Introduction (0:08)

In this brief video we will:

- Define what a citation is
- Discuss why and when we use citations in academic research
- Examine the various parts of a citation
- And finally, we will briefly introduce the various citation styles you are most likely to encounter here at WPI

Pretty much within your first term here at WPI, you will be asked to appropriately use citations as part of an assignment, such as a research paper.

You will also need to be able to use citations, such as these found at the end of this scholarly article, to help you find additional information on a topic you are researching.

Section 1 (0:40)

Let’s begin, first, with defining exactly what is a citation.

For research purposes, you can think of a citation as a specifically styled reference that points to the original source of a given piece of information, and allows readers of your work to find where that information is located.

Citations have two distinct parts that work together, the full citation and the in-text citation.

The full citation is where you place all of the information needed to identify what the source and where to find it.

The full citation is located in one of two places:
- At the end of a document, in what is typically called either the bibliography, reference list, or works cited section,
- or it is found at the bottom of a page as a footnote.

The second part of a citation is the in-text citation, which is the notation you use within the body your writing. These can be either a parenthetical citation, or these can be a number corresponding to a reference list or footnotes.
Section 2 (1:32)

So, why do we use citations in academic writing?

- Citations give credit to the work of others that you’ve used. In other words, you are avoiding plagiarism by showing what is not your own original work.
- Citations increase the credibility of your work by backing up your claims with evidence. They demonstrate that you indeed did your research.
- Citations also show readers what kinds of information you used and where they can find it if they want to do more research on their own.
- Finally, citations allow you, the writer, to participate in a scholarly conversation between yourself and the other researchers that you are citing by demonstrating how your own work builds upon, questions, confirms, and even contradicts the work of others.

Section 3 (2:12)

So when do you cite something?

- You need to cite any ideas of others that you have either directly quoted, paraphrased, or have used in some other manner within your writing or presentation.
- You will also need to cite non-written types of works that you use if they are created by someone else, such as data or images. Please note that when using images you may also need to think about copyright, which is a separate issue from citations.
- You do not need to cite something that is considered general or common knowledge, which is something that would be know by the general public, such as the earth revolves around the sun.

Section 4 (2:46)

There are many different citation styles, but regardless of how each style differs, all citations attempt to answer the who, what, when and where about a given source.

- Who refers to who wrote or created the source, meaning the author, editors, or other creators, such as a photographer.
- What is the information source called, refers to the title of the source, whether it be a book title, article title, or a web page.
- When was it created would typically refer to the publication date, but could, in the case of a webpage refer to the last revise date.
And finally where is the information source found? For an article, this could be a journal, newspaper, or a magazine title, as well as volume or issue number and page numbers. For a book, this would be the publisher name and location, and for a webpage, the URL.

**Section 5 (3:34)**

There are many different citation styles. These different styles tend to be associated with specific academic disciplines.

Some common styles that you might be asked to use during your time here at WPI include:

- MLA, which is often used in the humanities, especially literature and art
- APA, which is typically used in the social sciences and behavioral sciences, such as education, psychology, and sociology
- IEEE, which is used in computer science and engineering disciplines,
- CSE, which is often used in the biological sciences
- and Chicago, which is most frequently used in historical research.

To learn more about how to use and format these styles be sure to check out the other videos in this module.

You can also find more information about citations in general on our website at wpi.edu/library. Click do research on the side navigation menu, then cite and use Sources, then click the research guide on citing sources link

And as always, feel free to ask a librarian for help.