

## Giving Credit to Sources

When you write an essay, you normally do not know *everything* about the topic so you have to find more information online or in books to add to your ideas. But is it okay to use that information in your essay even though it is not your own thinking?



The answer is **YES**, as long as you **give credit to your sources**. Giving credit to a source means you acknowledge the author or creator of the information you are sharing in your essay.

### How can you give sources credit?

1. You can **explain who or where the information came from in the sentence you use it in**.
  - For example:

*[The name of the person], who wrote the book/article/song [title of book/article/song], says, “put the information you want to use in quotation marks.”*

This lets the reader know that you have borrowed information and allows them to look up the information themselves if they would like to read the full book/article/song.

2. You can **add the websites or the name of the book/article/song/picture at the end of your essay in a list**.

- Usually, you will be asked to list the sources in alphabetical order (titles or names that begin with an “A” before ones that begin with a “B,” etc.).
- For a book/novel, an MLA-style citation would follow this format:

Last Name, First Name. *Title of Book*. City of Publication, Publisher, Publication Date.

- For example, a citation for the book *The Outsiders* would look like this:

Hinton, S. E. *The Outsiders*. Penguin Books, 2016.

## How do I know if I need to give credit?

Question to ask yourself:	Do I need to mention a source/give credit?
<p>Is this information common knowledge that most people know without needing to look it up?</p>	<p><b>No</b>, you can write this information into your essay without mentioning how you know it or where you learned it.</p> <p>Example: The weather is usually sunny and warm in Florida.</p>
<p>What if I am talking about a personal experience (something that happened to me, a story from my life?)</p>	<p><b>No</b>, your experiences and memories belong to you, so <i>you</i> are the owner of those. When these experiences and stories involve things that other people say, you will still put that part in quotation marks.</p> <p>Example: My grandfather used to always say "life is short; eat dessert first."</p>
<p>Am I using exact words from someone's work/a movie/a song or using their ideas and putting it in my own words?</p>	<p><b>Yes</b>, you'll need to mention who or where you found this information that you are taking.</p> <p>Example: Hinton writes, "Maybe the two different worlds we lived in weren't so different. We saw the same sunset."</p>
<p>Did I read the information I am using in my textbook, on a website or hear it in a song/podcast/video?</p>	<p><b>Yes</b>, you'll need to include the name of the people, book, website and/or video you read and heard the information from.</p> <p>Example: On page 81 of the textbook, it explains that "a simile is a comparison of two things using 'like' or 'as.' For example, 'She is as pretty as a princess.'"</p>

If you are ever unsure if you need to give credit to a source for information or items you add into your essay, it is best to always double check with your teacher. When in doubt, ask the teacher the best route!