



Citations: What They Are and Why We Use Them

There are two fundamental reasons to use citations in your work:

1. Just as scientists working in a lab need to record every step of their work, thereby enabling other researchers to replicate it, academic writing in the humanities requires proper record-keeping. One of the primary tools for this kind of record-keeping is **citation**, which ensures that your reader will be able to follow your train of thought, look up all the other work you've used, and understand how you arrived at your conclusion.
2. Another important reason to use citations is to make sure that you're giving credit to the people who deserve it. You wouldn't want other people to take a recording or composition you've made and claim it as their own; so too, you need to make sure you're not using someone else's idea and claiming it as your own.

There are different methods and styles of citation; two of the most common are outlined in the [Chicago Manual of Style](#) and the [MLA Handbook](#). No matter which style of citation you are using, you should always include the information that will help your reader retrace your footsteps: the name of the author, the title of the work, and the publication information (place, publisher, and year of publication). If you are citing a specific passage, include the page number or web link.