

Citation Elements: How to Read a Citation

In this video, you will learn how to:

- recognize the basic elements of citations regardless of citation style,
- distinguish between publication types based on citations, and
- use citation information to locate and keep track of your sources.

There are many different types of resources or publications that you will come across while searching UNB WorldCat or other databases, including journal articles, books, book chapters, newspaper articles, films, dissertations, government reports, and more!

These resources or publications are typically represented in course syllabi, bibliographies, or database search results lists as citations.

A citation is a brief, descriptive entry that--through its components--tells you what the publication is and how to find it.

Let's go over the basic components of a citation.

Regardless of publication type (book, journal, website, and more) or style (APA, Chicago, MLA, and others), all citations have the same basic elements that are arranged in a specific order. These elements include the **author's name**, the **date of publication**, and the **title**.

APA

Book

Cote-Meek, S. (2014). *Colonized classrooms: Racism, trauma and resistance in post-secondary education*. Fernwood Publishing.

Journal Article

Nakhaie, M. R. (2018). *Service needs of immigrants and refugees*. *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, 19(1), 143-160.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s12134-017-0534-0>

Website

Statistics Canada. (2018). *Firearm-related violent crime in Canada*. *Juristat Bulletin--Quick Fact, 2018001*. (Catalogue no. 85-005-X). Retrieved June 7, 2021 from <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-005-x/2018001/article/54962-eng.htm>

Chicago

Book

Cote-Meek, Sheila. *Colonized Classrooms: Racism, Trauma and Resistance in Post-Secondary Education*. Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 2014.

Journal Article

Nakhaie, M. R. "Service Needs of Immigrants and Refugees." *Journal of International Migration and Integration* 19, no.1 (2018): 143-160.

Website

Statistics Canada. 2018. "Firearm-Related Violent Crime in Canada." *Juristat Bulletin--Quick Fact* 2018001. Catalogue no. 85-005-X. Accessed July 6, 2018. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-005-x/2018001/article/54962-eng.htm>

These basics--author, date of publication, and title--are always part of the citation information.

There are also other parts to citations that can help you recognize the type of publication. For example, you can generally recognize a journal article citation by the **italicised journal title and volume number** as well as the **issue number** included in the citation.

Moore, E. (2018). Perfectionism and the pursuit of personal goals: A self-determination theory analysis. *Motivation and Emotion*, 42(1), 37-49. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11031-017-9654-2>

You can generally recognize a book citation if you see the **publisher** noted at the end of the citation. Also, if you see the preposition **"in"** followed by a **title**, you can tell that the citation is for a book chapter.

Bordo, S. (2003). Does size matter? **In** M. Hussey (Ed.), *Masculinities: Interdisciplinary readings* (pp. 42–45). **Prentice Hall**.

The citation information for print books, is generally located on the back of the title page (or the verso). The citation information for journal articles in PDF format, can usually be found at the top and/or the bottom of the article pages.

Locating basic citation information can be challenging when using web content. For example, many websites can have corporate rather than individual authors.

Canadian Cancer Society. (n.d.). *What causes cancer?* Retrieved from <http://www.cancer.ca/en/cancer-information/cancer-101/what-causes-cancer/?region=nb>

Sometimes the year of publication can be hard to determine. Often the copyright date is noted at the bottom of the page, but this is not the date you should use in your citation. Instead, refer to when the website was last updated. Use n.d., which stands for no date, if this information is not noted.

When citation information is difficult to find on a website, you can right-click and select the “view page source” or the “inspect element” option to see the source code. The source code may provide the information you need for citation purposes.

The important thing is to note as much of the basic information as possible, including author, date of publication, and title. During your research, take the time to save and track citation information in order to

- a) locate your sources (have enough information to search for a publication in a catalogue or database), and
- b) easily incorporate citation information into your writing (it's very time consuming to backtrack and locate sources after you've used their information).

For help with using different citation styles in your writing, visit UNB's Writing Centres located on both the Fredericton and Saint John campuses.

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