiarism. You may, however, use technical terms and statistics from the original when you paraphrase.

Here are some guidelines to help you avoid plagiarism when paraphrasing:

1. Always make note of the source you are working with by putting the full citation in APA format at the top of your notebook page.

2. Read the original passage several times before attempting to paraphrase. Be sure to understand completely and clearly the idea being expressed and the context in which the material is being used.

3. Write down, in your own words, the idea of the passage without looking back at the original. Looking back can sometimes make [you] want to use the same words.

4. Determine if the wording in the paraphrase captures the exact meaning as the original.

5. Ask is the paraphrase used in the same context as the original? Is the borrowed idea used in the same manner that it was used in the original or has it been altered so that it serves a completely different purpose? Taking an idea out of context is faulty research and damages your argument.

6. Ask someone else to read the original, then read the paraphrase, and then compare the meaning and context between the two.

Preventing plagiarism begins with careful note taking while first reviewing the source, and ends when the borrowed material is accurately cited in the form of the preferred style guide. The actual content of the paraphrase needs to be completely original, even when using a citation. The following examples show acceptable and unacceptable paraphrases:

**Original passage:** “Educational leaders posed with the task of integrating ethics into undergraduate general education curriculum are faced with finding faculty who are
interested in the topic instead of forcing faculty who are not interested into teaching a subject they are not committed to” (Stevenson, 2007, p. 5).

**Acceptable paraphrase:** When it comes to teaching ethics in undergraduate programs, it is preferable to use faculty who have a profound interest in the subject to teach such courses (Stevenson, 2007).

**Unacceptable paraphrase:** Educational leaders have to find faculty who are interested in ethics instead of forcing teachers who are not interested in teaching a subject they are not committed to (Stevenson, 2007).

The acceptable paraphrase is fine because it rewords the main idea of Stevenson’s original passage about the effectiveness of using willing and interested faculty to teach ethics in undergraduate courses.

The unacceptable paraphrase is plagiarized because too many words from the original passage are used without quotation marks around those words.

**Summarizing**

Summarizing is very similar to paraphrasing in that you take information from a research source and put it into your own words, but the purpose and format for a summary differs from a paraphrase in the following ways:

- A summary captures the main points of a passage.
- A summary is meant to help students learn material so that they
  - know what the main points of a document are and
  - learn the material so well that they can capture the main ideas in their own words instead of using someone else’s words.

The following is an example of how to summarize information.

**Original passage:** Collaboration with others is part of living and working in the professional world. A high portion of our daily communication occurs in groups, such as family, coworkers, and friends. Regardless of career choice, it is likely that individuals will spend a considerable part of their personal and professional lives working in collaboration with others. The changing environment of the workplace has caused an increase in the use of virtual teams for collaborative projects. The major difference between a virtual team and a team that meets face-to-face is the distance that lies between members. It is distance that affects the interaction between group members.
Technologies, such as teleconferencing, email, Web-enabled chat, groupware, and shared file programs, have made communication at a distance and virtual collaboration possible. Through technology, virtual teams are able to interact, complete projects, and resolve conflicts (Martinez et al., 2008, p. 167).

To summarize the preceding paragraph, highlight the main ideas of the paragraph.

Collaboration with others is part of living and working in the professional world. A high portion of our daily communication occurs in groups, such as family, coworkers, and friends. Regardless of career choice, it is likely that individuals will spend a considerable part of their personal and professional lives working in collaboration with others. The changing environment of the workplace has caused an increase in the use of virtual teams for collaborative projects. The major difference between a virtual team and a team that meets face-to-face is the distance that lies between members. It is distance that affects the interaction between group members. Technologies, such as teleconferencing, email, Web-enabled chat, groupware, and shared file programs, have made communication at a distance and virtual collaboration possible. Through technology, virtual teams are able to interact, complete projects, and resolve conflicts (Martinez et al., 2008).

Now, put those main ideas into your own words (paraphrase).

Paraphrased passage: Today’s workplace is quite different than it was 20 years ago. More people are working remotely or companies are so large that they have different sites throughout the world. This change in the workplace has increased the need for virtual teams; however, the need for collaboration has not changed. Distance can affect how well a group works together, but modern technology, such as e-mail, instant messaging, groupware, and shared file programs have made communication with virtual team members possible and an effective means for getting the job done (Martinez et al., 2008).

Summaries are most helpful for learning new material. Summaries should be written in your own words because when you have read a passage closely enough or enough times that you can take the main ideas expressed in the original and put those ideas into your own words, you have truly learned the material. If you have to keep looking back at the original passage and use someone else’s words, you...
have not quite grasped what the main ideas are; therefore, you have to study the meaning behind the passage until you can state the main points in your own words. Summarized material in your paper needs to be cited, just as paraphrased material is cited.

**How Do We Cite?**

Each style guide has its own rules and reasons for citation; the rules and formatting are not random. Most style guides are written for particular disciplines; therefore, the rules and format for citations are designed specifically for the kind of information needed and used within that profession. For instance, *Bluebook* is a style guide used in the legal field. Bluebook’s style and format cater to displaying pertinent information for retrieving court cases, legislation, and briefs. *Associated Press (AP)* is a style guide for journalism, which means that no citations are provided in the text and no references page is required either. This way of writing is due to the nature of journalism in that newspaper or online news articles cater to an audience that is interested in reading about a news story with eyewitness or firsthand accounts. Generally, not much, if any, background or outside research is incorporated into a news story because it is timely, and when people read the news, they are most interested in what is happening now. Therefore, AP is a style that shows how to set up quotations or paraphrase firsthand accounts, but generally citations, if any are included, are minimized. On the other hand, *American Psychological Association (APA)* is a style that is used in the social sciences and sometimes in business. This means that readers are expecting writers to use the most current information and they do care where their research comes from. The *Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE)* is a professional organization dedicated to technological advances, and it, too, has its own style guide that is geared toward information that scientists and engineers would need to know to retrieve informational resources like scientific papers.

**Cross-Referencing**

The key to properly citing your sources is to learn how to cross-reference. This means that you take the information you are given in a journal article, for instance, and you look up in your style guide how to cite a journal article retrieved from an online database, and then you set up the information from the article into the format of the style guide. Here’s an example:
Information available to you in a journal article:
The journal volume is 3 and the issue number is 2. The article is 17 pages long beginning on page 17 and ending on page 34.

If you use MLA to format this entry, here’s what you would find in the style guide:
Author’s last name, First name. “Title of the Article.” Title of the Journal Volume.Issue (Year of publication): page numbers. Medium of the publication.

Using the original information, the citation would then look like this:

Where Do We Get the Rules for Citation?
The most accurate information about how to cite using a particular style guide is going to come from official resources, such as credible Web sites or the official book put out by the organization. Table 2 lists online resources where you can find information about each type of style. You can also find out the title of the official book for that style on each of these sites, as most offer a way to order the books online.

Table 2: ONLINE RESOURCES FOR VARIOUS STYLE GUIDES

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>STYLE</th>
<th>ONLINE RESOURCES</th>
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<tr>
<td>AP</td>
<td><a href="http://www.apstylebook.com">http://www.apstylebook.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>APA</td>
<td><a href="http://www.apastyle.org">http://www.apastyle.org</a></td>
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<td>AMA</td>
<td><a href="http://www.amamanualofstyle.com">http://www.amamanualofstyle.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Bluebook</td>
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<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td><a href="http://www.gpo.gov">http://www.gpo.gov</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>IEEE</td>
<td><a href="http://www.ieee.org/portal/site">http://www.ieee.org/portal/site</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>MLA</td>
<td><a href="http://www.mla.org">http://www.mla.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Oxford</td>
<td><a href="http://www.oup.com">http://www.oup.com</a></td>
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Citing Electronic Sources

Sometimes students think that electronic information is always found when provided with a URL or Internet address. This is rarely, if ever, the case when using a particular style guide because most professional organizations know that Web links can be broken. This is why, generally, electronic documents follow the same rules for citation as print publications. For instance, suppose you are using information from a Web site. If the Web site lists an author, for APA, MLA, and Chicago Manual of Style, you would use the author’s last name for an in-text citation along with whatever other information the particular style guide calls for, such as date and paragraph number for APA or just paragraph number for MLA. It is a safe bet to make that none of the style guides use the URL address for the in-text citation, so take care not to fall into that habit.

Citing Graphics

Graphics, such as charts, graphs, or artwork, that you want to use in your own papers have to be cited so that the information presented in such graphics, as well as the graphic itself, is not passed off as being your own work.

It is so easy now to copy pictures and graphics from the Internet onto your own computer and insert them into your papers, but when you do that without citing the source of the graphic, that too is stealing—just as if you copied and pasted words or took someone else’s idea and did not cite it.

According to most style guides, when you use graphics from a copyrighted source, you must first ask for permission to use it. If you intend to use the graphic for school purposes only, you do not need to get permission, but you must still cite the graphic in your paper. If you decide later to use the paper for any other purposes outside of class, you need to obtain permission.

Fair Use and Public Domain

Fair use is a doctrine and part of the copyright law that states that there are particular instances when reproducing some else’s work, within certain limitations, may be fair. These instances may include “criticism, comment, news reporting, teaching, scholarship, and research” (U.S. Copyright Office, 2009, para. 2). It is important to note, however, that there are no concrete guidelines for what constitutes fair use; therefore, authors should use their best judgment. It is advised that whenever information is borrowed for any reason, an author should seek permission to use it (U.S. Copyright Office, 2009).

The public domain is information or works that have not been published or that were published prior to certain dates set forth by the U.S. Copyright Office, or information that is open to the public,
such as most government information. Information that falls in the public domain should be cited, but
you do not need permission to use it.

Common Knowledge
There are specific times when content that is not originally yours does not need to be cited; use of
common knowledge constitutes a time when, unless taken word for word from a source, a citation is not
needed. Certain characteristics must be met for content to be considered common knowledge:

- The same information can be located in a minimum of five different research sources.
- Your reader should already know this information.
- The information is easily accessible in general information sources.
- Folklore, mythology, and well-known stories are considered common knowledge.
- Facts that are well known in your particular field of study—and will be well known to your
  audience.

The key concept to remember about common knowledge is that you do not have to cite it as long as it is
written in your own words. If you take a well-known fact word for word from a source, a citation is
required so that it is not considered plagiarism. Furthermore, if the interpretation of the common
knowledge is drawn from a source, the source needs to be cited, as the interpretation is not common
knowledge or original to your writing. Another example of a fact needing a citation is statistics because
statistical information is not typically equally represented in general information sources; the source of
the statistic, either as a primary or secondary source, needs to be cited.

You might not know if something is common knowledge until you find it explained the same way in
several sources, so it’s best to cite it like you normally would until you adequately prove to yourself that
it is common knowledge.

This handout helps you understand the basics of why and when you cite information. Each style
guide has different rules and formatting, and the best way to learn citation is to know that a style guide
is not meant to be memorized; it is a guide, a cross-referencing guide that you will use as a resource
when you write your papers. The key is to match your sources with the rules in the selected style guide.
Additionally, ask your instructor for the preferred style of citation in each class you take.
References