How to Write a Works Cited Page

I love being a writer. What I can't stand is the paperwork.
~ Peter De Vries

When you write a research paper, you must cite any secondary sources you use within the body of your paper. The Works Cited, sometimes called References, provides source information that identifies where you got your research. Most important, it lets readers know that you did not plagiarize any part of your paper. [See How to Avoid Plagiarism for more on this topic.]

A Bibliography is not the same as a Works Cited. A Bibliography is a list of all sources you consulted, including those you did not end up referencing in your paper. A Works Cited is a list of only the sources you reference in your paper (Gibaldi).

Always start the Works Cited or Bibliography page on a new page and place it at the end of your paper. Center the page title at the top of the page. Arrange entries in alphabetical order by last names of authors, editors, etc. or by the first letter of the title for sources without an author or editor.

In a Works Cited, you must alphabetically list every source you used in your paper, such as a book, a movie, a website, an interview, or any information that did not come from you. Commonly known information, such as when Independence Day is, does not need to be cited; however, anything more in depth than that, such as where the Declaration of Independence was signed and who exactly signed it, should be cited.

The most common citing format is the Modern Language Association (MLA) format. In high schools and colleges, most instructors will ask for MLA. Other citing formats are American Psychology Association (APA) and Chicago/Turabian. The citing examples we use in this document are MLA, but at the end you can find links to web sites that can show you how to cite in APA and Chicago/Turabian formats.

Sometimes, especially in English classes, you may be asked to use only one or two works from an author to write about. Thus the question arises, do you need to have a Works Cited if you are using one source, the instructor knows that source, and everyone else in the class will be using that same source? This is a time when it is necessary to ask the instructor what s/he would prefer. S/he may say that no Works Cited is necessary, because s/he knows the sources and wants you to focus on writing the paper, or s/he may want you to practice setting up a Works Cited page to get into the habit of doing so. When in doubt, create the Works Cited page. Regardless, you must cite these sources throughout your paper. [See How to Cite Information for more on this topic.]

A Works Cited or Bibliography page should be double-spaced, with all lines after the first one indented five spaces, or one-half inch. (This is called a hanging indent.) The most common work cited, a print book with one author (or editor), is set up like this:

Author/editor’s Last name, First name. Book Title. City of Publication: Publisher, Year of publication. Print.
Below are a few specific examples.

A book with one author:

A book of critical essays with one editor:

Other common sources you may need to cite include:

**Multiple Authors** – For books with two authors, cite the names in the order they appear. Only the first author is listed as last name, first name. The second author is first name followed by last name.


If there are three authors, you can list them as shown above, in the order they appear in the book. For more than three, list the first author then follow it with *et al.* If the book has editors and not authors (books of critical essays on one subject often do), treat the editors like the authors and set the source up like this:


**Magazine** – To cite an article from a magazine, it is necessary to have “month-year,” or “day/week-month-year,” depending on how frequently the magazine publishes. For example:


**Newspaper** – For a newspaper, list the date the article was published. If the newspaper does not say where it is published in the title of the newspaper, like The Wall Street Journal, put in brackets after the title of the newspaper where it is published, e.g., [New York]. For example:

Film – To cite a movie, you may use shortened versions of words, to avoid having to fill out director, producer, written by, each time. Also, because there are so many names involved, it shortens the entry. At the very least, include the movie title, the director, the distributor, the release date, and the medium (Film, DVD, VHS). Other information—such as who wrote it, who produced it, and who starred in it—can be added between the title and the distribution company. This information can usually be found on the DVD or VHS box, or online. Here are examples of both approaches:

Minimalist:


With more information:


Note that, with movies, it is not necessary to use the last-name-first format, because you are using the title of the movie to cite, not a specific person.

Online Sources – For the Internet, it gets tricky. Even if you use an article you found online and the article is from a magazine, you must treat the article like an internet source.

For a web site with an author, format the entry like this:

Author (last name first). “Title of article.” Title of Web site. Sponsor of site, date last updated. Web. Date of access (inverted).

For example:


Note: If your instructor requires a URL for Web sources, enclose the URL in angle brackets and place at the end of the entry. If the URL is too long and must be divided, break it after a slash (/). Do not insert a hyphen. Also, often word processing programs will try to make the web address a hyperlink for you. If this happens, right click on the link and press “remove hyperlink.”

Work from a Database – To cite from a database, note the article title, journal name, and standard bibliographic information listed earlier in this guide, the database listing the article information, and the organization subscribing to the database. Use the following format:

Other Formatting Tips

- Do not number entries on a Works Cited page.
- Book, magazine, or journal titles should be in italics; article or chapter titles should be in quotations.
- Each entry must identify the source format: Print, Web, Film, etc.
- When more than one city is listed for the same publisher, use only the first city.
- In article or book titles, do not capitalize articles, prepositions, coordinating conjunctions, or the "to" in infinitives.

Helpful Links for APA and Chicago/Turbanian

- Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL), APA Formatting and Style Guide: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/
Works Cited

