FY 100 Basic Citation Exercise
By Dr. Jennifer Mitchell for SUNY Potsdam FY 100, Fall 2019

Please read this page carefully before beginning Task 1. This EASY assignment helps you learn the basics of citing your sources at a college level. **It should take you under two hours to complete. Follow all details in the instructions for each step, because they will save you time.**

Errors in your paraphrases and citations can give the impression that you are plagiarizing. Standards are much higher in college: the result of plagiarism, bad paraphrasing, or poor citing can include failing grades or disciplinary action. Therefore, this Basic Citation Exercise shows you how to cite and paraphrase within your own writing.

Although we don’t cover it here, the bibliography is also a crucial part of citing well and avoiding plagiarism. Your bib must have every source you’ve used, and it must apply the style your teacher assigns. “Citation makers” (like EasyBib) can help you build your bib. **However, keep in mind that:**

- “Citation machines” like EasyBib help you draft your bib, but they do NOT help you with paraphrasing or citing in your sentences. That’s what you’ll learn here.
- It is your responsibility to correct the format of any bib you hand in by checking it against a credible guide (see our Resources page at the end of this exercise).
- Book with the Writers’ Block to go through these details with a peer tutor.

To complete this EASY Basic Citation exercise, you will read some short webpages and write three short responses which will come to about one page total.

1. Create one Word document with your answers to all three tasks below. Label each task clearly.
2. To complete the three tasks, follow our instructions, apply what you learn from the reading, and cite carefully.
3. Bring hard copy of your work to your class visit to the Writers’ Block. We’ll review the three tasks together, and you’ll do a bit more practice.
4. Then submit your exercise to your FYSS instructor following their instructions. Save this exercise on your computer as a helpful guide for the future.
5. Book with the Writers’ Block if you want help citing in this exercise!

*Scroll down to get started.*
**Task 1: “WAKE-UP CALL”**

**READ:** Potsdam Academic Honor Code, all of parts A and B, plus part C sections 1-2.

**READ:** What is Plagiarism?, section 1, first four paragraphs ONLY, PLUS ALL of section 3.

_THEN WRITE:_ Using what you learned from those two readings, write a short “wake-up call” addressed to your peers. You should share just a few key points which might be new to your peers coming from high school to college. What are the challenges they should keep in mind? Write 100-150 words or 10-15 sentences.

**CITE:** Each time you use something from one of the readings, name the _author_ either in your sentence or in parentheses immediately after you use that source. The author is either the Georgetown University Honor Council OR the SUNY Potsdam College Office of Student Conduct & Community Standards. (We’ll review your citing when you come to visit.) No pages numbers are necessary.

_NOTE: Different fields of study use different citation styles._ For example, English uses MLA style, but Psychology uses APA style and History uses Chicago footnote style. Your teacher will tell you what style to use. In most 100- and 200-level courses, MLA style will be fine.

**BIB:** Copy and paste your selected items from our Sample Bibliography page below. Only list the sources you actually used (i.e., paraphrased or quoted) in the exercise. Label your bib as “Works Cited.”

**Note:** Technically, a “bibliography” is a list of works which you consulted on the topic. A “works cited” page or “references” list shows only the sources which you actually used (that is, summarized, paraphrased, or quoted) in your paper.

**SHORTCUT: MOST IMPORTANT RULES OF CITING:**

- Give credit every time. Be sure to cite authors and page in parentheses after each quotation or paraphrase. Follow the formats in Task 3, below.
- Authors’ names must be mentioned, either in sentence or in parentheses. (If no author, use the title, including just the first three words of the title in parentheses). If it’s extremely clear in your sentences which authors you are citing, you don’t need to include their name in parentheses.
- Be sure to use the readings accurately to make your points.
**Task 2: GUIDELINES for CITING**

**READ:** Read “Paraphrasing,” pages 3-5. This knowledge is crucial to your success in college writing.

**READ:** In your FY 100 textbook, *College Success*, read Chapter 8 intro “The Importance of Writing” AND section 8.2 “How Can I Become a Better Writer?” (Your teacher might assign different pages for this exercise.) These sections are written by writing teachers, and they really tell it like it is!

**SKIM:** Skim “Plagiarism and Citation Basics.” (Note about MLA: On that page, the bibliography format still needs to be updated to MLA 8th ed. [Read more](#) if you’re curious.)

**THEN WRITE:** Summarize one new or helpful point you picked up from “Paraphrasing” and also one new or helpful point from your textbook. Write a few sentences for each of those, for a total of about 80-100 words. When you quote or paraphrase, mention the author -- either SUNY Potsdam College Writing Center OR *College Success*, with page number – in the sentence or in parentheses.

**BIB:** Copy and paste your selected items from our Sample Bibliography page below. Only list the sources you actually used (i.e., paraphrased or quoted) in the exercise. Label your bib as “Works Cited.”
Task 3: YOU BE THE JUDGE

READ this passage from your textbook:

“Writing instructors distinguish between process and product. The expectations [we’ve] described here all involve the ‘product’ you turn in on the due date. Although you should keep in mind what your product will look like, writing is more involved with how you get to that goal. ‘Process’ concerns how you work to actually write a paper. What do you actually do to get started? How do you organize your ideas? Why do you make changes along the way as you write? Thinking of writing as a process is important because writing is actually a complex activity. Even professional writers rarely sit down at a key board and write out an article beginning to end without stopping along the way to revise portions they have drafted, to move ideas around, or to revise their opening and thesis. Professionals and students alike often say they only realized what they wanted to say after they started to write. This is why many instructors see writing as a way to learn. Many writing instructors ask you to submit a draft for review before submitting a final paper. To roughly paraphrase a famous poem, you learn by doing what you have to do.” (College Success 285)

WRITE: Why are the following five paraphrases considered good or bad by a college teacher? Write just a few words or a sentence about each paraphrase. These questions will help you identify and strengths and weaknesses of each paraphrase.

- Is the paraphrase accurate?
- Is it our original wording or is it using the authors’ words from the passage above, from your FY 100 textbook?
- Is the source given credit correctly, in the sentence or in parentheses?

Examples of Good Paraphrases:

1. When writing, it is important to recognize that the product and process are two different things. One’s “product” is the final piece of writing that they submit to their professor, while the “process” pertains to how a writer creates their work (College Success 285).
2. The authors of the textbook, College Success, list different ideas of things to consider when writing a paper. These include noting how you begin a paper, the organization of concepts and how you make changes in your writing. These ideas are all apart of one’s writing “process.”
3. For many, writing is not a simple process. Even people who write professionally typically do not complete a product in one sitting. They often edit and reorganize their work before they submit it (College Success 285).

4. A common problem amongst all different kinds of writers, is that they are unsure of what they want to convey in their paper at the start. Often times it isn’t until they are in the midst of writing that they determine what it is they want to say (College Success 285).

5. The authors of College Success emphasize the idea that many professors will often times ask students to submit a draft of a paper before the final product. This is a chance for professors to teach, and for the writer to make changes to their work.

Examples of Bad Paraphrases

6. Professional writers and college students both often say they only realized what they wanted to say after they started writing.

7. Thinking of writing as a process is important. That’s because writing is actually a complex activity. Even professional writers rarely sit down at a key board and write out an article beginning to end. They stop along the way to revise portions they have drafted, to move ideas around, or to revise their opening and thesis (College Success 285).

You’re done! See our Sample Bib and Resources below.

**Remember, you are responsible** for learning how to cite and doing it thoroughly. Teachers won’t always spell out requirements in the same way, so your initiative to learn and check the formats is essential.
Always be absolutely sure that every source you used in writing a paper is listed on the bib page. By doing so, you are signaling that you used that source. If you do not signal use you are, in the eyes of your professors, hiding your use of a source. Hiding a source is the definition of plagiarism.

Works Cited


SUNY Potsdam College Writing Center. “Plagiarism and Citation Basics.” *SUNY Potsdam.* SUNY Potsdam, N.d.,

Www.potsdam.edu/sites/default/files/documents/support/tutoring/cwc/Plagiarism-and-Citation-basics.pdf.

SUNY Potsdam College Writing Center. “Paraphrasing.” *SUNY Potsdam.* SUNY Potsdam, 2013,


SUNY Potsdam Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards. “SUNY Potsdam Academic Honor Code.” SUNY Potsdam, 2017,

Www.potsdam.edu/studentlife/studentconduct/honorcode.
**Resources: Help when you need it**

**Help on campus:**

- **Potsdam College Writers’ Block** peer writing consultants can help you with any aspect of your writing, including citation. Just contact us for a free appointment.

- SUNY Potsdam librarians can also help with citing, and [libraries.potsdam.edu](http://libraries.potsdam.edu) includes good links. They really want to help you learn, so bring your questions, big and small, to the reference desk at the base of the stairs. See their [research desk hours here](#).

- Group tutoring is also available from [Academic Support Lab](#) and individual tutoring is available for students in the TRiO and EOP programs. Sign up early in the semester and stick with it, or the resource won’t be available.

**Links:**

The best online guides to citation styles are [Purdue OWL](http://Purdue OWL) and [CiteSource](http://CiteSource). The OWL includes sample papers with correct citation and information on all aspects of writing. CiteSource shows how to cite various kinds of web sources.

Citation makers (like EasyBib or BibMe) help you to create a works cited page, but they don’t show you when to cite in your sentences and paragraphs. And the quality of the works cited page is still your responsibility: check to be sure that it really is correctly formatted by comparing the format to those at [Purdue OWL](http://Purdue OWL) or [CiteSource](http://CiteSource).

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