



COMMUNITY COLLEGE
OF RHODE ISLAND

The APA Documentation System

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Documentation

Documentation explains where borrowed words, statistics, ideas, pictures, charts, music, and other items came from.



heard in a song



found on a Web site

statistics



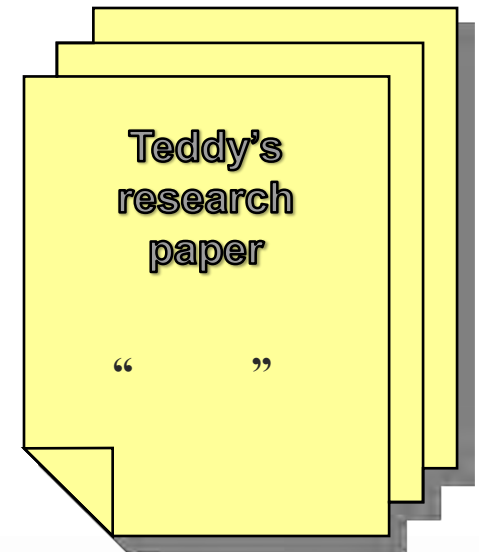
said in a speech



written in a book

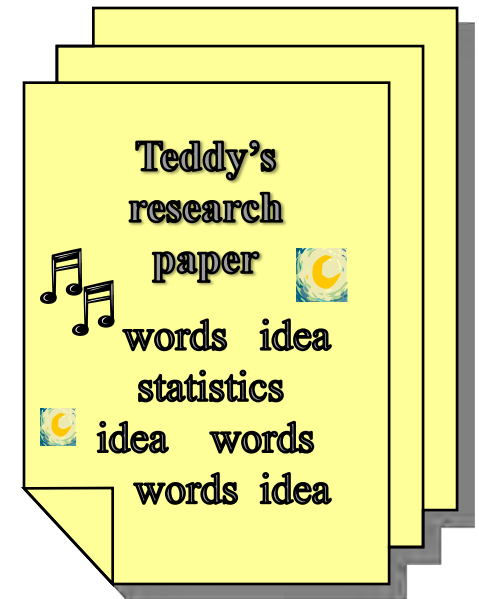


painted in a picture



Without documentation, readers and listeners will not know:

- Which words in the paper are Teddy's?
- Which ideas are Teddy's?
- Which words came from a book?
- Did the picture of the flower come from a Web site, a painting, or Teddy's camera?
- Where can someone find more information from the same source?
- Are the statistics from a recent source?
- Who sang the song? Who composed the song?
- Was the song heard on a CD, at a concert, or on a Web site?



Quotations, Paraphrases, and Summaries

Source documentation is used while communicating borrowed words or ideas in quotations, paraphrases, and summaries.

Quotations

Include Source Information

Borrowed words

Use quotation marks

Paraphrases

Include Source Information

Borrowed ideas

Do not use quotation marks


Summaries

Include Source Information

Borrowed, condensed ideas

Do not use quotation marks

Documentation Systems

- A documentation system is used in research papers and other kinds of communication to describe the source(s) of borrowed information and words.
- Documentation systems include: 
- The APA System, from the American Psychological Association, is the documentation system that is used in social science fields.

Components of the APA System

For each borrowed word or idea, an **in-text citation** is placed in the paper.

The first word of the **citation** has to match the first word of a **Reference list entry**.

Writing is an important academic and career skill. An article discusses how “the quality of your writing can determine success or failure” **(Jacobs, 1998, p.1)**.

Reference
Jacobs, P. (1998). Strong writing skills essential for success, even in IT. *InfoWorld*, 20(27), 86. Retrieved from Academic Search Complete database.

In-text Citations

An in-text citation can be formatted in two different ways:

with the author's **name**, the **year**, and the **page number** in parenthesis

An article discusses how “the quality of our writing can determine success or failure” (Jacobs, 1998, p. 1).

with the **author's name** and the **year** in a lead-in phrase and with the **page number** in parenthesis

Jacobs (1998) discusses how “the quality of your writing can determine success or failure” (p. 1).

Clear Source Identification and Documentation

- To indicate a change from the writer of the research paper to one of the sources of information or words, a **lead-in phrase** is often used.
- Unless the author's words indicate otherwise, the **in-text parenthetical citation** shows readers the end of the source's ideas/words, as well as the year and the page number.
- The words following a citation can show a continuation of the same viewpoint or a **change to a different viewpoint**.

According to the National Commission on Writing (2004), writing is important. A survey shows that writing is a "threshold skill" needed to get hired and promoted at work (National Commission on Writing, 2004, p. 3). Also, this survey shows In addition to being important at work, writing is also important in

What No Citation Means

Whenever a citation is not present, a reader will assume that the idea and the words are the research paper writer's.

Incorrect source documentation often results in plagiarism:

Writing is a threshold skill for both employment and promotion purposes.

Revision should include checking for places where additional source information is needed.

This revision has a citation documenting the source of borrowed ideas and words:

In a survey of 120 large American companies, writing was found to be a “threshold skill” for both employment and promotion” purposes (National Commission on Writing, 2004, p. 3).

A Paragraph Citing Sources by Using the APA System

Strong communication skills are important in today's professional careers. According to Jacobs (1998), "Whether you are pitching a business case or justifying a budget, the quality of your writing can determine success or failure" (p. 1). Police officers, for example, need to record information, write reports, and sometimes showcase their written documents in a courtroom. A single ineffective communication could result in a criminal being found innocent of a crime. In a survey of 120 large American companies, writing was found to be a "„threshold skill" for both employment and promotion" purposes (National Commission on Writing, 2004, p. 3). People in all of today's careers need to be able to communicate effectively to interact appropriately with their colleagues, bosses, customers, and other people, as well as to communicate their knowledge and to showcase their accomplishments.



Good Organization While Citing Sources

- The organization of a paper or speech should be focused on the writer's or the speaker's ideas.
- The **thesis** and **topic sentences** should convey the writer's or speaker's main ideas, rather than being **quotations from sources**.
- **Source material** is most often used to **support** a writer's or a speaker's ideas.

... Strong communication skills are important at work and in college.

When at work, an employee needs to be skillful in communication in order to successfully complete many tasks. For example, a person often has to write reports, send e-mails to colleagues, and speak with his/her boss. According to Jacobs (1998), "[T]he quality of your writing can determine success or failure" (p. 1).

Good communication is also important in college. . . .

Correct Grammar When Using Source Material

Correct grammar, including correct sentence structures, is needed when using source material and citing sources.

Strong communication skills are important in today's professional careers. According to Jacobs (1998), "Whether you are pitching a business case or justifying a budget, the quality of your writing can determine success or failure" (p. 1).

If the use of a quotation results in unclear writing or grammatical errors, then revision of the lead-in phrase is needed, or the writer/speaker can use a paraphrase or a summary instead.

Jacobs (1998) states, "whether you are pitching a business case" (p. 1).

Revision



Jacobs (1998) states that good writing can help when "pitching a business case" (p. 1).

Reference Pages

- The works that have been “referenced” in the body of a paper or a speech are listed on a “Reference” page.
- The format of a Reference page includes:
 - Alphabetical order to organize the works
 - Hanging indents to format the second and later lines of each entry
 - Double spacing for most academic papers

“Reference ” or “References”

- The singular word “Reference” is used for a Reference page with only one entry.
- The plural word “References” is used for a page with more than one entry.

Reference

References

Reference Page Entries Include:

- Name(s) of author(s)
- If there is no author's name, an organization's or a company's name
- Year of publication in parenthesis
- Title(s)
- Print publication information, such as city, state, publisher, volume, and issue
- Electronic publication information, including the Web site's name, database title, DOI, and the words "retrieved from" with the URL (if there is no DOI).

Jacobs, P. (1998). Strong writing skills essential for success, even in IT. *InfoWorld*, 20(27), 86. Retrieved from *Academic Search Complete* database.

The Format of Titles for Reference Pages

An italic font is used for the titles of independent items.

- Newspapers 
- Journals
- Books 
- Web sites
- Databases 
- Films
- Paintings 
- Performances

A regular font is used for short works published as parts of longer works.

- Essays 
- Songs
- Stories
- Poems
- Web pages 
- Articles from Web sites, newspapers, and journals

Commonly Used Abbreviations

“p.”

- Used in the citations of a paper to indicate “page”

“pp.”

- Used in the citations of a paper to indicate “pages”

“n.d.”

- Means no date of publication was stated by the source

“et al.”

- Used in a citation to indicate additional authors

“ . . . ”

- Ellipses are used on a reference page to indicate additional authors.

An Example Reference Page

References

Jacobs, P. (1998). Strong writing skills essential for success, even in IT.

InfoWorld, 20(27), 86. Retrieved from Academic Search Complete database.

The National Commission on Writing. (2004). *Writing: A Ticket to Work. . .*

Or a Ticket Out. (Ellipsis in orig.) College Board. Retrieved from

http://www.writingcommission.org/prod_downloads/writingcom/writing-ticket-to-work.pdf



More Information

The Writing Center at the Community College of Rhode Island has more online resources.



Contact Information

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