

How to Properly Cite the Course Textbook (Open Educational Resource): A Guide to Doing it Right

Proper citation is a very important part of writing at the college level. While it may seem like the professor is simply giving you unnecessary extra work, especially when you are rushing to meet multiple assignment deadlines, supporting their work, and acknowledging their sources through proper citation is a critical skill for all students. You will often be asked to cite the course textbook: [*Communication @ Work*](#), an OER (open educational resource). The discussion which follows uses the textbook itself in order to provide examples on how to use and properly cite its information as a source for your writing in the class.

There are a number of ways of incorporating research material to into your writing. These include:

- Direct quotations
- Paraphrasing
- Summarizing
- Reproducing media

And in each of these cases, both a proper in-text citation and end citation are required (Bartsiokas & Hylton, 2019, 6.24, para. 3). Let us look in a little more detail at the first two methods of incorporating research: direct quotations and paraphrasing.

Direct quotations are the simplest way to use someone else's information in your own work. Essentially, "...quoting takes word-for-word information from an original source, puts quotation marks (" ") around that information, and embeds it into your writing" (Bartsiokas & Hylton, 2019, 6.24, para. 4). You can see in this example how the exact words from the original source are used and placed inside quotation marks. The citation appears directly after the closing quotation marks, and the rest of the paragraph continues the discussion, clarifying the points in your own words. The citation example provided here is slightly more specific than what APA requires, with the chapter (3), unit (9), and paragraph number (2). Alternately, you could include a page number instead, if you've downloaded the PDF of the textbook. This level of detail helps make it perfectly clear where the information comes from. Finally, the References list at the end of the document will include a full citation for the source.

As explained in Chapter 6 of our textbook, direct quotations are not your only option. In fact, paraphrasing is often a better way of incorporating source material, because it allows you to put the original author's ideas into your own words, thereby making them fit with your audience, purpose, and writing style (Bartsiokas & Hylton, 2019, 6.24, para. 5). What you just read is an example of content from the class textbook being paraphrased, rather than directly quoted. Going by the citation, you know that the information came from Chapter 6, Unit 24, paragraph 5 in the textbook. And since there are no quotation marks, you know that the material has been paraphrased. More specifically, here is the original text from *Communication @ Work*:

“Paraphrasing or ‘indirect quotation’ is putting research information in your own words. Paraphrasing is the preferred way of using a source when the original wording isn’t important. This way, you can incorporate the ideas and tailor the wording so it is consistent with your writing style and your audience’s needs. Also, paraphrasing a source into your own words proves your advanced understanding of the research information.” (Bartsiokas & Hylton, 2019, 6.24, para. 5)

See the difference in how to paraphrase versus directly quote the same information? Both are appropriate in your writing. And, just like in the case of direct quotations, paraphrasing also requires a proper in-text citation and corresponding citation in the References list on the last page (Bartsiokas & Hylton, 2019, 6.24, para. 3). Take a look at the References list which appears on a separate page following the conclusion of this discussion.

Seneca’s Library also has a fantastic resource that provides further detail and examples on how to cite material, including OER textbooks like ours and course material like lectures and slide decks (Seneca Polytechnic Libraries, 2024). You are encouraged to take a good look at the information there; while it does take a little more effort to properly cite your sources, you can see that it is not overly complex. Direct quotes, paraphrasing, and other methods allow you to properly acknowledge the original source for your information and knowing when and how to cite those sources means you avoid plagiarism while also showing your skill as a professional communicator.

References

Bartsiokas, T., & Hylton, T. (2019). *Communication@work* (Adapted from *Communication@work* by Jordan Smith). Seneca. Retrieved October 9, 2024, from <https://pressbooks.senecapolytechnic.ca/buscomm/>

Seneca Polytechnic Libraries. (2024, October 8). APA Citation Guide (APA 7th Edition). <https://library.senecapolytechnic.ca/apa>

[Note: While various parts of the textbook are cited in the body of your writing (the in-text citations), there is only one citation in the References list. It is not necessary to include a separate citation for each section of the source that is noted in the in-text citations. Also, if you go to the link for the Seneca Libraries source noted above and scroll to the bottom of that page, you will see the “last updated” note. That is where “2023, December 1” came from. If you can’t find a “last updated” note, simply use “n.d” (no date) in your citation.]