



W. L. Adams Center for Writing

Glossary of Research Writing Terms

abstract: a short summary of a book, report, or article. In APA style, an abstract is a required component that precedes research papers submitted for publication. Many professors require that abstracts precede APA style research papers.

analogous evidence: a comparison that offers support for a thesis or claim, such as Plato's use of the cave metaphor to describe the limits of human knowledge.

anecdotal evidence: a single incident or occurrence offered as evidence, such as a personal story or a case history, often considered weaker evidence than quantitative or testimonial evidence.

AMA style: refers to the documentation style set forth in the publication manual of the American Medical Association. Its characteristics are:

- ✎ Superscripts (raised numerals) serve as in-text citations: Carmona.⁵ ✎
Superscripts also serve as source identifiers, assigned in order of use.
- ✎ Page numbers for direct quotations are included in superscripts.
- ✎ Reference page lists sources only once, numbered in the order used. ✎
References require use of standardized journal title abbreviations.

APA style: refers to the documentation style set forth in the publication manual of the American Psychological Association. Its characteristics are:

- ✎ Parenthetical citations emphasize timeliness of data: (Carmona, 2004).
- ✎ A title page has a "running head" that also appears on subsequent pages.
- ✎ Quotations and paraphrase require citations; direct quotes require page numbers.
- ✎ Quotations longer than 40 words must be block-quoted.
- ✎ An alphabetized reference page emphasizes the year of publication and omits many standard capitalizations.

attribution: the act of signaling to a reader that information comes from a source other than yourself, through in-text citation and use of a signal phrase such as "According to" or "This study shows."

bibliographical citation: publication information essential to identify and locate source material (usually includes author, date, title, and medium of publication, and means of access.) Citation styles vary between AMA, APA, MLA, and Chicago/Turabian.

bibliography: alphabetized list of sources on a subject, with complete publication information. Can also refer to the list of sources used in a Chicago/Turabian style research paper. In APA the bibliography is titled "References"; in MLA it is "Works Cited."

block quotation: a lengthy quotation displayed as an indented block. MLA style requires a quotation of more than four lines to be indented ten spaces from the left margin. APA style requires quotations of more than forty words to be indented five spaces. In Chicago/Turabian style, quotations that run more than 5 lines must be indented 5 spaces and single-spaced. All styles omit quotation marks for block quotes.

catalog: an online collection of individual listings for all books and other archival materials owned by a library or available via its subscription databases, searchable by title, author, and subject.

Chicago (or Turabian) style: citation of sources with footnotes or endnotes as specified in the *Chicago Manual of Style* or in Kate L. Turabian's *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*.

citation: a reference to a source or information that identifies a source you have used (usually includes name of author or title of source material, page number, and, for APA, date of publication). APA example: (Leventhal 2005) MLA example: (Leventhal 46)

cite: to provide documentation in a research paper that will direct a reader to the original source of the material quoted, paraphrased, mentioned, or summarized.

common knowledge: general information/knowledge that is commonly known by the public and, therefore, does not need to be attributed to a source (e.g., the information that terrorists attacked the World Trade Center in New York on Sept. 11, 2001, is now common knowledge).

digital sources: general term for electronic sources available online; includes both Web sources and digitized databases.

direct quotation: re-expressing information exactly as it appeared or was spoken in the original source. In research papers, use quotation marks to indicate direct quotations. Example: *The fire chief stated, "The cause of the fire has not yet been determined."*

documentation: the essential publication details about a research source that a writer must include to acknowledge source material appropriately and to provide optional access to the original.

documentation style: the type of documentation used; usually refers to MLA, APA, Chicago/Turabian, or AMA styles.

DOI: An acronym for "digital object identifier," a permanent internet address for a source. Commonly used in science and medical reference citations, the number always starts with "10." In a reference citation use lower-case letters for the DOI:

Herbst-Damm, K.L., & Kulik, J.A. (2005). Volunteer support, marital status, and the survival times of terminally ill patients. *Healthy Psychology, 24*, 225229. doi: 10.1037/0278-6133.24.2.225.

endnotes: citations in Chicago style formatted like footnotes but placed at the end of a research paper, between the body of the paper and the bibliography.

evidence: information that supports or amplifies your thesis. The four types of evidence are anecdotal, testimonial, quantitative, and analogous.

footnote: a reference note placed at the bottom of the page, most notably in Chicago/Turabian style. In APA and MLA, footnotes are used for textual asides and commentary, or clarification of points in the text.

indirect quotation: a paraphrase or summary of a direct quotation; indirect quotations used in research papers do not require quotation marks but they do require citation. Example: The fire chief reported that the cause of the fire was unknown (Smith, 2003).

MLA: refers to the documentation style of the Modern Language Association, which is widely used by disciplines such as English and foreign languages. Its characteristics are:

- ✎ Parenthetical citations include author name and page: (Carmona 44).
Include the page number for both quoted and paraphrased material.
- ✎ The first text page also serves as the title page.
- ✎ Block quote any passage that exceeds three lines in length.
- ✎ Include an alphabetized “Works Cited” page at the end of the paper.

paraphrase: to express source material in your own words, without altering the meaning of the original.

parenthetical reference/citation: information needed to identify a source, enclosed in parentheses and inserted at the end of quoted, summarized, or paraphrased material. Place the period **after** any parenthetical citation placed at the end of a sentence.

APA example: Nursing first gained recognition as a profession during the Civil War (Smith, 2014).

MLA example: Nursing first gained recognition as a profession during the Civil War (Smith 46).

plagiarism: the act of quoting, summarizing, or paraphrasing source material without using appropriate, complete documentation; the act of claiming authorship of a document written by another person.

quantitative evidence: use of numerically expressed data, statistics, ratios, and percentages to support a claim. Generally considered to be powerful evidence.

quotation: source material that is reproduced in the exact words of the speaker or writer, indicated by the use of double quotation marks.

Example: According to a CDC report, “No valid evidence correlates rising autism rates with the use of childhood vaccines” (2013, p. 66).

quotation within a quotation: quoted source material that includes a quotation, indicated by single quotation marks.

Example (in MLA): As John Turner reminds us, “a great president focuses on more than 'winning the next election' or 'making a name for himself'” (Moore 6).

signal phrase: phrases appended to direct quotations to provide cues to the reader about context, attribution, and relevant value of the source.

Example (in Chicago/Turabian): According to the EPA’s latest guidance on pesticides, you should “never store poisonous products in containers that could be mistaken for food or drinks.”⁹

shortened form: used in Chicago/Turabian style endnotes or footnotes, an abbreviated form of the complete citation, permissible to use once you have cited a source in full with the first use. Example: ⁵Carmona, “Autoimmune Assays,” 17.

summary: source material that is condensed and expressed your own words, cited with appropriate documentation.

superscript: a means of citing a particular source by using a raised numeral that refers a reader to a citation at the bottom of the page or in endnotes. Superscripts are used in Chicago/Turabian style and AMA style.

Example: Nursing first gained professional recognition during the Civil War.¹²

testimonial evidence: information offered by an eyewitness or an expert in support of a claim, often combined with quantitative evidence.

Works Cited: the list of research sources provided on the last page of an MLA research paper to provide complete publication information about all the references (works) used (cited) in the paper.

Works Cited entry: the information provided on a single source in the Works Cited page in MLA Style.

Example: Angelou, Maya. *Even the Stars Look Lonesome*. New York: Random House, 1997.