

Why do we cite sources?

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You have a research assignment due and your professor reminds you to “always cite your sources!” But what exactly does that mean and why should you do it?

“Citing sources” is all about acknowledging the original authors or creators of an information source that you quote, paraphrase, or summarize in an essay, presentation, or other research assignment. We do this to give credit to the person who wrote or created the idea we are incorporating into our own work, establish our own credibility as researchers by highlighting the sources we read or consulted to create our work, lead the readers of our work to related research so that they can learn more about a topic, and participate in a scholarly conversation by establishing your own voice in relation to the ideas and information of others.

Yes, citing sources in your papers, presentations, and projects will help you avoid plagiarizing, but it does so much more than that! By citing our sources we show that we care about our research, respect other researchers, and value the people taking the time to read our work. We’re a part of a community of scholars, and creating good citations is a way to be a good member of that community.

There are many different citation styles, so you’ll need to choose the one that matches your area of study, or one recommended by your professor. For citation examples and help, visit the UH Libraries Citation Style Guide: <https://guides.lib.uh.edu/citationhelp>