

Citing Sources (Teacher Background Notes)

There are many different styles for a resource list or bibliography. Most differences in style are questions of punctuation or the placement of the date. Teachers may choose to follow the model recommended by their division, school, or library. The most important rule to emphasize is *consistency*.

General Rules

- The purpose of a resource list is to include sufficient details to allow the reader to easily locate or retrieve the source.
- Sources are placed in alphabetical order by author's last name, or by title if the author is unknown.
- If there are a number of sources, students may divide them into types: print, Internet, video.
- The most essential elements of citing a source are: author, title, date. Each element is separated by punctuation (usually a comma or a period).
- The publication date is generally placed at the end. In the author-date style, which appears frequently in history texts, the date is placed in parentheses immediately after the author's name.
- Book titles, encyclopedia titles, and magazine titles are in italics. In a handwritten resource list, they may be underlined.
- Advise students that all direct quotations must be indicated as such by citing the reference directly in the text. This may be done by a footnote or a parenthetical reference. When citing a source directly in a piece of work, the essential elements are the author's name and date, or the website URL <exact website>, and date consulted (B. Smith, 2001) or <<http://www.metisresourcecentre.mb.ca/>> (4 April 2003). Students should also indicate the page number of the quotation if it is from a book or another longer published work.

Recommendations

- All reference details should be recorded at the time of the first consultation; this avoids having to find the source again later on.
- In some cases, all the necessary details are difficult to find or absent (e.g., websites, printed brochures). In this case, students should include all the details that will help in retrieving the source.
- Avoid errors by always using the cut-and-paste feature to reproduce a URL (Uniform Resource Locator) or Internet address. Students should also note the date they consulted the source, as sites are updated or change frequently. In the case of a very long URL, students should include the home address and specify the links they clicked or the search word they used to reach that page.

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The following examples are included as suggestions only. Emphasize uniformity and simplicity in resource or reference lists.

Book

Example:

Colombo, J.R., *Famous Lasting Words: Great Canadian Quotations*. Vancouver, B.C.: Douglas and McIntyre, 2000.

CD-ROM

"Topic," *Title in italics* [CD-ROM], publisher, date.

Note: Place the author at the beginning if indicated in the CD-ROM.

Example:

"Louis Riel," *The Manitoba Legislative Building* [CD-ROM], Manitoba Education and Training, 1999.

Website

Include the exact page title, the name of the website (the date posted or last update at bottom of web page), and the date retrieved, followed by the URL.

Example:

"Manitoba," Confederation for Kids, National Library of Canada (2001), 12 November 2003: <<http://www.nlc-bnc.ca/confederation/kids/h2-1375-e.html>>

Newspaper Article

Example:

Elliott, L. "Native leaders eyed for key cabinet post," *Winnipeg Free Press*, 16 November 2003.

Video

Example:

Canada: A People's History, Episode 10, "Taking the West," CBC, 2001.

TV Show

Example:

Fifth Estate, CBC, 15 April 2004.

Personal Interview:

Include name, background, and interview date.

Example:

Smith, John Joseph. World War II veteran, personal interview, 10 November 2003.