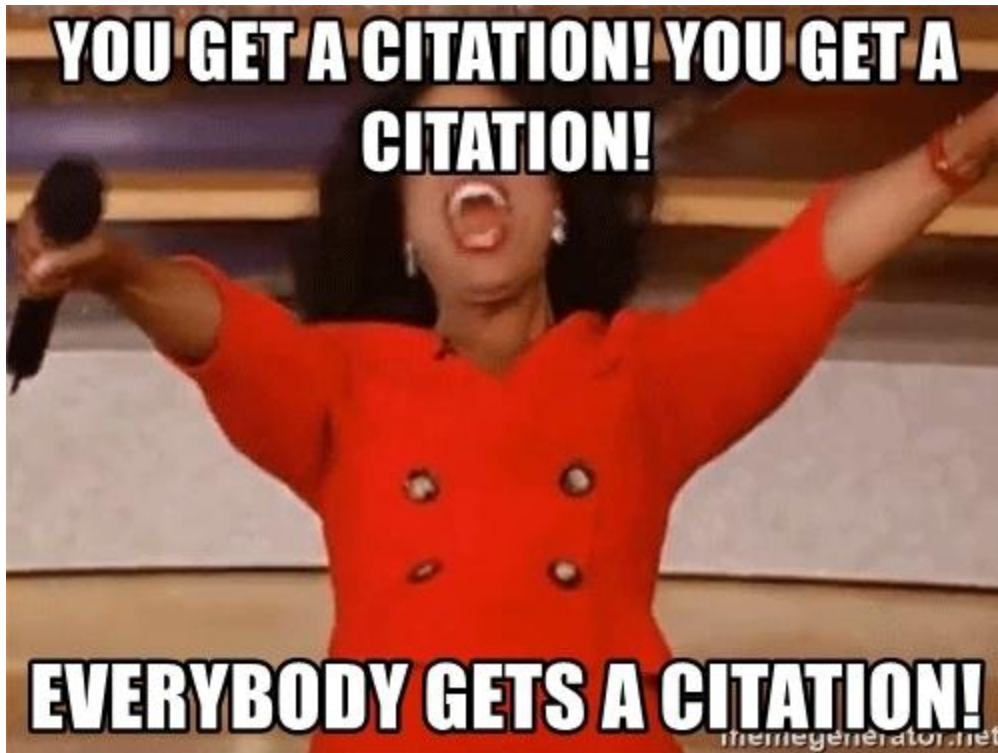


# APA Referencing

## An Unofficial Quickstart Guide

Accurately referencing a research project using APA (American Psychological Association) format can feel like a difficult task, one made more challenging by the fear that sourcing incorrectly can be perceived as academic dishonesty. I want to help simplify the process and clarify what's required. It starts with understanding *why* we must reference and cite sources.



(Oprah Winfrey APA Meme, n.d.)

# Incorrect APA Referencing ≠ Academic Misconduct

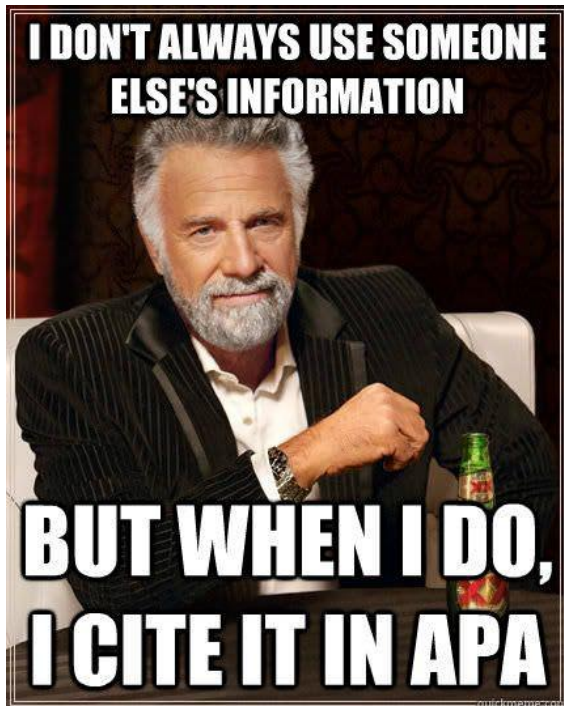
**Incorrect APA referencing does not equal academic misconduct.** Please rest assured that if you show you've made an effort to cite your sources (even if your technique could use some improvement) this is not the same as academic misconduct. You will likely lose marks due to improper referencing technique, but if an attempt has been made to source facts that come from outside of your head, you have not engaged in academic misconduct. That said, let's avoid losing marks unnecessarily. Please read on!

# Why do we cite?

Very simply, you need to cite your sources in order to **give credit where credit is due** and not pass an idea off as your own when it is borrowed from another author/source. **If you are using any information that exists outside of your own brain, you must cite it.** (If you are writing a personal story, reflection piece or completing another assignment that does not require outside information, referencing is not necessary.) Most university-level assignments will require a **combination** of research (finding information from external sources outside of your brain), alongside analysis of these ideas, mixed with your opinions (developed inside of your brain). **Therefore, most assignments require referencing.**

The purpose of citing for is **for your reader to be able to find the information at the original source.** This will allow them to pinpoint where you found the information and verify that this information is correct and accurately interpreted. Examples of original sources include credible websites, videos or textbooks, among others. Any source that the outside world does not have access to (your own lecture notes, for example) still needs to be cited but will be treated differently due to lack of access (more on that in a minute). **Understanding that your reader should be able to access these sources is helpful to understand *how* to cite.**

How do we cite?



(The Most Interesting Man in the World APA Meme, n.d.)

**APA** (American Psychological Association) referencing style is most commonly in arts and humanities and it **consists of two parts: in-text citations** (found throughout the assignment, beside the associated information) **and a final 'References' list** (found on the last page of your assignment with your sources listed in alphabetical order).

# Your Assignment is Like a Map

*The entire map* = your assignment

*Each red node* = in-text citation

*Map legend* = final references list

*Lines connecting the nodes* = the reader connecting the dots to understand where you found the information and verifying your sources



(Cwojtun, 2015)

Whenever you include research within your assignment, **you must have an in-text citation, as well as a final references list item** for the source. If I'm a reader looking to verify your source, the in-text citation helps me identify where the information is located in the assignment and the references list provides me with the complete information about the source (and I can then go find the original source, if necessary). Therefore, if you are citing a source that is not accessible to the outside world (ex: your lecture notes or a chat you had with your instructor after class), this information still needs to be sourced but done so a little differently (in APA language, we call this a "personal communication") (Caulfield, 2020).

## Common Research Sources

Source	Format	In-Text Citation for Paraphrased Info	Reference List Item
<b>Textbook</b>	Last name, Initials. (Year). <i>Book title</i> (Editor/translator initials, Last name, Ed. or Trans.) (Edition). Publisher.	(Smith & Williams, 2020)	Smith, T., & Williams, B. M. (2020). <i>The citation manual for students: A quick guide</i> (2nd ed.). Wiley.
<b>Website Article</b>	Last name, Initials. (Year, Month Day). <i>Article title</i> . Site Name. URL	(Rowlatt, 2020)	Rowlatt, J. (2020, October 19). <i>Could cold water hold a clue to a dementia cure?</i> BBC News. <a href="https://www.bbc.com/news/health-54531075">https://www.bbc.com/news/health-54531075</a>
<b>White Paper</b> (A report presenting the ideas of the organization who issued it - ex: government report)	Organization Name. (Year). <i>White paper title: Subtitle</i> [White paper]. Publisher Name. URL	(Department of Health and Social Care, 2012)	Department of Health and Social Care. (2012). <i>Caring for our future: Reforming care and support</i> [White paper]. Crown. <a href="https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/136422/White-Paper-Caring-for-our-future-reforming-care-and-support-PDF-1580K.pdf">https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/136422/White-Paper-Caring-for-our-future-reforming-care-and-support-PDF-1580K.pdf</a>
<b>Software</b>	Author. (Year). <i>Name of the software or app</i> (Version number) [Computer software or Mobile app]. Publisher. URL	(Xero, 2019).	Xero. (2019). <i>Xero practice manager</i> [Computer software]. Xero. <a href="https://www.xero.com/nz/features-and-tools/practice-tools/practicemanager/">https://www.xero.com/nz/features-and-tools/practice-tools/practicemanager/</a>
<b>Recorded Video (Including Recorded Lectures)*</b>	Last name, Initials. [Channel name]. (Year, Month Day).	(Stevens, 2017)	Stevens, M. [Vsauce]. (2017, August 14). <i>The napkin ring problem</i>

Source	Format	In-Text Citation for Paraphrased Info	Reference List Item
	<i>Video title</i> [Video]. YouTube. URL		[Video]. YouTube. <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J51ncHP_BrY">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J51ncHP_BrY</a>
<b>Your Lecture Notes*</b>	(First Initial of Faculty Who Gave Lecture. Second Initial if known. Last Name, personal communication, Month Day, Year lecture took place)	(J. D. Black, personal communication, May 30, 2012)	<i>Not Required</i> (because the reader doesn't have access to this material)
<b>A Conversation</b>	(First Initial of Individual. Second Initial if known. Last Name, personal communication, Month Day, Year conversation took place)	(D. J. White, personal communication, May 27, 2012)	<i>Not Required</i> (because the reader doesn't have access to this material)
<b>Course Material Housed on D2L*</b>	Instructor's Last Name, First Initial. Second Initial if given., Additional Instructor(s). (Date of publication). Course code: Title of module, page, or presentation [Course Content]. Retrieved from LMS <a href="https://courses.ryerson.ca">https://courses.ryerson.ca</a>	<b>First instance:</b> (Habekost, Kuzmin, Varma, & Wong, 2021)  <b>Each instance thereafter:</b> (Habekost et al., 2021)	Habekost, M., Kuzmin, N., Varma, D., & Wong, J. (2021). GCM 120: Module 1 Welcome to Press'd for Time Print Co.! [Course Content]. Retrieved from D2L's Brightspace <a href="https://courses.ryerson.ca">https://courses.ryerson.ca</a>
<b>Lecture Slides*</b>	Instructor's Last Name, First Initial. Second Initial if given. (Year Presentation Was Created). <i>Title of presentation: Subtitle if any</i> [PowerPoint presentation]. Retrieved from LMS.	(Graham, 2013)	Graham, J. (2013). <i>Stem Cells</i> [PowerPoint presentation]. Retrieved from D2L's Brightspace <a href="https://courses.ryerson.ca">https://courses.ryerson.ca</a>

\*While it's best practice to return to the original source (or as close to the original source as you can find) versus citing lectures, we understand that in many courses discuss a number of specialized pieces of equipment and discuss topics that aren't commonly found in textbooks and freely available. **If this is the situation you find yourself in, ask your instructor if they are okay with you sourcing the lecture and/or your own notes when the information can't be found elsewhere.**



(Ryan Gosling APA Meme, n.d.)

The reason *why* it's best practice to cite from the original source is because the more information gets passed from one source or person to the next, the more the information could become distorted, inaccurate, incomplete or taken out of context. It's kind of like a game of [broken telephone](#), whereby each time the message is passed from one person/source to the next, there is a chance that the information will change. This is why it's **best practice to source the original, fact-checked information provided in places like textbooks, credible websites and news articles.**



(Telephone Game, n.d.)



# Balance is Key

When it comes to incorporating research into your projects, you can include it in your assignment in three ways: direct quoting, paraphrasing and your own thoughts/ideas/analysis.

**Direct Quoting** (someone else's idea in their exact words)

- Quotation marks are required around the text to indicate they are in the author's original words
- An in-text citation at the end of the corresponding sentence that includes an exact location of the quote in the original text (ex: page number) is required
- A final reference list item is required

**Paraphrasing** (someone else's idea but in your own words)

- An in-text citation at the end of the corresponding sentence is required
- A final reference list item is required

**Your Own Thoughts/Ideas/Analysis**

- No reference required

Your research assignment will likely contain a combination of all three of the above and it's a good idea to aim for **balance**. Relying too heavily on just one or even two of these incorporation methods will result in a less-than-ideal final piece.

- *Too much direct quoting?* The result is often a choppy-sounding final product that is just a patchwork of other people's words with little original thought.
- *Too much paraphrasing?* The result is often not enough of your own thoughts and ideas injected into your work that is essential to providing context for the reader.
- *Too much of your own thoughts/ideas/analysis?* The result is often an under-researched, unsubstantiated final result.

**Aim for balance.**

# Perfecting Paraphrasing

Even the most well-intentioned students can get into trouble when they're trying to paraphrase with the original source actively open in front of them. Here's a simple 4-step plan to put someone else's ideas into your own words:

Step 1 - Read/listen/watch

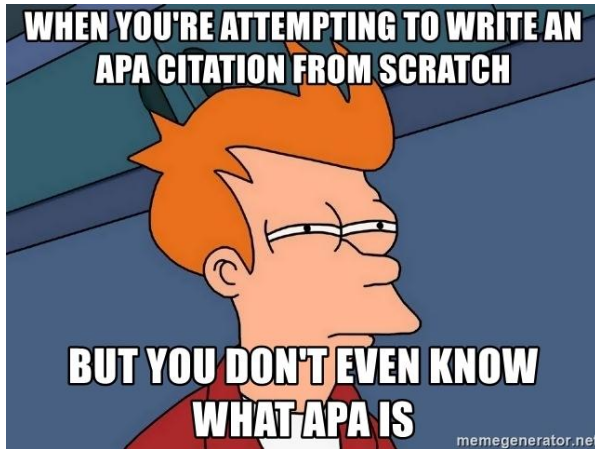
Step 2 - Minimize the tab/close the book

Step 3 - Think

Step 4 - Paraphrase (include specific tips here)

You've got this!

## Make Use of Citation Tools



(Futurama APA Meme, n.d.)

Why make life (and citing your sources!) harder than it has to be? There are a number of automated tools available for you to use for free.

[Google Docs Citation Tool](#)

[Microsoft Word Citation Tool](#)

There's a lot to know about citing your sources (the [APA Reference Manual](#) is hundreds of pages long!), but this is a start. Getting the hang of the *why*, *how* and *when* to cite is an important skill to know throughout your university career. Practicing it here and now is a necessary first step to becoming an APA champion.

**Happy citing!**

# References

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<https://memegenerator.net/instance/81313063/futurama-fry-when-youre-attempting-to-write-an-apa-citation-from-scratch-but-you-dont-even-know-what>

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<https://memegenerator.net/instance/50979643/oprah-winfrey-meme-you-get-a-citation-you-get-a-citation-everybody-gets-a-citation>

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<https://memecreator.org/static/images/memes/5017139.jpg>

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