



Citing Responsibly, Avoiding Plagiarism: An NPS Refresher



Citations make your research credible. They validate information, give credit where credit is due, and allow other researchers to follow in your footsteps. Citations tell your readers how to verify claims, data, or facts discussed in your writing by pointing them to the specific works from which you gathered information. 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 knowledge the result of emails or conversations? (You still must cite unpublished information.)
- Is this my own analysis based on my personal knowledge or research, or is it analysis I borrowed from another person?

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 (don’t cite).

One citation at the end of a paragraph cannot “cover” the entire paragraph.

Cite the source completely *the first time it is used in each paragraph*. Then, throughout the paragraph, make it reasonably clear that you are continuing to discuss information from the same source. Cite the source again, if needed, before your focus moves to another 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, though there are exceptions, no more than 10 percent of your document should be quoted from other sources.

The Graduate Writing Center and Thesis Processing Office can help!

Writing coaches and thesis processors can help you build your paraphrasing, quoting, and citation skills. You may also ask a writing coach to run a draft paper run through NPS’s plagiarism 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 citing in Chicago/Turabian, use in-text reference numbers and footnotes to cite, and signal phrases to help clarify the distinction between sources. It must always be clear which pieces of information came from which sources. If a sentence is not cited, the reader will assume that it is your own original thought or finding as an author (or common knowledge).

- A **full footnote** citation appears the **first** time a source is cited (see footnote 1).
- A **shortened** footnote citation appears the **second** and each subsequent time a source is cited (see footnotes 2 and 3).
- The number of note references in a sentence or a paragraph can be reduced by grouping several citations in a single note. The citations are separated by semicolons and must appear in the same order as the text material to which they pertain. Take care to avoid any ambiguity as to what is documenting what (see footnote 4).

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 clearly the opinion of the author.

Red and yellow are the best colors with which to decorate your restaurant because they induce feelings of hunger.¹ Consider popular fast-food chains, which often use red and yellow in their advertising and décor. According to Smith and Lopez's study, restaurant customers felt more energized in red and yellow environments, which encouraged them to order more food.² The same study indicated that patrons felt relaxed in blue and purple environments, which encouraged them to "spend more time considering the menu options and eat at a slower pace."³ Although blue décor can give your restaurant a more casual, laid-back feel, industry experts believe it encourages patrons to linger at their tables without ordering additional food or beverages.⁴ Accordingly, it is difficult to identify a popular chain restaurant that decorates with calmer hues.

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

For Turabian ground rules, see www.press.uchicago.edu/books/turabian/turabian_citationguide.html.

¹ Alex Yakimenko, "Color's Effect on Restaurant Patrons," *Restaurant Hospitality* 13, no. 4 (April 1999): 28.

² Sally H. Smith and David Lopez, *Color Me Hungry: How to Decorate Your Restaurant to Increase Profit and Patronage* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 3.

³ Smith and Lopez, 29–30.

⁴ Yakimenko, "Color's Effect on Restaurant Patrons," 18; Smith and Lopez, *Color Me Hungry*, 74.