

## What should I cite?

Generally, you should cite any information that is not a part of your general knowledge. In other words, if you had to look up or research something, you should cite it. While this is not an exhaustive list, it should serve as a guide to help you know whether or not you should cite something:

### Always Cite

\*Someone else's research. If someone else conducts a study, even if you memorize the results of that study or draw different conclusions about their research, you should cite their work.

\*Specialized information that you did not know before you wrote the research paper.

\*News stories or articles

\*Direct quotations of what other people have said

\*Ideas or concepts that other people have written about before you. Even if you draw your own conclusions, if you base those conclusions on other people's ideas, you should give them credit for that. (Ex. *According to the ideas proposed in J. Doe's theory of positivity (Citation), I believe that he was only partially correct. While he correctly identified...he failed to account for S. Deer's ideas of negativity (citation.) Therefore, the correct conclusion is...(no citation is needed here, since you already gave them credit for their ideas, and you're using those ideas to create your own new theory.)*)

### Give Credit (informal citation)

Informal citations are citations where you need to give credit to the author, but do not need to cite the source in MLA format. Ex. According to Benjamin Franklin....

\*Quotations from historical figures (over 100 years old)

\*Information from famous historical documents (i.e. US Constitution, Magna Carta, etc.)

\*Information from public records (non-copyrighted material)

### No Citation Needed

The only things that do not require any citation are those ideas which are completely your conclusions or research that you have gathered and conducted yourself. **In a research paper, most of your information should be cited.** If it is not, you haven't conducted any research, and therefore have not written a research paper, you have instead written an opinion essay.

### How often should I cite?

You should cite every time you switch from one source to a new source. If an entire paragraph is summarized material from a single source, it is acceptable to cite the entire paragraph. In a research paper, every paragraph that is not your original conclusion should be cited.