

# Tips for Effective Citation and Strong Support

(for the formal academic paper)

- *Specific question about a certain style? Check out these online resources:*
  - Modern Language Association style:  
[http://www.mla.org/publications/style\\_faq](http://www.mla.org/publications/style_faq)
  - American Psychological Association style:  
<http://www.apastyle.org/previoustips.html>
  - Chicago style:  
<http://www.press.uchicago.edu/Misc/Chicago/cmosfaq/tools.Documentation.html>
  
- *Consider the credibility of the source.*

No matter how relevant the source is to your argument, never use it unless its authority can be verified. Information found on the Internet especially must come from a recognized, credible authority in the field and should be treated with caution even then.
  
- *Do not leave your quote or supporting evidence to make its own statement.*

Evidence is meant to support your argument, not make its own observations. Make your argument stronger by providing support, which you interpret for your reader. Explain its significance to your argument.
  
- *Never be afraid to paraphrase, quote, and integrate supporting material.*

Make your paper interesting for the reader by introducing your support in different ways; try to avoid always quoting or always paraphrasing, for example. As long as you faithfully cite the sources of the material every time, your creativity has no bounds.
  
- *Even when paraphrasing, you must cite your source.*

Plagiarism is academic theft in which someone else's idea or theory is appropriated. Even if you do not use the source's exact words, you are still borrowing someone else's thoughts. So whether you quote or paraphrase, you must cite your source.
  
- *Always check with your professor to understand citation format.*

Every professor has his or her own preferences, so ask what those preferences are. Appropriate formatting for one professor or discipline may not be appropriate for another. It is always your responsibility to clarify those expectations before you turn in your paper.
  
- *Remember the cardinal rule: when in doubt, always cite.*

Not sure if something should be cited? Cite it anyway. Plagiarism is a serious offense, and it is much better to err on the side of caution than it is to steal someone else's intellectual property.