

Writing & Citation Guide

A Handbook for Sociology Students

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The purpose of this handbook is to provide tips about professional writing, principles of citation, and a handy guide to writing in the ASA style in particular, to help you succeed in sociology and other writing-intensive classes.

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Writing Tips

In general,

- *In social science writing, in most cases your purpose should be to enter into a conversation about a particular topic or set of topics.*
 - You should be adding something new to what others have already said about it, making a case for why someone else's argument is problematic, providing support for another's proposition, etc.
 - A simple template to keep in mind as you write is "they say/I say"
 - In other words, explain what others have said about the topic ("they say") and then provide your own argument ("I say").
 - While you need to provide the context from the literature about the topic in which you are interested (otherwise how will you know what to add to the conversation?), it is very important that you clearly make your own argument (Graff and Birkenstein 2006).
- *Write your papers as if the reader does not know anything about the subject.*
 - Provide enough context so that a random person picking up your paper blowing down the street could understand it; the paper needs to stand on its own.
 - Provide enough elaboration about the sociological concepts you employ such that this random person could understand it and your professor can see that you understand the concept yourself.
 - Define in your own words or otherwise make clear what these concepts mean.
 - Do not refer to "in class" or what "you said" or what "we did", which indicates that it is written strictly for the professor and not in a more professional manner for a general audience.
- *For many written assignments, you will be asked to identify another author's thesis and in most cases you should provide your own.*
 - What is a thesis?
 - "A proposition stated or put forward for consideration, especially one to be discussed and proved or to be maintained against objections" ("Thesis" n.d.).
 - In essence, a thesis is the overall argument the author is making, the primary conclusions the author is reaching (it is not the same as the author's purpose)
- *Re-read and edit your papers carefully prior to submitting them.*
 - Your professor may dock points for typos/editing issues (including problems with citation/references)
 - Having someone else read through your paper to give you feedback (the campus writing center is an option) can be very helpful.
 - If you are using Microsoft Word or something similar, it will underline misspellings and grammar issues; make sure you take note of and address those issues.
 - Your not catching these obvious editing mistakes indicates to the professor that you have not taken the time to edit your work.

- And, this feature will not catch instances where you use the wrong form of the word (e.g. their instead of there), so you need to read through it carefully.
 - Watch out for *sentence fragments* – they are a common and very annoying problem.
 - Go here for some tips on what sentence fragments are and how to avoid them:
 - <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/620/01/>
 - Similarly, avoid ending sentences with prepositions, such as to, for, with, or in.
 - Also, in the name of professionalism, avoid using contractions in formal papers; instead, write out the two words, such as “was not” instead of “wasn’t.”
- *Other tips:*
 - Good writers use transitions in their writing to cohesively knit the paper together.
 - Instead of a series of disconnected paragraphs, make sure that you move clearly from one topic to the next.
 - Just using section headings is not enough; rather, you need to guide the reader through your thoughts. When you are moving from one major section to another, summarize what you have stated and explain to the reader how the previous section or topic is connected to that which follows. This may seem redundant, but it will help the reader better understand where you have been and where you are going.
 - Use direct quotations when another writer states something better than you could
 - *But:* limit the number of direct quotations that you use in your papers.
 - Using too many quotes can indicate to the reader that you are too lazy to summarize or to express the idea in your own words. It could also make it seem as though you are tentative because you do not really understand the material. You obviously would like to avoid giving either of these impressions.
 - In American English, we use double quotes for quotations (e.g. “like this”); single quotes are reserved for quotes-within-quotes, for example: According to Hauser (2012), “Many mothers justify this by arguing that ‘it’s just easier this way’”.
 - When you do your own interviews, make sure you use the data!
 - Use direct quotes from your interviewees to support your points and bring the story to life.
 - When you do include quotes from in-depth interviews where the parties need to remain confidential, you should simply explain who provided the quote right in the sentence (e.g. According to a middle-aged, middle class male from Oshkosh, “...”) but not include a citation.
 - You should cite something as a “Personal communication”, on the other hand, when it is based on an “on-record” conversation you have (e.g. directly with an expert to obtain facts), which is cited in the text in a particular way (see below).
 - When you include photos, maps, tables, and other such supplemental information:
 - Always refer to them in your text; for example (See Table 1).
 - Tables should be labeled Table 1, 2, 3, etc.
 - Photos, maps, graphs, and so on should be labeled Figure 1, 2, 3, etc.
 - If they are central to your argument, including them directly in the main text.
 - If they are not central, but useful, include them in an Appendix.
 - Provide an explanatory caption with the Table or Figure.
 - If you have obtained them from an outside source, be sure to cite those sources appropriately.
 - When you refer to a book or film title, put the title in sentence case (capitalizing the first letters) and in *italics*, whereas for article titles you should put quotes around the title.
 - As alluded to, important information that is too bulky to include in the main text, or not central, should be included in Appendices, which come *after* the References.
 - Group similar items together in the same Appendix and center, bold, and label them
 - For example, Appendix A – Photographs, Appendix B – Maps, Appendix C – Tables
 - If this information is important enough to include at all, even in the appendices, then you should refer to it somewhere in the text of your paper; for example (See Appendix A).

ASA Citation Basics

In general, if you didn't write it, cite it!

- Why cite?
 - It is good ethics; citations give credit where credit is due (to the authors whose original ideas you are citing).
 - Citations allow readers to locate and further explore the sources you consulted and show the depth and scope of your work.
 - Citations provide evidence for your arguments and add credibility to your work by demonstrating that you have sought out and considered a variety of resources.
 - In written academic work, citing sources is standard practice and shows that you are responding to this person, agreeing with that person, and adding something of your own. You should think of documenting your sources as providing a trail for your reader to follow to see the work you performed and discover what led to what you have written.
 - Also, by following these guidelines, you avoid plagiarism.

In-text citation: If you cite facts from, paraphrase from, or quote the ideas of outside sources, you need to include an in-text citation, placing citations in sentences so that it is clear which material has come from which sources.

- Again, essentially all of your written assignments should include proper citations and references. Failure to do so is equivalent to plagiarism.
- *Do not cite the entire title of an article or book in the text of your paper. Professional writing includes only the last name of the author or authors and year of publication.*

Key points: Please pay close attention to the following:

- For all information taken from outside sources, you need to identify the author that you are citing and the year of that author's publication (if it is an electronic source with no specific year of publication, put n.d. – for no date – where the year normally goes, but make sure it is a legitimate source for your purposes).
- In general, the sentence punctuation (period, comma, etc.) comes *after* the citation information in parentheses. (The exception is for “block” quotes – see below.)
 - Within the parentheses, there is no comma between author and year of publication, and a colon comes before the page number. For example, “this is how the citation will often look” (Van Auken 2008:55).
 - The exception to the above is when the citation and the quote are broken up, as in the following: Thrasher (1999) referred to the "spontaneous effort of boys to create a society for themselves" (p. 147).
- For all direct *quotes*, you need to put the quoted words within quotation marks and include the page or paragraph number of the quote.
 - If you are *paraphrasing* what someone else wrote, you need to cite the author and year but not a page number.
- In general, everything you cite needs to have a corresponding entry on the reference list.
 - The exception is personal communications (i.e. you spoke to someone directly), which *only show up in the in-text citation* with full date, e.g. (Jill Jones, personal

communication, September 9, 2009). If was via email, then cite it as such, e.g. (Joe Smith, email correspondence, May 5, 2010). Such information cannot be found by the reader, so is not in the references.

- Your reference list should only include sources that you cited in the paper.
- There are many different citation styles. The sociology department uses the style standards of its discipline (ASA). The key is to cite everything that should be cited, but you also need to pay attention to the details of this particular citation style.
 - The best way to make sure you are doing it correctly is to simply mimic an example of proper ASA citation.
- *Even if you think the reader (e.g. the professor) will know exactly where you got the information, you need to cite it properly.*

Additional details:

Option	Description	Sample Citation
1. Idea-focused	Place the author(s) and year(s) of publication, separated by a comma, in parentheses at an appropriate place in or at the end of a sentence. *Note: The citation needs to directly follow the information it relates to in the sentence.	Researchers have pointed out that the lack of trained staff is a common barrier to providing adequate health education (Fisher 1999) and services (Weist and Christodulu 2000).
2. Researcher-focused	Place only the date in parentheses	Fisher (1999) recommended that health education be required for high school graduation in California.
3. Chronology-focused	Integrate both the author and date into your sentence	In 2001, Weist proposed using the Child and Adolescent Planning Schema to analyze and develop community mental health programs for young people.
When you have . . .	Here's what you do:	Sample Citation
A source with 1 or 2 authors	Cite name(s) in first and all subsequent citations. Note: Anytime you have multiple authors, list them in the order listed on the publication (not alphabetically).	<i>Idea focused:</i> Research (Adkins and Singh 2001) supports this claim. <i>Researcher-focused:</i> Adkins and Singh (2001) argue that this is the case.
Authors with same surname	Use initials even if the years are different	D. Baldwin (2001) and M. L. Baldwin (1999)

When you have . . .	Here's what you do:	Sample Citation
A source with three to five authors	List all authors for the first citation. In all citations after the first, use the first author's name followed by et al.	<i>First citation:</i> (Baldwin, Bevan, and Beshalke 2000) <i>Subsequent citations:</i> (Baldwin et al. 2000)
A source with no author	Use the first few words of the title--in quotation marks for article or chapter, in italics for self-contained item	("New Child" 2001) (<i>Sleep Medicine</i> 2001)
	In general, you should not cite information for which you do not know the source. You may get information from organizational websites for which an author is not listed, but in such cases you should list the organization as the author. Further, citations from websites typically come from sites with multiple pages. You must provide a citation and corresponding reference for the specific page (with the correct URL) from which the information is derived, not simply the general website address.	(Oshkosh Area Chamber of Commerce 2007)
Two or more works in parentheses	Arrange by order of the reference list; use a semicolon between works	Several researchers (Greenberg 2000; Roy 1995; Yawn 2000) reported the same finding.
Representative works	Use e.g. (for Sample Citation, means "for example") before parenthetical citations	The need for more effective prevention of mental illness in children has been the focus of many reports (e.g. National Institute of Mental Health 1998; U.S. Public Health Service 2000; Weist 2001).
An organizational author with a long name	When initially citing a source by a government agency or a corporate author with a long name, spell out the entire name followed by its abbreviation or acronym in brackets, and list it in the same way in the references. In subsequent citations, simply use the abbreviation/acronym.	(National Institute of Mental Health [NIMH] 1996). (NIMH 1996).

- **Citing quotations:** If you directly quote a source, you must put the quoted portion within quotation marks and include the page number along with author year in parentheses.
 - If the quote comes from a web source, you must list the *paragraph number* where the quote was found (and the URL you provide on the Reference page should take the reader directly to the specific *page* from which you got the quote).
 - Further:

For . . .	Here's what you do:	Sample Citations
<p>Direct Quotes</p> <p>Relatively short quotes</p>	<p>For direct quotes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ You always need a page number and the quoted part needs to be within quotation marks. ▪ If it is from an electronic source, then instead of page number you should include the paragraph number (preceded by para. or ¶); add section numbers for long electronic documents. ▪ The page or para. number should be placed directly following the quote. <p>If your quote is 40 words or fewer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It should be within a normal paragraph with an appropriate signal (lead-in) statement as demonstrated in the examples on the above right. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In other words, avoid “plopping” your quotes into sentence with no introduction. 	<p>According to Cromartie (1995), deconcentration of population to amenity areas has been called “a veritable suburbanization of rural areas” (p. 8) and many rural places are “being transformed into places that people only live; they work, shop, and obtain services elsewhere” (Salamon 2003:5).</p> <p>Universal interventions "target the general public or a whole population group that has not been identified on the basis of individual risk" (Greenberg et al. 2000, Section I, para. 20).</p>
<p>Long quotes</p>	<p>If the quote is longer than 40 words (because this author really captured what you're trying to get across or it's a great quote from someone you interviewed), then you should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “Block” the quote; ▪ Indent/left justify five spaces; ▪ Use no quotation marks; 	<p>This is how a block quote looks. It is indented five spaces. When a quotation is indented in this way, quotation marks are not needed. When you conclude the quote, the parentheses follow the punctuation, while for normal quotes the punctuation comes after the parentheses. (Van Auken 2009:5)</p>

- Single space and use smaller font if it improves readability; and,
- Put the period *before* the parentheses (normally it comes after).

- *Note: if author year comes prior to the block quote, use P. in front of the page number in parenthesis).

For example, according to Van Auken (2009),

This is how a block quote looks. It is indented five spaces. When a quotation is indented in this way, quotation marks are not needed. When you conclude the quote, the parentheses follow the punctuation, while for normal quotes the punctuation comes after the parentheses. (P. 5)

ASA Reference Basics

- *Formatting the list of references*

Title	Type “REFERENCES” at the top of a new page, left-justified.
Spacing	All entries should be single-spaced, with space between each entry.
Indentation	Use hanging indents (first line flush left, with following lines of entry indented five spaces)

Sample references

Type of source	Sample entry in reference list
Book (1): Basic form, single author	Baxter, Charles. 1997. <i>Race Equality in Health Care and Education</i> . Philadelphia: Ballière Tindall.
Book (2): Editors in place of authors (Only if you reference the general topic or conclusion of an edited book)	Stock, Gregory and John Campbell, eds. 2000. <i>Engineering the Human Genome: An Exploration of the Science and Ethics of Altering the Genes we Pass to our Children</i> . New York: Oxford University Press.
Chapter in an edited book:	Luloff, Al and Jeff Bridger. 2003. “Community Agency and Local Development.” Pp. 203-213 in <i>Challenges for Rural America in the 21st Century</i> , edited by David Brown and Louis Swanson. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press.
Journal article (1): Basic form, single author	Roy, Alan. 1982. “Suicide in Chronic Schizophrenia.” <i>British Journal of Psychiatry</i> 141(5): 171-177.
Journal article (2): Journal paginated by issue, 3-6 authors	Baldwin, Charles, Christine Bevan, and Andrea Beshalske. 2000. “At-risk Minority Populations in a Church-based Clinic: Communicating Basic Needs.” <i>Journal of Multicultural Nursing & Health</i> 6(2): 26-28.
Government report (1): Organization as author (group author)	National Institute of Mental Health. 1998. <i>Priorities for Prevention Research</i> (NIH Publication No. 98-4321). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Type of source	Sample entry in reference list
<p>Government report (2): Obtained online; organization as author (group author)</p>	<p>U.S. Public Health Service. 2000. <i>Report of the Surgeon General's Conference on Children's Mental Health: A National Section Agenda</i>. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Retrieved August 25, 2001 (http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/chilreport.htm).</p>
<p>Publication, private organization: Basic form</p>	<p>Swift, Anthony. 1985. <i>Determining our Children's Future</i> (Report no. 12). Milwaukee: Child Care of Wisconsin.</p>
<p>Magazine article: Basic form [Note: Use vol. no. if available.]</p>	<p>Greenberg, Gregory. 2001. "As Good as Dead: Is There Really Such a Thing as Brain Death?" <i>New Yorker</i>. October 30, 36-41.</p>
<p>Newspaper Article: Basic form [Note: Put city where newspaper is located in brackets if it is not part of the newspaper's name.]</p>	<p>Johnson, James. 2001. "Mad-cow May Tighten Blood-donor Curbs." <i>The Gazette</i> [Montreal]. April 15, p. A13.</p>
<p>Conference paper: Basic form</p>	<p>Crespo, Craig. 1998. "Update on National Data on Asthma." Paper presented at the meeting of the National Asthma Education and Prevention Program, Leesburg, VA, March 3-5.</p>
<p>Dissertation:</p>	<p>Fisher, Craig. 1999. "The Status of Health Education in California's Public School Districts: A Comparison to State and National Recommendations and Status Reports." Ph.D. dissertation, Dept. of Sociology, College of Letters and Sciences, University of Southern California.</p>
<p>Electronic source, no author: [Note: Be sure to double check that the URL is accurate before you submit your paper, as the point is to give the reader a clear trail to the source.]</p>	<p>"New child vaccine gets funding boost." 2001. Retrieved March 21, 2001 (http://news.ninemsn.com.au/health/story_13178.asp).</p>
<p>Letter to the editor:</p>	<p>Johnson, Kevin. 1994. "Obesity Affects Economic, Social Status" [Letter to the editor]. <i>Jordan Times</i>. February 23, p. B20.</p>
<p>Review:</p>	<p>Ward, Jennifer. 1989. "Good Intentions—Not So Good. [Review of the book <i>Good Intentions</i>]. <i>Time</i>, January 12, p. 6.</p>
<p>Video:</p>	<p>Achbar, Mustafa (Director/Producer), James Abbott (Director), Jose Bakan (Writer), and Barbara Simpson (Producer). 2004. <i>The Corporation</i> [DVD]. Canada: Big Picture Media Corporation.</p>

IMPORTANT: Differentiate between **electronic versions of print sources** and those that are NOT duplicates of print sources.

Electronic versions of print sources

Description	Reproduce the exact same content, format, and page numbers as the print versions, so you need to indicate that you read the source in the electronic version (by placing [Electronic version] after the title of the article), but you do NOT need to provide a retrieval date or a URL.
Example	Knowles, Elaine. 1999. "Distance Matters More Than you Think! An Artifact Clouds Interpretation of Latane, Liu, Nowak, Bonevento, and Zheng's Results [Electronic version]. <i>Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin</i> 25: 1045-1048.

Electronic materials that are NOT duplicates of print sources

Description	For electronic materials that are NOT duplicates of print sources (e.g., an organization's web site, an electronic-only journal, etc.), you must provide a retrieval date (because such an electronic source may not be stable; i.e., it may change) and a URL. If you know the day it was published, include it.
Example 1	Nelson, Graham. 2003. "A Meta-analysis of Longitudinal Research on Preschool Prevention Programs for Children." <i>Prevention & Treatment</i> 6, Article 31. Retrieved December 2, 2004 (http://journals.apa.org/prevention/volume6/pre0060031a.html).
Example 2: [Note: Organization as author, no date]	Oshkosh Chamber of Commerce. n.d. "About Us." Retrieved February 1, 2010 (http://www.oshkoshchamber.com/about_us).

* NOTE: Much of the above information regarding references comes directly from UW-Madison Writing Center (2006). For additional details about manuscript formatting, citation, and references in ASA see *ASA Style Guide, 4th edition*, which is summarized by the Purdue Online Writing Lab here: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/583/1/>.

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Examples of Proper Citation and References

An amenity is a “feature that increases attractiveness or value, especially of a piece of real estate or a geographic location” (“*Amenity*” n.d.). Rural development in the Western world is increasingly occurring where place entrepreneurs capitalize on the allure of amenities like coastlines, forests, and mountains. As noted by Johnson (2006), “Recreational getaways have long existed in rural areas, but only recently have emerged as a significant force influencing demographic change” (p. 20).

Bayfield is Wisconsin’s northernmost county, much of which is a peninsula. By the 1960s its natural resource-based economy was highly distressed, but on Lake “Superior’s coastline, one still sensed the mystery and power of *Kitchigami* (big sea)” (Keller and Turek 1998:7). Its population grew by 18 percent in the 1970s and migration-driven growth has continued, built upon amenities like Apostle Islands National Lakeshore. The City of Bayfield is the county’s center for tourism and has a population of 487 (United States Census Bureau [USCB] 2010a). Washburn is larger, with a population of 2,117 but developed “with its back to the lake,” according to a local business owner. Nonetheless, median household income is substantially higher (\$47,824 compared to \$29,620) in Washburn (USCB 2007-2011). In Sør-Trøndelag, a large Norwegian county, fishing and agriculture have undergone significant restructuring (Almås 2003). From 1951 to 1971 the population of the islands Hitra and Frøya declined by 16 percent (Almås 2003), a trend that has continued, but less dramatically, according to a local official (Stein Foss, personal communication, March 10, 2006).

Visual imagery is now regarded as central to the modern experience with nature, and Urry (1990) argues that “visual consumption” is pushing the growing commodification and degradation of rural landscapes, which are often constructed for the “gaze” of visitors through various media. A recent story announced, “The beautiful Lake Superior coastal town of Bayfield, the official gateway to the Apostle

Islands, has been rated number seven by *Midwest Magazine*, in their search for the top 100 small-town getaways” (Brown 2007:A5). Contemporary land use theory, however, has tended to focus only on urban environments (McCann 2002).

While relatively wealthy newcomers may appreciate particular views, they are logically less likely to understand the history or social relations tied to them. To evaluate landscape, according to Bell (1994),

One must mentally break the seamlessness of the environment which connects out there to here so that the view becomes distinct from the self. In so doing, one turns landscape into an object...one can take for one’s own...a bit of a powertrip, a mental taking possession of all one sees – something that feels right to the socially powerful. (P. 172)

The ramped-up local housing market has contributed to the decline of the year-round population in Bayfield and is attributed in part to speculation by people viewing local homes strictly as investment property. This type of activity caused the Bayfield city council to recently adopt a moratorium on the issuance of permits for bed-and-breakfasts in residential neighborhoods (Hollish 2007a). Ripple effects have forced other local governments to increase spending as well, and the result is that the average year-round Bayfield household saw a nine to ten percent increase in their wastewater utility rates in 2007 (Hollish 2007b).

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