

## Chapter 9 Research



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**Student Success**  
An Invaluable Resource for  
College and University Students



This resource is a chapter from the book, *Student Success: An Invaluable Resource for College and University Students* by Mary Shier, published by BCcampus Open Education, illustrated by Gordon Shier.

Note that page numbers reflect the page numbers in the full textbook.

The full text can be found at [opentextbc.ca/studentssuccess](https://opentextbc.ca/studentssuccess), where it can be read online, downloaded, printed, or ordered.

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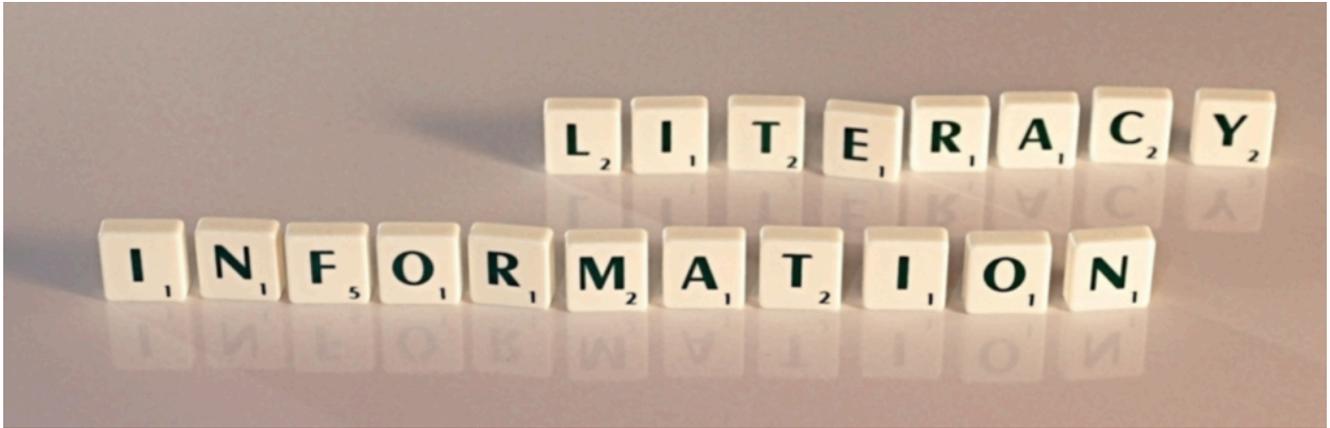
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This textbook can be referenced. In APA citation style, it would appear as follows:

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## Introduction



“**Information literacy**” is a term you’ll hear a lot during your college years. It means that all students (and all people, really) should be able to find and use reliable information and source materials, and that they should be able to find the right material for whatever it is they’re doing or whatever questions they have.

Finding dependable information is especially important in the digital/internet age, where millions of ideas can be discovered in half a second but where much of that information is outdated or worthless.

Handling the materials correctly is important too; this includes giving full credit when using materials created by others. This chapter deals with how to find, evaluate, and use information correctly.

### Learning Objectives

In this chapter on “Research,” students will:

- Find information and research topics using various sources.
- Compile, evaluate, and review information.
- Identify plagiarism.
- Reference sources, appropriately demonstrating an understanding of the different referencing styles (i.e. MLA, APA).

### Text Attributions

This chapter has been adapted from the following chapter:

- “Why is Information Literacy Important? (<https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/wrd/chapter/why-is-information-literacy-important/>)” in *The Word on College Reading & Writing* by Carol Burnell, Jaime Wood, Monique Babin, Susan Pesznecker, and Nicole Rosevear. Adapted by Mary Shier. CC BY-NC.

## 9.1 Researching Information

As a college student, it is important that you can find reliable sources for your class work and assignments. It is also essential that you know how to correctly use and handle the sources when you make them part of your own work.

Outside of school, most of us also feel that it is important to be informed about current issues and ideas. Knowing what is going on in the world is, arguably, a citizen's responsibility. Plus, it feels good to join in a conversation and know the facts, or to be sure we are sharing a meme, social media post, or news article that's accurate and trustworthy.

### Snopes

Snopes is a widely respected, non-partisan site dedicated to investigating rumors, memes, social media statements, and news stories, and then issuing decisions about whether the materials are correct or false.

#### Exercise: Using Snopes

Go to Snopes' "What's New" page (<http://www.snopes.com/whats-new/>)—a page that updates daily and includes the latest rumours.

Scroll through the list until you find an interesting hot topic. Click and read, then write a quick paragraph that summarizes what you found. What did you learn? Were you surprised?

If this captured your interest, you may want to explore Snopes a little more. It's a fun place to poke around and a great place to fact-check information. The next time you are forwarded a bit of information and you want to know if it's true before you become outraged and send it to all your friends, do a search for it on Snopes.

As humans living in the digital age, people should know how to navigate the Web successfully, find the best materials, and evaluate and use them with confidence. Alas: in an age where a quick Google search nets millions of "hits" in half a second, evaluating the sources of the chosen material can be trickier than it sounds. There's a lot of great material on the Web, but there's a lot of garbage, too. Being able to tell which is an important life skill in the digital age.

We also need to understand who "owns" information—whether hard copy (printed) or digital—and how and when to give credit to the owner; this keeps us safe from accidentally committing plagiarism. This will be discussed in the next section, Chapter 9.2 Plagiarism.

## Finding Quality Texts

In the world of academia, our gold standard for texts requires them to be created by people with substantial education, advanced degrees, and life expertise, making them experts in their fields. If I'm reading a cookbook, I want it to be by someone who really knows their way around a kitchen—not someone who's a mediocre cook but decided it would be fun to collect the family favourites into a self-published book.

You're a college student. Without a doubt, the best place for you to find quality information is the college library—and you can do this by walking into the library or searching it via the Web. Many college libraries have adopted a new set of guidelines for helping students find good materials. It's called **CRAP**. Yes, really! CRAP stands for currency, reliability, authority, and purpose/point of view.

### CRAP

Note: some libraries use **CRAAP** instead of **CRAP**, adding a second “A” for “accuracy.” The simple **CRAP** method, below, incorporates “accuracy” into the “reliable” category. Besides, using **CRAP** is more fun.

C: Currency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is this the most recent material you can find?</li> <li>• Is the material recent enough to accurately represent your topic?</li> <li>• Has it been updated recently?</li> <li>• For electronic sites, does the site appear modern and up to date?</li> </ul>
R: Reliability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the material objective?</li> <li>• Can you detect any obvious bias or loaded language?</li> <li>• Are sources available to back up the piece?</li> <li>• Does the material seem accurate?</li> <li>• Is it well written and free of errors?</li> </ul>
A: Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the author have degrees, experience, or other expertise in the topic area?</li> <li>• Is the host source reliable (e.g. a respected newspaper versus an individual blog)?</li> <li>• Is the publisher reputable and well known?</li> <li>• Do you have a sense of trust for the author?</li> </ul>

P: Purpose and Point of View	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the material’s creator trying to accomplish? Are they trying to inform? Persuade? Push their own agenda? Convince you to buy something?</li> <li>• Does the site include advertising or click-bait?</li> <li>• Does the article seem aimed at a specific audience?</li> </ul>
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Sounds like our gold standard, yes? Keeping the metaphor going, your college library is a gold mine for students.

## Your College Library

- Gives you access to a world of source materials that have already been reviewed and approved by the librarian staff.
- Allows you free database access that would be extremely expensive if purchased as a non-student. (For example, accessing an EBSCO online database—one of the best college research standards— can cost \$40-50 per article! Fortunately, the same article would be free through your college library.)
- Provides current, constantly updated sources.
- Allows you to obtain materials that your library may not have. How? Through a wonderful service called inter-library loan, where your library will actually contact other libraries—all over the country—to find the materials you need and get them to you.
- Provides study spaces, tutoring, research assistance, and other helps.
- Gives you access to librarians—the library’s greatest resource. Where a library database can give you thousands of results in response to a search, the librarian can help you figure out where to start looking, or what search terms to use. They can answer any and all of your questions relating to research.



*Your college library is a gold mine of resources.*

Wander into your college library (or search the library’s online help) to get started—and if you have problems, ask a librarian! They love to work with students.

## The Web

Can you also find good material on the World Wide Web?

Of course. But doing so can be tricky. Think for a moment. If you've found a website or resource you feel might be useful, how do you convince yourself that it follows the **CRAP** approach?

Keep in mind that your college work is different from your day-to-day activities. For instance, you may surf the Web for a number of different reasons, perhaps for pleasure, perhaps out of boredom, or maybe chasing links. You can search the Web when you need simple information like what to do for doggy diarrhea or what stores carry light fixtures. We can search and read as we like; nothing is at stake, so to speak.

But in your college work, there's plenty at stake. Part of doing solid work at the college level has to do with finding strong source materials and using them correctly and effectively.

## Find Good Materials on the Web

Finding good materials on the internet takes a bit of detective work. You can use your **CRAP** detective skills, and rate it using the following system.

### Exercise: CRAP Test

Use the CRAP test on your sources and rate them using the following scale:

- “CRAP+” means the source passed the test and had a *positive* result.
- “CRAP–” means the source did not pass the test and had a *negative* result.
- “CRAP+ /–” means there wasn't enough information to know whether the source was credible, and it could be *positive* or *negative*.

It also helps to know a little something about how to navigate and use Web materials. Let's explore!

### Domain Name Endings

The domain name ending refers to the letters that follow the period at the end of a Web address (also called a url, or uniform resource locator). For example, **.com**, **.edu**, and **.org** are all domain name endings.

Example of a Web address: **www.cnn.com**

Example of a domain name ending: **.com**

Different domain name endings refer to different kinds of websites and can be related to the quality of the site's material. Therefore, you have to examine them to decide whether they're reliable. Here are some examples:

**.com**: a commercial or personal site. These are generally considered to be some of the least reliable

sources because anyone can create one and they're typically used for either private blogs, web pages, and other personal uses or for commercial purposes and sales. So it is often difficult to know if it is reliable. **(CRAP+ /-)**

**.org:** these used to belong solely to non-profit sites, such as The American Cancer Society. But these days, anyone can purchase and use a .org site for any purpose. Thus the content on a .org site may vary widely in terms of its authority. **(CRAP +/-)**

**.edu:** American educational sites, usually maintained by colleges and universities but sometimes by high schools as well. These sites are considered to be very reliable. **(CRAP+)**

**.gov** and **.mil:** government and military sites, maintained by the governments and the military. These sites are considered to be very reliable. **(CRAP+)**

Let's look at a couple of examples and see how they hold up to the **CRAP** method:

The noted food journalist Michael Pollan uses a .com site, [michaelpollan.com](http://michaelpollan.com) (<http://michaelpollan.com/>), to host many of his writings. He's a respected writer and resource, and his .com site is a wonderful resource for anyone writing about food.

- **C:** Is it **current**? Yes, it is. He is continually adding new materials and updating the site.
- **R:** Is it **reliable**? Yes. Pollan uses sources and/or provides source lists for his writings. His work is objective and fact-based.
- **A:** Is it **authoritative**? Yes. Pollan provides an extensive biography and a list of his publications and honours. His work is widely respected throughout the publishing and journalism communities, and his books have been published by some of our best-known publishing companies.
- **P:** What is its **purpose**? Pollan is a journalist who tries to share science-based information about food and the food industry. He seeks to inform, and he does this with the intention of wanting to make people's lives better. He is addressing a vast audience: the American people.

**Result? CRAP+**

Let's try another one. The .org site, [cellphonesafety.org](http://www.cellphonesafety.org) (<http://www.cellphonesafety.org/>) may appear, at first glance, to be a reliable site. But not all .org sites are reliable. Let's look closer:

- **C:** Is it **current**? Although the date at the bottom looks recent, an exploration of the site will show a reliance on articles that are outdated or lead to broken links. This is a problem, because a topic that changes as quickly as one like technology must rely on current and constantly updated materials. No—we cannot say this is current.
- **R:** Is it **reliable**? The site does not provide a list of authors. Clicking “About” at the bottom of the page leads to a set of names that do not click through to the actual organizations—a bad sign. Further, it says it was “created by the National Consumer Advocacy Commission.” But a Google search reveals that this organization doesn't exist! So we'll give “reliable” a big NO.
- **A:** Is it **authoritative**? Again, this is a no. The materials used are not current, and many lead

to broken links. The comments tend to use biased language and seem more focused on persuasion (or even manipulation) toward a certain view than on presenting facts.

- **P:** What is its **purpose**? The purpose seems to be to convince readers that there are no dangers or hazards associated with cell phone use. We certainly know there are several safety concerns such as road safety, and so again, this fails the test.

## Result? CRAP–

### Authors

In many cases, it's easy to find an author's name on an online site. Evaluate the author fully—don't just assume they know what they're doing. For example,

- Do they have the right academic credentials or professional experience to back up their authority? For instance, someone who's spent their life as a short-order cook wouldn't be considered an authority on astronomy, nor would a PhD-level astronomer be considered an expert on the art of donut making.
- Have they published work in the field?
- Does a quick review of the topic or field suggest that they're a known expert in that area?

Sometimes pages will list an author's **bio**\*, **résumé**\*\*\*, or **curriculum vitae (CV)**\*\*\*\* on the site, allowing you to find out more about their education, work, and publication history. You can always do a Web search to find out more about them.

\*A "bio" (biographical sketch) is a short piece of information about the author and their life, often highlighting unique or interesting events—especially those relevant to the piece they've just written.

\*\*A résumé is a short listing of a person's education, qualifications, and relevant job skills. Résumés are typically used when applying for a job. They are usually 1-2 pages long.

\*\*\*A curriculum vitae (CV) is like a résumé on steroids. Where a résumé tends to be limited in scope, a CV is a comprehensive listing of one person's lifetime educational accomplishments and honours, professional memberships, employment, and accomplishments (including publications, lectureships, conference participations, and so forth). These may be dozens of pages in length!

Sometimes an online site will look good but won't show an author's name. Does that mean you shouldn't trust the site? Not necessarily.

Many sites employ a staff of writers or freelance writers to create content on the site but don't list the author's name. For example, the National Institute of Health's information page about headaches lists no authors. Scroll to the page bottom, and you'll see the page was "prepared by: Office of Communications and Public Liaison." However, the NIH is a highly respected national institution, and their site is full of information that absolutely meets our **CRAP** criteria. They list no authors, but they point to the information's origin, and we can be confident that they are relying on strong writers for their material. Is this a useful site? Absolutely.

**Periodical**\* sites may post articles that don't credit an author. Many of these sites have their own

department of **journalists\*\***, writers, and **freelance writers\*\*\*** who create their content; these writers are often not credited individually.

\*A periodical is anything that is printed on a regular schedule (i.e., periodically). Periodicals include newspapers, magazines, journals, zines, and more.

\*\*A journalist is a skilled writer who has completed a college bachelor's degree in journalism. Journalistic writing follows a specific style that is fact-based and objective.

\*\*\*A freelance writer is a professional writer who is hired and assigned to write specific stories or articles. Freelancers may not be experts in subjects they're assigned to write about, but they are skilled researchers, enabling them to write about varied topics.

### Information/Page Date

You'll want to check to see if the material you're looking at has a date. As a general rule, the more current the date on the material, the better—especially if you're discussing something that undergoes near-constant change, like politics, science, or technology.

But sometimes, information can be dated and still be useful. For instance, if I was writing a paper about organic gardening, I might be interested in some of Dr. Rudolph Steiner's original lectures on biodynamic farming (<http://wn.rsarchive.org/Lectures/GA327/English/BDA1958/19240607p01.html>). These can be found on the Rudolph Steiner Archive and eLibrary. They date back to the 1920s, but their content is still considered useful and informative by many farmers (**CRAP+**). This example shows how important it is to consider date when evaluating a source.

Sometimes, you won't find any date on the material. Again, you'll need to evaluate this in terms of the strength of the rest of the page. Scrolling to the bottom of a web page will often reveal a "last update" date at the bottom, and this can help your decision process. If you can't locate any dates on the material and the website hasn't been updated in years, you should probably find a better source.

### Other Points to Check

Consider the visual layout and appeal of the page:

- Does it look modern (**CRAP+**) or dated (**CRAP-**) (i.e. as if someone hasn't updated it in years)?
- Are there lots of advertisements or direct attempts to sell products? (**CRAP-**)
- Are there pop-ups that interfere with navigating or reading the page? (**CRAP-**)

And take a look at the page content:

- Are the articles or content well written and carefully proofread? Do they "sound" authoritative and feel reliable? (**CRAP+**)
- Do articles include links to other materials or links to credible and/or reliable source materials? (**CRAP+**) Has content been carefully edited, or can you detect lots of errors? (**CRAP-**)

- Is the language smart and objective? (**CRAP+**) Or does it include biased language, slang, or frankly rude or negative words? (**CRAP-**) For example, let's imagine you were researching a question of why people buy beverages in single-use plastic bottles. **An objective, fact-based statement:** Studies show that many people buy beverages in single-use plastic bottles because the bottles are convenient, easy to carry, and available just about anywhere. **A biased, non-factual statement:** Let's face it—most people who buy single-use plastic bottles are just too lazy to carry reusable bottles. Or they just don't care if they single-handedly destroy the environment.

**Video:** The CRAP Test for Evaluating Websites (length 5:45)



*One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://opentextbc.ca/studentssuccess/?p=231#oembed-1> (#oembed-1)*

### Look in the Right Places

Start your search in the right place. When looking for a specific piece of evidence, don't just automatically type a word into Google: instead, ask yourself, "What's the best place I might find this?" While thinking about the subject, consider the persons or organizations that are considered experts on the topic, and try beginning a search with those names. For instance, if you wanted to answer a question about spaceflight, you might think of starting with NASA.

If you begin in the right place, you're more likely to find useful information right away, and it's more likely to be credible. Likewise, try and find the best human sources as well. With a little research on your topic, you can identify the big names in the field.

Don't always start by turning to the internet and Google. Yes, this may be the easiest way to go, but is it always the best? No—not usually. It is better to start with sites that you know will carry reliable information. Choose Google Scholar (<http://scholar.google.com>) over a typical Google search. Google Scholar is a web search engine that focuses on scholarly literature and includes peer-reviewed online academic journals, books, conference papers, dissertations, technical reports, and more. You are far more likely to find a good credible source here than in a general Google search.

Visit your college library, or search it electronically. Read textbooks or periodicals. Seek out human experts. Put your hands on your topic, if you can, by diving into it in a personal way. Try making an observation, conducting a survey, or interviewing a subject. In a recent research writing class, a student writing about Starbucks's business practices actually drove to company headquarters in Seattle and interviewed a top executive. Another student—this one investigating the Ebola virus—met with two local microbiologists, while a third student researching the geology of Crater Lake went on a weekend outing to experience the national park "up close and personal".

Practice these strategies when you evaluate sources and websites, and you should be able to find strong materials that will boost your college work.

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Whenever you identify a good printed source—book, journal, etc.—go to the end of it and read the bibliography. Voila: a brand new list of potential source materials!

#### Exercise: Evaluating a Website

Part 1: Consider what you’ve just learned about currency, reliability, accuracy, and purpose or point of view to help you evaluate the academic merit of a source.

Keep these qualities in mind as you explore one (or more) of these sites.

- Feline Reactions to Bearded Men (<http://www.improbable.com/airchives/classical/cat/cat.html>) (found at [www.improbable.com](http://www.improbable.com))
- Aluminum Foil Deflector Beanie (<http://zapatopi.net/afdb/>) (found at [zapatopi.net](http://zapatopi.net))
- Dihydrogen Monoxide Research Division (<http://www.dhmo.org/>) (found at [www.dhmo.org](http://www.dhmo.org))

Part 2: Answer and consider the following.

1. What was your first impression when you first glanced at the site? Why did you have this impression?
2. Explore the site a little—clicking links, reading content, looking for authors and dates and so forth. Did your opinion change? Why? What did you discover? Would you rely on the site for your college work? Does it meet the **CRAP** test?

#### Answers

Hopefully you found that *none* of those sites passed the CRAP test. But likely you had fun reading through them at least. As you evaluate websites in the future, remember these examples and be sure to explore the sites carefully as you decide whether or not they are reliable.

## “Hard Copy” Periodicals

Follow the same guidelines given above for finding strong Web materials. Look at the author, date, and the material itself. Consider the publication itself: a mainstream, respected newspaper or magazine—like *The New York Times*, *Washington Post*, or *The Atlantic*—more or less automatically meets our **CRAP** test, while smaller or local publications may require a detailed evaluation.

## Wikipedia and Other Open Encyclopedias

A **wiki** is a website that functions as a public, open encyclopedia or collection of information. The best known of these is Wikipedia. Wiki sources typically can be created and edited by anyone. The best part

of wikis is their openness, along with the fact that people collaborate to create them. The worst part is that wikis can be created and edited by anyone—including people who have no business doing so or, even worse, who intentionally enter false or defamatory information.

As a rule, Wikipedia and other “wiki” sources are not considered to be acceptable sources for college work.

Why not?

The beauty of Wikipedia is its egalitarianism: it’s billed as a public encyclopedia for everyone. The problem with this is that anyone can create a Wikipedia entry, and likewise, anyone can edit the entries. Unfortunately, “anyone” is usually not an authority in the field. Remember, we’re looking for sources that meet the **CRAP** criteria and that are written by people with degrees, education, and/or expertise in the field. Wikipedia doesn’t follow this model, and so we don’t rely on it as a reliable source.

But now that I’ve told you not to use Wikipedia, be aware that sometimes a teacher may ask you to use Wikipedia for a specific purpose. In that case, they’ll explain why they’re asking you to use it and how you should proceed.

Also, consider this: studies have shown that the information in Wikipedia is, in most cases, as accurate as that from standard encyclopedias (Taraborelli; Terdimann). Yet despite these findings, two problems remain:

1. As discussed above, Wiki entries can be made and edited by anyone. **(CRAP–)**
2. There are multiple instances of Wikipedia entries being changed as a “joke” or to defame or damage a source’s credibility. **(CRAP–)**

These problems once again point out why we don’t rely on Wikipedia for academic work.

Wikipedia, however, has two great features that you can use right away:

1. Most entries have long lists of source materials at the bottom of each topic page. Many of these listed materials will be useful when you’re doing research, or at least will aim you in a sound direction.
2. Wikipedia can be a great place to start learning more about a topic. Just remember that it is a springboard—not a reliable source itself.

In addition to not using Wikipedia as an academic source, you should also avoid DotDash (formerly About.com), Yahoo! Answers, eHow, and other similar public information sites. If you have questions about using these sources, discuss this with your instructor.

#### Exercise: Researching Information

You will find and evaluate a few reference sources for a topic of your choice.

1. Pick a topic to research. Here are a few ideas: misogyny, racism, anxiety, bipolar disorder, the benefits of exercise on the brain, the Keto diet, climate change. Choose one of these or one of your own ideas.
2. Find a number of sources where you found information about your topic (about 3-5 sources). Record the sources.
3. Evaluate the sources using the CRAP test. Did any of your sources pass the CRAP test? If not, keep looking until you find one or two sources that do. Record the sources that did and didn't pass the CRAP test and the reasons why.

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### Text Attributions

This chapter is a remix of the following chapters:

- “Learning About Plagiarism and Guidelines for Using Information (<https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/wrd/chapter/learning-about-plagiarism/>),” “Why is Information Literacy Important? (<https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/wrd/chapter/why-is-information-literacy-important/>), and “Finding Quality Texts (<https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/wrd/chapter/finding-quality-texts/>)” in *The Word on College Reading and Writing* by Carol Burnell, Jaime Wood, Monique Babin, Susan Pesznecker, and Nicole Rosevear. Adapted by Mary Shier. CC BY-NC.

### Video Attributions

- “The CRAP Test for Evaluating Websites” by Stephanie Stephens. Standard YouTube licence.



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## 9.2 Plagiarism

Plagiarism occurs when someone uses another person's intellectual property and doesn't give them credit. Intellectual property is defined as material or ideas envisioned and created by another person. There are many kinds of intellectual property, including books, articles, essays, stories, poems, films, photographs, works of art or craft, or even just ideas. For example, if you copy text out of a textbook or article and use it in your homework assignment so it looks like you wrote it – that's plagiarism. If someone else thought of an idea and brought it into the world, they own it, and if you use their idea in your work, you have to acknowledge them as the actual owner. If you don't, you've committed plagiarism. That's not a good idea!

Plagiarism is a kind of academic dishonesty—a kind of theft. Colleges and universities take plagiarism seriously; assignments can get a grade of zero, and many institutions discipline or even expel students who are found to be plagiarizing.

Many educators used to believe that students plagiarized either because they were lazy or because they just didn't care about anything but getting that final piece of paper: the degree or certificate. Both of these reasons are still true sometimes: we've all met people who don't like to work hard (or at all!) or who, in the case of college, just want that piece of paper and don't care how they get it.

But today, thanks to the work of innovative educators, instructors know that plagiarism and cheating are often motivated by more complicated factors.

As for you: how can you avoid plagiarism? It's actually quite simple:

1. **As much as possible, do your own work.** In other words, always start by writing what you know about a subject, turning to sources only when you need to support your own ideas with authoritative backing or when there's a knowledge gap you cannot fill on your own. Or, of course, to satisfy requirements imposed by your instructor or professor who may ask you to use a certain number of sources in completing an assignment. But even then, much of the work should be your own.
2. **Take notes carefully.** If you add source material to your work, mark it or identify it in such a way that you will *know* it's from a source. Cite the work immediately and add it to your works cited list. (See 9.3 Referencing Sources)
3. **If you use someone else's intellectual property, give them credit.** If you bring their work into your assignment, you must mention them as the work's owners. There are accepted formats to give credit which you will read about in the next section.

There are a number of different practices which could lead to or be defined as plagiarism, so it's important that you understand what constitutes plagiarism and what doesn't.

### Exercise: Identifying Plagiarism

Which of these would be a kind of plagiarism?

- Copying written material from the Web and pasting it into your paper so it would look like you wrote it.
- Overhearing someone's great idea while riding in an elevator and then later sharing the idea and saying it was yours.
- Finding a beautiful photograph on the Web and using it as your profile picture on social media without showing the photographer's name.
- Citing lines of poetry in a blog post without mentioning the poet.

#### Answers

All of the examples are kinds of plagiarism. Did you get them all correct? Remember, any time you use someone else's intellectual property—of any kind—you must give them credit by acknowledging their name and giving information about the source.

## Common Knowledge

There is no need to cite common knowledge. Common knowledge does not mean knowledge everyone has. It means knowledge that everyone can easily access. For example, most people do not know the date of George Washington's death, but everyone can easily find that information. If the information or idea can be found in multiple sources and the information or idea remains constant from source to source, it can be considered common knowledge. This is one reason so much research is usually done for university writing—the more sources you read, the more easily you can sort out what is common knowledge: if you see an uncited idea in multiple sources, then you can feel secure that idea is common knowledge.

## Guidelines for Using Information

In today's digital age, with information seemingly at our fingertips, it's important to understand some of the guidelines and restrictions that affect how we use that information. This is another important part of using sources correctly and avoiding plagiarism.

### Copyright

**Copyright** is a legal term that refers to the person (or people) who own and distribute a piece of information. The copyright holder has rights to that material, and if others use the material without getting permission first, they may be in violation of copyright. This is not good! And it can result in fines.

What is the most important thing you need to know about copyright? Simple: If something is copyrighted, you cannot use it without getting permission; this may involve paying for permission.

- If you're a college student, your college librarians can help you navigate copyright issues. They may also be able to get you copyrighted material through inter-library loan.
- As a college student or faculty member, you may be able to access copyrighted material through the practice of "fair use" or "fair dealing" (below).
- You might find copyrighted materials in your college library.
- You may be able to find similar materials in open educational resources (OERs) (like the one you're reading now!) which can be copied and reused under a Creative Commons copyright.

Otherwise, the Canadian Guide to Copyright ([https://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/cipointernet-internetopic.nsf/eng/h\\_wr02281.html](https://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/cipointernet-internetopic.nsf/eng/h_wr02281.html)) is your go-to location for everything you need to know about copyright in Canada.

## Fair Dealing

Fair dealing (<https://www.lib.sfu.ca/help/academic-integrity/copyright/fair-dealing>) is a legal term pertaining to users' rights in Canada under copyright law. There are provisions that allow people to use parts of copyrighted material for specific purposes. Fair dealing applies to common law jurisdictions in the Commonwealth such as Britain, Australia, and New Zealand. The United States has a similar provision called *fair use* (see below). The six factors defining fair dealings include purpose, character, amount, effect of the dealing, nature of the work, and alternatives to the dealing. Canada's provisions have become more flexible particularly after an amendment process that took several years with extensive public consultation. In July 2012, the Federal Government of Canada amended fair dealing (Section 29) as follows: Fair dealing for the purpose of research, private study, education, parody or satire does not infringe copyright.

Fair dealing provides ways for people to use others' copyrighted work without infringing on the author's copyright. This is especially important for students and educators when using and sharing information in research assignments and projects.

## Fair Use for Academic Purposes

The concept of **fair use** (<http://fairuse.stanford.edu/overview/fair-use/what-is-fair-use/>) allows students and teachers to use small amounts of copyrighted materials for a short-term, limited purpose—particularly for study, teaching, or research. The rules of fair use apply to the United States. The four factors determining fairness include purpose and character of the use; nature of the copyrighted work; amount and substantiality of the portion of the work used; and the effect of the use on the potential market or value of the work.

In general, the following should be true if you claim fair use to work with copyrighted materials:

- You will use them for a limited purpose. For example, you'll use them to complete an assignment and then will return or release them. Specifically, you won't retain the material to use at a later date.

- You will not post them on the Web, make them available publicly, or share them with anyone else.
- You will not make permanent copies of the material.
- You will only use a small portion of the “whole” material. For example, using two or three chapters of a twenty-chapter book is a fine example of fair use; using twenty-four of twenty-five chapters without paying for them would *not* be considered fair use.
- You will not benefit, monetarily, in any way from the material.

## Creative Commons

**Creative Commons** ([creativecommons.org](http://creativecommons.org)) is a not-for-profit organization that collects all sorts of materials and makes them available to the public for free use.

When a user creates a piece of content (writing, art, photography, or just about anything), they may choose to put a Creative Commons licence on the material. The licence explains how people share, remix, re-purpose, or in other ways use the material.

As a student, the Creative Commons has made a world of materials available to you. If you use any of the materials in your work, you should include the Creative Commons in your source citation.

## Open Educational Resources

**Open Educational Resources** (<https://open.bccampus.ca/what-is-open-education/what-are-open-educational-resources/>) (OERs) are teaching and learning materials that are available for free use by students and teachers everywhere because they are under an open licence, such as a Creative Commons licence. The move toward OERs has really taken off recently—both to take advantage of the internet and digital publishing and also to help control the skyrocketing cost of textbooks. Open resources are easy to access and use and are continually updated and revised. You’re reading one right now!

## Torrent and BitTorrent Sites

A **BitTorrent** site is a website that encourages peer-to-peer (P2P) file sharing. Files can consist of books, periodicals, music, film, data (many scientists use Torrent files to distribute large data packages) or virtually anything.

A major problem with these sites is that many of them engage in illegal file-sharing— particularly of music and film and lately of graphic novels. Notwithstanding the ethics involved, most of the sites are not secure, which raises the risk of users being implicated in illegal file-sharing activities. Most BitTorrent sites do not provide user anonymity and most can track (or at least record) IP addresses.

The best advice with BitTorrents: stay away from them unless you’re really good with technology and know exactly what you’re getting into.

Why is this worth mentioning? You’ll often be asked to watch film or access other resources as part of

your classes. And, you'll be asked to buy textbooks. You may be tempted to download a free book or movie through a Torrent site. Beware, and consider the implications first.

## Reverse Image Search

What if you have an image that you found somewhere on the internet and you want to use it in an assignment or some sort of publication, but you don't remember where you found it. How will you credit the source? You can now do a reverse image search to try and find the owner or creator of images on the Web.

One of the best of these is **TinEye** (<https://www.tineye.com/>) ([www.tineye.com](http://www.tineye.com)). Upload a copy of the image in question, and the TinEye engine will search for the original or oldest-known occurrence of the image. Google also has a reverse image search, and others are appearing on the Web all the time.

### Exercise: Reverse Image Search

1. Go to Google (<http://www.google.com/>) and search for "image."
2. Click "images" at the top of that page.
3. Pick an image and save it to your desktop or clipboard.
4. Go to [www.tineye.com](http://www.tineye.com) (<https://www.tineye.com/>). Upload your image and use TinEye to search for its origins. See what you find!

Not only is it correct and ethical to avoid plagiarism and give credit to authors and sources, but it also adds credibility to your paper. When your paper cites reliable sources, it looks good on you that you have done good research and backed up your information.

## Text Attributions

This chapter is a remix of the following chapters:

- "Learning About Plagiarism and Guidelines for Using Information (<https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/wrd/chapter/learning-about-plagiarism/>)" and "Why is Information Literacy Important? (<https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/wrd/chapter/why-is-information-literacy-important/>)" in *The Word on College Reading and Writing* by Carol Burnell, Jaime Wood, Monique Babin, Susan Pesznecker, and Nicole Rosevear. Adapted by Mary Shier. CC BY-NC.
- "How Can I Become a Better Writer?" in *University Success* by N. Mahoney, B. Klassen, and M. D'Eon. Adapted by Mary Shier. CC BY-NC-SA.



## 9.3 Referencing Sources

Once you have researched good sources of information and summarized or paraphrased or directly quoted a source, you will have to correctly reference your sources (also called citing your sources). There are some standard ways of using sources that let your readers know this material is from other texts rather than original ideas from your own brain. Following these specific guidelines also allows your readers to locate those sources if they are interested in the topic and would like to know more about what they say.



*Old library of Trinity College, Dublin*

Giving credit to the sources you used while creating a text is important (and useful) for several reasons.

- It adds to your own credibility as an author by showing you have done appropriate research on your topic and approached your work ethically.
- It gives credit to the original author and their work for the ideas you found to be useful, and in giving them credit it helps you avoid unintentionally plagiarizing their work.
- It gives your readers additional resources (already curated by you in your research process) that they can go to if they want to read about your topic further.

### What Does It Mean to Credit or Cite Your Sources?

For college-level work, this generally means two things: in-text or parenthetical citation (throughout the body of your work) and a “Works Cited” or “References” page (at the end of your work). What these two things look like will be a little different for different types of classes.

### Forms of Citation

You should generally check with your instructors about their preferred form of citation when you write papers for courses. No one standard is used in all academic papers. You can learn about the three major forms or styles used in most university writing handbooks and on many Web sites such as Purdue OWL:

- The Modern Language Association (MLA) system of citation is widely used but is most commonly adopted in humanities courses, particularly literature courses.
- The American Psychological Association (APA) system of citation is most common in the social sciences such as psychology classes.

- The Chicago Manual of Style is widely used but perhaps most commonly used in history courses.

MLA and APA are the two most commonly used styles for referencing sources. The specific details required and the order in which they appear changes a little between different formats, but practising one of them will give you a general idea of what most of them are looking for. All of the information shown here is specific to MLA, which is the format you will use for your writing classes (and some other humanities classes). Note that the format for each style is very particular and should be followed exactly. Instructors can be very fussy about making sure the referencing formats are followed to a “t”.

## Citing: Identifying In-Text Sources

Once you have brought source material into your writing (via quotation, summary, or paraphrase), your next task is to cite or identify it. This is essential because giving credit to the creator of the source material helps you avoid plagiarism. Identifying your sources also helps your reader understand which written content is from a source and which represents your ideas.

When you cite or identify source materials, you make it absolutely clear that the material was taken from a source. Note that if you don’t do that, your reader is left to assume the words are yours—and since that isn’t true, you will have committed plagiarism.

### In-Text Citation

Every time you use an idea or language from a source in your text (so every time you summarize, paraphrase, or directly quote material from a source), you will want to add an in-text citation. In-text citations are exactly like it sounds – *in the text*. In other words, they are references which are placed right in the body of the paper (not at the bottom of the page or at the back of the paper). Sometimes you can accomplish giving credit to the author in an in-text citation simply by mentioning the author or title of a source in the body of your writing, but other times you’ll handle in-text citation differently, with a parenthetical citation. Parenthetical means that the citation appears in parentheses (brackets) in the text of your essay.

A starting point for parenthetical citations is that they include the author’s last name and the page number where the borrowed information came from. For example, let’s say I’m using material from an article written by Lisa Smith. It’s in a physical magazine and spans pages 38-42. If, on page 41, she says something like, “While most studies have shown that Expo dry erase markers have superior lasting power, erasability, and colour saturation to than other brands on the market, their higher cost is a concern for some consumers,” I might incorporate that into a paper like this:

By most measurable standards, Expo markers are clearly the favoured option (Smith 41).

However, you don’t always need both components (last name and page number) in the parenthetical citation. If I introduced the source material in the sentence above a little differently, introducing the author before delivering the material, I wouldn’t need to repeat the author’s name in that same sentence in the parenthetical citation. In that case, my sentence would look something like this: According to Lisa Smith, Expo markers are clearly the favoured option by most measurable standards (41).

In this section, we'll discuss **three ways to cite or identify written source materials** in your own writing.

### 1. Introduce the Author and/or the Title of the Source

By introducing the author or the material, you make it clear to the reader that what you're talking about is from a source. Here's an example of a quotation that is identified by introducing the author and the title of source:

In the article, "Grooming Poodles for Fun and Profit," Jonas Fogbottom explains, "Poodle grooming is a labour of love. It takes years of practice to be good at it, but once learned, it's a fun and worthwhile career."

Here's an example of a paraphrase that is identified in the same way:

In the article, "Grooming Poodles for Fun and Profit," Jonas Fogbottom says that although it takes a long time to become a skilled poodle groomer, it's well worth the effort and leads to a good career.

Note that, in the example above, (1) if there are no page numbers to cite and (2) if the name of the author is signaled in the phrase that introduces the bit of source material, then there is no need for the parenthetical citation. This is an example of a situation where mentioning the author by name is the only in-text citation you'll need. And sometimes, if the name of the author is unknown, then you might just mention the title of the article instead. It will be up to you, as a writer, to choose which method works best for your given situation.

The first time that you mention a source in your writing, you should always introduce the speaker and, if possible, the title of the source as well. Note that the speaker is the person responsible for stating the information that you're citing and that this is not always the author of the text. For example, an author of an article might quote someone else, and you might quote or paraphrase that person.

Use the speaker's full name (e.g., "According to Jonas Fogbottom . . .") the first time you introduce them; if you mention them again in the paper, use their last name only (e.g., "Fogbottom goes on to discuss . . .").

### 2. Use Linking or Attributive Language

Using linking language (sometimes called attributive language or signal phrases) simply means using words that show the reader you are still talking about a source that you just mentioned.

For example, you might use linking language that looks something like this:

- The author also explains . . .
- Fogbottom continues . . .
- The article goes on to say . . .
- The data set also demonstrates . . .

By using this kind of language, you make it clear to the reader that you're still talking about a source.

And while you'll use this type of language throughout any researched essay whether you're also using parenthetical citations or not, as mentioned above, sometimes this linking language will be all you need for in-text citation.

Let's look back at the last Fogbottom example from above, and imagine you wanted to add two more sentences from the same source. **The linking language is highlighted:**

In the article, "Grooming Poodles for Fun and Profit," Jonas Fogbottom says that although it takes a long time to become a skilled poodle groomer, it's well worth the effort and leads to a good career. **Fogbottom goes on to explain** how one is trained in the art of dog and poodle grooming. **The article also gives** a set of resources for people who want to know more about a dog grooming career.

In this example, the phrases "Fogbottom goes on to explain..." and "The article also gives..." are linking language. Using the linking language makes it absolutely clear to your reader that you are still talking about a source.

### 3. Use a Parenthetical Citation

A parenthetical citation is a citation enclosed within parentheses.



Whatever comes first in the Works Cited citation is what will go into the parentheses in a parenthetical citation. Most often that item is an author's last name, but sometimes it's a title or abbreviated title of an article or other type of text. This is another good reason for starting by creating a Works Cited entry the moment you begin working with a source.

The classic parenthetical citation includes the author's name and, if there is one, a page number. To learn more about parenthetical citation and see some examples, see the Purdue OWL article on "MLA In-Text Citations: The Basics (<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/2/>)" (available from owl.english.purdue.edu).

Here's an **example**:

(Fogbottom 16)

If there are **two authors**, list both (with a page number, if available):

(Smith and Jones 24)

If there are **three or more authors**, list the first author only and add "et al."\* (with a page number, if available):

(Smith et al. 62)

\**et al* means “and others.” If a text or source has three or more authors, MLA style has us just list the first one with *et al*.

**But my source doesn’t have page numbers!**

If you are using an electronic source or another kind of source with no page numbers, just leave the page number out: (Fogbottom)

If you’re **quoting or paraphrasing someone who was cited by the author of one of your sources**, then that’s handled a bit differently. For example, what if you quote Smith, but you found that quote in the article by Fogbottom. In this case, you should introduce the speaker (Smith) as described above, and then cite the source for the quote, like this:

(qtd. in Fogbottom)

**But my source doesn’t have an author!**

This happens sometimes. Many useful documents, like government publications, organizational reports, and surveys, don’t list their authors. On the other hand, sometimes no clearly listed author can be a red flag that a source is not entirely trustworthy or is not researched well enough to be a reliable source for you.

If you encounter a source with no author, do look for other indicators that it is a good (or poor) source—who published it, does it have an appropriate list of references, is it current information, is it unbiased?

If you determine that this source is an appropriate source to use, then, when you create your in-text citation for it, you will simply use the title of the source (article, chapter, graph, film, etc.) in the place where you would have used the author’s name. If the title is long, you should abbreviate by listing the first one or two words of it (with a page number, if available).

Let’s imagine you’re working with a newspaper article entitled, “What’s New in Technology,” enclosed in quotation marks to indicate that this is an article title, and with **no known author**. Here’s what that would look like in a parenthetical citation:

(“What’s New” B6)

If there is no author and you’re working with an electronic article, use the first one or two words in your parenthetical citation, again, enclosed in quotation marks. Let’s imagine you’re working with a web

article entitled, “Pie Baking for Fun and Profit” and with no author. Here’s what that would look in a parenthetical citation:

(“Pie Baking”)

The parenthetical citation should be added at the end of the sentence that contains the source material. Let’s go back to the Fogbottom example and see how a parenthetical citation would work:

“Poodle grooming is a labour of love. It takes years of practice to be good at it, but once learned, it’s a fun and worthwhile career” (Fogbottom).

Here’s what it would look like if we used it with a paraphrase instead of a quotation:

Although it takes a long time to become a skilled poodle groomer, it’s well worth the effort and leads to a good career (Fogbottom).

Note that the citation is placed at the end of the sentence; the period comes after the parentheses. Misplacing the period is one of the most common formatting errors made by students.

Using parenthetical citation makes it crystal clear that a sentence comes from source material. This is, by far, the easiest way to cite or identify your source materials, too.

If using parenthetical citations is easy, why would we bother with using introduction or linking language to identify sources?

Good question! There would be nothing wrong with only using parenthetical citations all the way through your writing—it would absolutely do the job of citing the material. But, it wouldn’t read smoothly and would feel somewhat rough because every time a parenthetical citation popped up, the reader would be “stopped” in place for a moment. Using a combination of introduction, linking language, and parenthetical citation, as needed, makes the writing smoother and easier to read. It also integrates the source material with the writer’s ideas. We call this synthesis, and it’s part of the craft of writing.

## Crediting Images

Increasingly, teachers allow and even encourage students to use images—photographs, maps, sketches, graphs, and so forth—in their writing. Before you do this, check with your teacher to make sure they approve. And then remember that if the image was created by someone else, you must give them credit.

We don't list images on the Works Cited page. But we do identify them in one of two ways:

1. If your word processor allows captioning, you can add the image information in a caption.
2. Otherwise, mention it in the text at the point you are talking about it, enclosing the information in parentheses.



*Remember to credit the photographer in any pictures you use.*

Ideally, include the author(s), title of source, title of container, publisher, date, and location.

Here's an example of how you might cite a sketch taken from a hard copy book, where "The Perfect Poodle Hairdo" is the name of the sketch and *Styling Poodles for Fun and Profit* is the book title:

Groomer, Ima. "The Perfect Poodle Coif." *Styling Poodles for Fun and Profit*, Poodle Publishing, 2015.

## Titles

Here are a few basic rules for formatting titles:

- Periodical and book titles are always italicized.
- Article and chapter titles are not italicized and are placed in quotation marks.
- Every word in a title is capitalized except for conjunctions (small joining words like and, but, or if), articles (a, an, and the), and prepositions (words that show position, like above, on, and between). Also, don't capitalize "to" when it's part of a verb (to Learn, to Practice, etc.).
- If a colon is used within the title, the word after the colon is always capitalized, e.g. Raising Golden Retrievers: An Exercise in Power Vacuuming.

### Exercise: Formatting Titles

You'll probably be working with all kinds of texts as you write essays and assignments for various college

classes. Properly formatting the titles of your sources signals to your readers the type of source you're discussing (a book, an article, a short work, etc.). See if you can correctly capitalize and format the following titles:

1. Web article: people are happier when they spend time in the outdoors
2. Short story from a magazine: once upon a time: a tale of lost love
3. Book title: overcoming adversity in life
4. Newspaper article: two people apprehended in attempt to rob a bank

Check your answers at the end of this section.

## Works Cited Entries

At the end of texts that have drawn from existing sources, you will often find a Works Cited page. This page gives more information than the parenthetical citations do about what kinds of sources were referenced in this work and where they can be found if the reader would like to know more about them. These entries all follow a specific and consistent format so that it is easy for readers to find the information they are looking for, and so the shape and type of that information is consistent no matter who is writing the entries.

Until recently, the MLA required a slightly different format for every type of source—an entry for a Youtube video required certain information that was different from an entry for a book that was different from an entry for an online article. The most recent version of MLA, though—MLA 8—has simplified this so there is just one format rather than many.

You can learn how to create works cited entries in MLA 8 format and see an example in the “Creating a Works Cited Page (<https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/wrd/back-matter/creating-a-works-cited-page/>)” appendix to the text, *The Word on College Reading and Writing*. This clearly explains the process to create a proper Works Cited Page. You can also refer to Purdue Owl, *MLA Sample Works Cited Page* ([https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research\\_and\\_citation/mla\\_style/mla\\_formatting\\_and\\_style\\_guide/mla\\_sample\\_works\\_cited\\_page.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_formatting_and_style_guide/mla_sample_works_cited_page.html)). Purdue Owl is a great website to use as a reference whenever you have questions about citing or referencing material.

## Citation Generators

A **citation generator** is a piece of software that creates a Works Cited list for the writer. The writer types in the details about the source, and the citation generator creates the in-text citations and the Works Cited list. For each new document, you can choose which style you require (MLA, APA, Chicago style, etc.) Every time you use a new source, you enter the info into the citation generator. It will have blank fields for you to fill out, which is helpful. For example, if the source is a website, as soon as you choose *website* as one of the options, it will bring up fields asking for the URL and all the fields associated with a website. Then it takes the information and sorts it for the Works Cited page and the in-texts citations. It's handy because once the information for the source is entered, every time you use information from the source, you can click *in-text citation* and it will insert the parenthetical citation correctly into your paper. This is a convenient way to keep track of sources as you go along.

There are websites such as [www.bibme.org](http://www.bibme.org) (<http://www.bibme.org>) that can manage your references (free version will do citations) or some word processing software has it built in. For example, Microsoft Word has a Reference tab. Click on Manage Sources to enter each new source. Regardless which software you use, once your references are entered, you can add in-text citations easily, and generate your Works Cited page at the end. It will automatically alphabetize your sources and format the page correctly. Sometimes you need to make a few adjustments at the end as none of the software seems to be perfect, but the citation generator can be a very useful tool to keep your references organized, and to cite correctly according to required style. Another feature is that the software keeps a history of your references so if you use some of your sources in future papers, you will already have the source entered and you can easily add it to the new paper.

## Proofreading Your Work with Sources

Once you have completed your Works Cited page and all your in-text citations, here is a checklist for your referencing of sources.

1. Every written source mentioned in your paper using an in-text citation must also be listed on Works Cited. (As we've discussed, images do not need to be listed on Works Cited but should be acknowledged in the paper.)
2. Anything listed on Works Cited must also appear in your paper. When proofreading, cross-check your in-text (in-paper) sources and your Works Cited page (end of paper) to make sure they cross-match.

Check carefully to be sure each of these is correct and complete:

- Capitalization of titles
- Use of italics and quotation marks
- Use of punctuation (periods and commas)



*Give credit to authors whose work you borrow.*

The descriptions above demonstrate how to use MLA style. APA style has slightly different rules but is just as specific in its formatting. For a detailed description of APA with examples, tips, and practice exercises see the open textbook: *Writing for Success – 1st Canadian Edition* – Chapter 9. Citations and Referencing (<https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccess/chapter/chapter-9-citations-and-referencing/>)

An incredibly valuable resource for helping students cite sources correctly for various styles is The Purdue Online Writing Lab, more commonly referred to as Purdue OWL (<http://owl.purdue.edu>). It is a very handy resource to continually refer to as you learn how to cite sources correctly.

### Answers to Exercise: Formatting Titles

Here are the correctly capitalized titles:

1. “People are Happier When They Spend Time in the Outdoors”
2. “Once upon a Time: A Tale of Lost Love”
3. *Overcoming Adversity in Life*
4. “Two People Apprehended in Attempt to Rob a Bank”

How did you do?

### Text Attributions

This chapter is a remix of the following chapters:

- “Crediting and Citing Your Sources (<https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/wrd/chapter/crediting-your-sources/>),” “Citing or Identifying Images in Your Writing (<https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/wrd/chapter/citing-or-identifying-images-in-your-writing/>),” “Handling Titles (<https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/wrd/chapter/handling-titles/>),” and “Proofreading Your Work with Sources (<https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/wrd/chapter/proofreading-your-work-with-sources/>)” in *The Word on College Reading and Writing* by Carol Burnell, Jaime Wood, Monique Babin, Susan Pesznecker, and Nicole Rosevea. Adapted by Mary Shier. CC BY-NC.
- “How Can I Become a Better Writer?” in *University Success* by N. Mahoney, B. Klassen, and M. D’Eon. Adapted by Mary Shier. CC BY-NC-SA.

### Media Attributions

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## 9.4 Chapter Review and Activities

Finding good accurate information is an important skill for doing research papers as a college student. Knowing how to find credible sources and then to evaluate whether the information from these sources is useful for your topic is paramount. Knowing how to properly reference the sources that you end up using will prevent plagiarism and will give proper credit to the applicable authors and researchers.

### Key Takeaways

To find credible sources:

- Use your college library, where you have access to research databases with academic journals, scholarly articles, and current research, and where you have access to knowledgeable librarians who can assist you with research.
- Go to websites which are a recognized authority on your topic.
- Use Google Scholar to search for research articles, journals etc.
- Search for works of renowned experts in the field.
- Use the domain name ending of the url of a website to give you clues about its reliability.
- Avoid wikis, blogs, and public information sites that have open contributions of information and opinions by those who haven't been screened as authorities in their fields.

To evaluate resources that you find:

- Use the CRAP+- test. Evaluate resources for currency, reliability, authority, and purpose and point of view.
- Look for currency in the research especially in quickly changing fields, such as science and technology.
- Consider the authors' education, expertise and experience.
- Consider the host source (specific newspaper, magazine, university, etc.) and publisher to determine if they are respected and reputable.
- Consider the intent of the resource. Is it biased? Does it have a specific objective?

Avoiding plagiarism:

- Do not use another person's intellectual property without giving credit.
- Common knowledge (easily attainable information) does not need to be cited.
- Pay attention to copyright.
- Open Educational Resources (OERs) are freely available resources available for sharing, re-using, remixing, and adapting. They are often under a Creative Commons licence.

Referencing sources:

- Use a consistent format for referencing throughout your paper as appropriate (MLA, APA, etc.).
- Keep track of sources continually through the writing process.
- You will need in-text citations (throughout your paper) as well as a Works Cited or Reference page giving detailed information about your sources (at the end of your paper).
- Using citation generators can help keep your references organized as you write your paper.
- Use Purdue OWL as a reference in citing different situations correctly.

Exercises: Research

Use your search skills to find the following two resources.

1. Open Educational Resources in Canada 2015, Rory McGreal, Terry Anderson, and Dianne Conrad
2. Effects of Climate Change on Birds, Peter O. Dunn, Anders Pape Moller

For each resource:

- State the type of resource (e.g. video, web site, book, journal article, etc.).
- Use the CRAP criteria to determine if each resource is a credible source. State your reasons.
- Show how each work would be cited in both MLA and APA styles. Give an example of an in-text citation as well as how it would be cited on the Works Cited or Reference page.