

Proper Citation of Sources--APA Format

When writing papers which use information from researched sources, it is necessary to provide complete and correct documentation to show the source of all words and ideas that are not those of the student. Failure to cite a source implies that the information used is the original work of the paper writer—a form of stealing known as "plagiarism." In college classes and on the WCT, plagiarism is grounds for failure, no matter how well written the rest of the paper may be. In the professional world, it is grounds for lawsuits.

There are two necessary components for proper documentation: in-text citation (within the paragraphs of the paper) and the References page (at the end of the paper). When quoting the words of another writer in your paper, it is necessary to use quotation marks around a quote, which is shorter than four lines.

Example:

It is common practice today to exclude people from a jury if they have heard or read much about the crime and/or defendant in the media. As some writers have pointed out, this type of exclusion leads to the selection of jurors who don't know and probably don't care what is going on in their community. "This exclusion, intended to prevent prejudice, substitutes a different kind of prejudice" (Minow and Cate, 1992, p. 456).

A quotation longer than four lines should be set in from the left margin:

Recent movies like *The Juror* portray dangerous criminals who threaten jurors who might vote to convict them. Such movies may frighten us into thinking that anonymous juries are needed. William Kunstler (1992), however, suggests that this practice takes away all possibility of a fair trial for a defendant.

Ostensibly intended to protect the safety and privacy of jurors and their families, it is, in reality a prosecutorial device to increase the likelihood of conviction by giving jurors the impression that a defendant is so beyond the pale that their very lives would be in danger if their identities were made public (p. 458).

Sometimes you will want to comment on an idea you have read without the need to actually quote from it. In that case, you may paraphrase the idea, but you still must cite the source. Here is an example:

Today's high-profile cases can sometimes offer rewards for jurors who can later sell their stories to the tabloids, or who may have their own radical political views. This can also prevent a defendant from getting a fair trial. The same people who would otherwise use any tactic they could think of to avoid jury duty, may now become what lawyers call "stealth jurors"--people who will tell the lawyers whatever they think they want to hear in order to be appointed to the jury (Scheck, 1997).

Note that in all these examples, the source material is used to reinforce the idea of the essay writer. This provides context for the quote or paraphrase. Don't use source material to stand alone--use it to support the point you want to make.

References

In showing sources on the References page, you must be careful to give enough information that the reader could take your citation to a library and find the information you used. For a magazine you need to give the author and title of the article, name of the magazine, and exact date of the issue, along with the page number(s) for the article.

Scheck, B. (1997, April 7) The death row dance. *Newsweek*, p. 56.

Be especially careful if the source you use is part of a larger work, such as an essay from a book of essays or a short story or poem from an anthology. You must give credit to the writer you are quoting, as well as the source of that piece.

Minow, N. and Cates, B. (1992). Impartial--not ignorant--juries needed. In

S. D. Spurgeon (Ed.), *Strategies for Argument* (pp. 456-457). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

(For other examples of citations, see APA stylebook or obtain a style sheet from the Academic Support Center).

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