

# What is a Citation?

A citation is the identifying information that gives the important facts about a source (books, magazine/journal articles, newspaper articles, chapters in books, encyclopedia entries, and websites are some examples). One of the most important functions of a citation is to enable someone else, based upon the information you give, find the source you are citing. A citation also provides credit to the creators (authors, organizations, etc.). Often there are certain formats your instructor will want you to follow based upon a style guide. The MLA (Modern Language Association) is one style guide—there are others such as the American Psychological Association (APA) style guide. The examples below do not necessarily follow a certain style, but provide examples of the information to include.

## **Books**

Citation includes the following information:

- Title of book
- Author(s), editor(s)
- Edition (if given)
- Publisher and where published
- Publication year
- Total number of pages

## **Example:**

Gibaldi, Joseph. MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers. Sixth edition. New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 2003. 361 p.

## **Journal Articles**

Citation includes the following information:

- Title of article
- Author(s) of article
- Title of journal
- Volume
- Issue
- Date of journal
- Page numbers

## **Example:**

Watkins, T.H. “The Brotherhood of the Mountains.” American Heritage 30 (3), April/May 1979: p. 58-67.

## **Websites**

These will include the URL (Uniform Resource Locator), or web address, plus other information according to the type of online resource or website being cited. Some print articles will also be published in full-text databases through resources like VIVA. Other electronic full-text sources may also be originally from a print source. Examples of these include items some government publications or electronic books. In these cases, include both the print and electronic (URL) information.

## **Example:**

NAIC Online. Sept. 29 1999. National Association of Inventors Corporation. Oct. 1 1999.  
<<http://www.better-investing.org/>>