Citing Responsibly, Avoiding Plagiarism: An NPS Refresher

Citations make your research credible: they validate claims discussed in your writing, give credit where credit is due, and allow other researchers to follow in your footsteps. To determine if you need a citation, ask yourself the following questions as you write and revise:

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

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

- Is this knowledge the result of emails or conversations? (You still must cite unpublished information.)

You do __not__ need to cite your own experience and findings, or common knowledge.

Common knowledge is something your readers already know. 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." As a rule of thumb, if you can find an unattributed fact in five credible sources, a citation is not needed. Consult a faculty member from your department or your reference librarian if you are unsure if something is field-specific common knowledge.

Include a citation or signal phrase when you borrow a source's idea, statistic, or wording.

Your readers should understand which pieces of information came from which sources (cite!), and which are your original thoughts and data, or common knowledge (don't cite).

One citation at the end of a paragraph typically cannot "cover" the entire paragraph.

Ensure the source is clear upfront and throughout the paragraph. A good rule of thumb is to cite the source completely *the first time it is used in each paragraph*. Then make it reasonably clear—using signal phrases, sentence flow, and/or additional citations—that you are continuing to discuss information from the same source.

Differentiate 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 appear in quotation marks (proper nouns and common language excluded) or be paraphrased. Remember: whether you are paraphrasing or quoting source information, always cite it.

Try to limit direct quotations.

While quoting can be effective—and sometimes essential for precise wording—paraphrasing demonstrates your understanding of the topic and your critical thinking skills. Generally, the vast majority of your paper, around 90 percent, should be written in your own words rather than directly quoted from other sources.

The Graduate Writing Center and Thesis Processing Office can help!

Writing coaches and thesis processors can help you build your attribution skills. You may also ask a writing coach to run a draft paper through NPS's plagiarism-detection software; the coach will meet with you to discuss problem areas and guide your revisions.

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

For Chicago Notes/Turabian, use in-text reference numbers and footnotes to cite, and signal phrases to clarify the distinction between sources. It must always be clear which pieces of information came from which sources. Without a citation, signal phrase, or other indicator, the reader will assume a sentence contains your original thought or finding as an author (or common knowledge).

- A **full footnote** citation appears the **first** time a source is cited in your paper; see footnotes 1 and 2.

- A **shortened** footnote citation appears the **second** and each subsequent time a source is cited; see footnote 4.

- When a footnote is identical to the one right before it, include only the source's author(s) and the relevant page number(s); see footnote 3. See the libguide for options and examples.

- Citations for several relevant sources can be grouped together in a single note at the end of a sentence, separated by semicolons; see footnote 4. Take care to avoid ambiguity as to what is documenting what.

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 the opinion of the author.

> In a *Journal of Restaurant Marketing* article, restaurateur Shawna Jackson contends that a restaurant's color scheme influences how hungry its patrons are.[1] Consider popular fast-food restaurants, which often use red and yellow in their advertising and décor. According to a study by Roberta Chen and David Lopez, restaurant customers feel energized in red and yellow environments, which encourages them to order more food.[2] The same study indicates that patrons feel relaxed in blue and purple environments, which causes them to "spend more time considering the menu options and eat at a slower pace."[3] Although blue décor can give a restaurant a casual, laid-back feel, industry experts believe this color can negatively affect profit.[4] Accordingly, it is difficult to identify a popular restaurant chain that decorates with calmer hues.

* Note: no page number is needed in footnote 1 because the sentence describes the source's general argument rather than data or analysis from a specific location in the source.

For reference examples and tips, visit libguides.nps.edu/citation/chicago-nb.

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[1] Shawna Jackson, "Color's Effect on Restaurant Patrons," *Journal of Restaurant Marketing* 13, no. 4 (April 2009).

[2] Roberta Chen and David Lopez, *Color Me Hungry: How to Decorate Your Restaurant to Increase Profit and Patronage* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 3.

[3] Chen and Lopez, 29.

[4] Jackson, "Color's Effect on Restaurant Patrons," 18; Chen and Lopez, *Color Me Hungry*, 74–76.