How to Cite Sources

By Kevin Gary Smith

In academic writing, it is imperative that you credit the sources you use in writing a paper. Failure to credit your sources is a form of stealing called plagiarism. This chapter is devoted to explaining the essentials of how to cite source using a system called in-text citing.

The advantages of in-text citations

The preferred method of citing sources is known as *in-text citation* or *author-date* referencing. In the past, theological publications used a footnote referencing system. In the old system, whenever you cited or alluded to a source, you needed to add a footnote indicating your source. The new method indicates the source in parentheses in the text of your paper. This explains the name in-text citation. Since the in-text citation typically consists of the name of the author(s) and the date of publication, some call it the author-date method.

Why are many scholars moving from footnotes to in-text citations? There are two main reasons. First, in-text citations take less space than footnotes. If you read academic articles that use footnotes, you often find footnotes taking up half the document. A 20-page article may have as many as 100 footnotes. Even if the note only has a few words, it occupies two lines of text. In-text citations occupy must less space. Second, footnotes disrupt the flow of the document more than in-text citations do. Each time you encounter a footnote, you need to break your train of thought and look at the bottom of the page to obtain essential information about the source (endnotes are worse—the information is not even on the same page). In an economical way, in-text citations alert you to the essential information right where you need it.

The elements of in-text citations

In-text citations provide answers to three questions: (a) Who? (b) When? (c) Where? They indicate *who* you are quoting, *when* the source was written and

where in the document your quotation can be located. Thus a complete in-text citation usually has three parts:

(a) *Author*: the first part of an in-text citation gives the surname(s) of the author(s). This instantly alerts readers to whom you are alluding. It also helps them locate the full source in the bibliography, which is arranged alphabetically according to authors' surnames.

(b) *Date*: the date of publication follows the author's name. This aids the reader in two ways. First, in distinguishes different sources by the same author. Second, it indicates how recent the cited source is; recent works carry more weight than older ones.

(c) *Page*: when you are quoting from or referring to specific parts of a source, insert page numbers to help readers locate the relevant portion. If you are referring to the entire source without special reference to selected parts, you may omit the page numbers.

Putting the three parts together, a standard in-text citation would look like this:

Wilson 2004:132

A single space separates the author's name and the date of publication. A colon divides the date and page number.[1]

How to add an in-text citation

There are two ways of adding an in-text citation to your paper.

If the name of the author appears in the text, place the date and page number in parentheses either after the name or after the quotation. Here are some examples:

> Wilson (2004:132) explains, "A series of linking words connect these three psalms."

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[1] There are variations on this style of author-date citations. For example, some add a comma between the author and the date (e.g., Wilson, 2004:132); some prefer to separate the date and page number with a comma (e.g., Wilson 2004, 132). These minor variations are not important; the most important thing is to be consistent in your method.

> Montgomery believes "Psalm 73 stands at the theological centre of the Book of Psalms" (1999:149).
>
> Long and White (2006) did not find any conclusive evidence of purposeful redaction in Luke 9:51-19:27.
>
> Njamini (2002:132-148) explored several potential reasons for the rising divorce rate amongst Xhosa pastors . . . .

The first two examples contain direct quotations; they illustrate the two positions in which the date and page can be added, either after the author's name or after the quotation. As a rule, the first option is preferred. The third example refers to an entire work, so page numbers are unnecessary. Although the last example does not contain a direct quotation, the page numbers indicate the portion of the work where the relevant information can be found.

If the name of the author does not appear in the text, place the author, date and page number in parentheses at an appropriate place in the sentence. Consider these examples:

> There "remains little doubt that Luke 9:51-19:27 depicts a literary journey rather than a literal one" (Bosman 1992:94).
>
> The majority of commentaries (e.g., Williams 1984; Bond 1991; Long and Brown 1995; Mahlangu 2002; Smith and Ngi 2006) believe Paul wrote Ephesians.
>
> The allusions to illness in Psalm 6 "may be metaphors for spiritual or national suffering" (Mills 1999:24; cf. Jabini 2004).

The full citation typically follows a quotation (first example). The period (full stop) comes *after the citation*; other than the closing inverted comma, there is no punctuation mark between the end of the quotation and citation. The middle example lists a number of sources without any direct quotation. In the last example, the direct quotation comes from Mills; Jabini is a second source supporting the same idea.

When you include a block quotation, the same two approaches can be used. The citation could look like either of these examples:

Pollock (2007:198) clarifies the approach as follows:

> When faced with an ambiguity in the Greek text that he cannot retain in translation, the translator should place the likelier interpretation in the text and the alternate rendering in a footnote.

It is not always possible to translate word-for-word.

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How to handle variations on the main elements

Not all in-text citations follow the standard formula of author, date and page. What if a book has six editors instead of an author? What should you do if no author is named, as often happens with websites? What if there is no date? Electronic books often do not include page numbers; what then? How do you reference a chapter or a section?

We cannot look at every possible problem you might encounter, but we can explain how to handle common problems. If you understand the principles involved, you should be able to solve other problems.

Problems related to *the author*

You will encounter two opposite problems with respect to the author part of an in-text citation: no author and too many authors.

If the work has no author, substitute the title for the author. If the title is long, abbreviate it. The example shows how you could cite an anonymous internet article called "the doctrine of salvation in the preaching on George Raymer". Please note the abbreviated title and the comma after the title.

> "Jesus died to atone for our sins" (The doctrine of salvation, 2007:3).

If the work has 3-5 authors, list all the names in the first citation; thereafter, cite the first author followed by "and others" (or et al.).

First citation:	Brown, Smith, Wilkins and Rebuli 1998:14
Later citations:	Brown and others 1998:29
or	Brown et al. 1998:29

If the work has 6 or more authors, cite it using the first author followed by "and others" (or et al.).

"If we abandon our belief in the doctrine of creation, our belief in the atoning work of Jesus makes no sense" (Flanagan and others 2004).

Occasionally you will use source documents that have an *organisation as author*. This often happens with government bodies, organisational reports and institutional documents. In such cases, substitute the name of the organisation for the author. If the name of the organisation is long, write it out in full the first time, but place an abbreviation in square brackets after it; thereafter, use the abbreviation to cite it.

First citation:	South African Theological Seminary [SATS] 2007:12
Later citations:	SATS 2007:19

Many students err when citing *an article from an edited book*—they cite the editor(s) of the book rather than the author of the article. You should cite by the author of the article. For example, Wood was the senior editor of third edition of *The New Bible Dictionary* (1996), while Dunn wrote the article "Baptism". If you cite from this article:

Incorrect:	Wood 1996:120
Correct:	Dunn 1996:120

The only time you may substitute editor(s) for the author is when the source does not indicate who wrote the article; in such cases, you may substitute either the editor(s) or the title for the author. If a Bible dictionary was edited

by Young and Kunhiyop, but gave no indication of who wrote the article "baptism", you could cite it in either of these ways:

(a)   Young and Kunhiyop 2006:423

(b)   Baptism, 2006:423

When citing by title, a comma separates the title from the date (see example b). Whichever option you choose, your bibliography entry must match. These would be the corresponding entries.

(a)   Young LP and Kunhiyop S (eds) 2006. *The African Bible dictionary,* 420-428. . . .

(b)   Baptism. 2006. In LP Young and S Kunhiyop (eds), *The African Bible dictionary,* 420-428. . . .

Problems related to *the date*

Most problems related to *the date* spring from the rise electronic media. Websites often fail to indicate the date an article was written or published. Electronic books (e-books) may give two dates, namely, the date the printed edition was published and the date of the electronic version; which one should you cite? The content of an online article may change regularly (e.g., Wikipedia), so the *exact* date on which you accessed it becomes crucial. Using the examples below as guidelines, you should be able to work out how to handle most situations.

If a source gives no indication of the date it was written or published, you may use the abbreviation "n.d." for "no date". This is the traditional way of referencing books that give no publication date.

Example of "no date":   Tucker n.d.:249

If an e-book gives publication information for both the printed edition and the electronic edition, use the date of the electronic edition. For example, the Logos edition Warren Wiersbe's book *Be Holy* indicates that the printed edition was published in 1994, but the electronic in 1996. The correct form would be:

Correct: Wiersbe 1996:31   (date of electronic ed.)
Incorrect   Wiersbe 1994:31   (date of printed ed.)

If a website does not indicate the date the source was written or uploaded, you may cite it by the date you accessed it. This is not ideal, but it is better than citing it as "no date". If you accessed a dateless online resource on 14 January 2006, you would cite it in-text as 2006.

Where do you locate the date of publication in a book? Usually on the left hand page behind the title page. If you look at this page in Johann Mouton's *How to Succeed at Your Master′s and Doctoral Studies,* this is what you will see:

Published by Van Schaik Publishers
1064 Arcadia Street, Hatfield, Pretoria
All rights reserved
Copyright © 2001
. . .
First edition 2001
Second impression 2001
Third impression 2002
Fourth impression 2003

Which date should you cite? The publication date is the date of the copyright or the edition, in this case 2001. The other dates are simply reprints. If a book has been through more than one edition, you may see something like this:

First edition 1984
Second edition 1993
Third edition 2004

In this instance, cite the latest edition, namely, 2004.

Problems related to *the page*

The purpose of including page numbers is to help readers locate the relevant section of the work cited. Page numbers are not the only way to point readers

towards a particular section of a source. These are variations on the use of page numbers.

In some circumstances, you may omit any reference to a specific part of the source. In these cases, you simply give author and date (e.g., Cook 2004). These are common situations in which this guideline applies:

- You are referring to the whole source rather than to a specific part of it.
- You are citing a work without any page numbers and none of the other guidelines apply.
- You are citing a commentary's discussion of a specific Scripture.

In many sources, section numbers provide an ideal means of referencing. Many documents number sections. I have seen this in web documents, theses, grammars, lexicons and legal works, to name just a few. If a source contains both page and section numbers, you may choose to cite it by page or by section. Use the symbol § to point to a section number.

Example from Strong's lexicon:	Strong 1996:§1499
Example from a dissertation:	Smith 2007:§2.3.2

You may cite a chapter number instead of a page number. This happens in two situations: (a) if you are referring to an entire chapter rather than a specific part of a chapter or (b) if an electronic source has chapters, but not pages. When citing by chapter, use a comma instead of a colon to separate date and chapter number. You may choose to write out the word "chapter" or to abbreviate it as "chap." or "ch.". Here are some examples:

Wilson 2002, chapter 3	or	Wilson 2002, chap. 3
Ndlovu 1997, chapters 3-7	or	Ndlovu 1997, chaps 3-7

When citing lexicons, you can use the latin abbreviation "s.v." (meaning "under the word") followed by the entry. The citation below means you can find the relevant information under the lexicon entry for the word *"eimi"*, section 2.a.

Kirsten 1997, s.v. *eimi* 2.a

Remember, the goal is to help readers find the right part of the source as easily as possible. As a rule, page numbers are the most helpful way to achieve this goal. However, if page numbers are not available or there is a better way to achieve the goal, use another way of pointing readers to the right place.

Some loose ends

There are four loose ends I need to discuss: (a) how to cite Scripture, (b) how to order groups of citations, (c) how to punctuate in-text citations and (d) how often to repeat and in-text citation.

How to cite Scripture

The standard way to cite scriptures is to indicate the book of the Bible followed by the chapter-and-verse like this: Matthew 16:18. Note that the chapter number and verse number are separated by a colon. Here are some important rules for citing Scripture verses:

- In the text of the document, write out the names of Bible books in full; in parentheses, abbreviate the book names. Compare these two examples:

  Matthew 18:16 promises, "If two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven" (NIV).

  The Word of God promises, "If two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven" (Matt 18:16, NIV).

- Whenever you quote directly from a Bible translation, you need to indicate which translation you are using. Use standard abbreviations for this purpose (e.g., NIV for New International Version in the above examples). If you primarily quote from the same translation, after the first quotation add a footnote like this: "Unless otherwise indicated, all scripture quotations are from the New International Version." Then you do not need to add "NIV" when quoting it.

How to order groups of citations

To emphasise that the consensus of scholarly opinion regards Psalms 9-10 as a single poem, the author of the example below cites twelve scholars who concur with that judgement. This is a common practice in academic writing.

> However, Psalms 9-10 were originally a single psalm, so the heading of Psalm 9 subsumes Psalm 10 (so Bratcher and Reyburn 1991; Motyer 1994; Craigie 1998; Broyles 1999; Strugnell and Eshel 2001; Wilcock 2001; Richard 2002; Wilson 2002; Terrien 2003; Miller 2004; Goldingday 2006; Labuschagne 2007).

When you need to cite multiple sources in support of a point, how should you order them? Here are three guidelines:

- You may arrange citations in alphabetical order based on the authors' surnames.
- You may arrange them in chronological order, ascending or descending, based on the dates of publication.
- When citing scriptures, it is standard to list them in canonical order, that is, in the order of the Bible books.

The next aspect we need to discuss is the punctuation of in-text citations.

How to punctuate in-text citations

In ordinary citations consisting of author, date and page, use no punctuation between the author and date, and use a colon between the date and page (e.g., Williams 2002:26). If you substitute a title for an author, use a comma between the title and the date (e.g., The names of God, 2007). When substituting other designations for page numbers, replace the colon with a comma before chapters (e.g., White 2004, chap. 4) and volume numbers (e.g., Wilmot 2003, 4:428), but not before sections (e.g., Woods 2005:§4.2).

Use a simple dash (minus sign; e.g., 12-14) to denote an unbroken series of pages or verses; do not use an em-dash (12—14) or an en-dash (12–14). If the pages or verses are not consecutive, separate them with a comma.

(White 2007:19–34 and 94) is incorrect for two reasons: it uses an en-dash between the page numbers; it uses "and" before the final page number.

(White 2007:19-34, 94) is correct; it points the reader to pages 19-34 as a consecutive sequence as well as to page 94.

(John 14:1-4, 9-10; 15:1, 7, 10) is the proper way to cite selected verses from John 14 and 15.

Separate citations with a semi-colon. Do not separate them with a comma and do not use "and" before the last entry in a series.

Incorrect:	(Smit 1996, Thom 2001 and Williams 2004)
Correct:	(Smit 1996; Thom 2001; Williams 2004)

Incorrect:	(Matt 16:18-21, Luke 14:12-14 and John 8:1-11)
Correct:	(Matt 16:18-21; Luke 14:12-14; John 8:1-11)

When you work extensively with certain sources, how often must you provide a full citation? This is the topic for this chapter.

How often to repeat an in-text citation

When working extensively with a source, how often must you repeat the in-text citation details? *The rule is that you must start fresh in a new paragraph.* When you start a new paragraph, you must provide full citation details from scratch even if you are still referring to the same source as you were in the previous paragraph. The two paragraphs below show correct practice. Although the citation in the second paragraph is from the same source and the same page as the one in the first, it needs to be repeated in full because it occurs in a new paragraph.

Van Wyk (2001:43) explains that there are three ways we might interpret Psalm 6: as a composite of two fragments, namely, verses 1-7 and 8-10; as the prayer of a sick king whose enemies are exploiting his crisis; or as a national prayer in

which the allusions to illness are metaphors for national suffering.

"In my view," declares Van Wyk (2001:43), "the evidence favours the second option." He offers four reasons for this view. First . . . .

Within the same paragraph, these rules apply:

● If a different citation does not intervene, it is not necessary to repeat the citation for subsequent references. If it comes from the same page (or verse or section), the second quotation needs *no* citation; the original citation is assumed to apply. If the second citation refers to a different place, only the new page (or verse or section) number needs to be given. This can be done using the following abbreviations: p. for one page, pp. for than one; v. for one verse, vv. for more than one; § for one section, §§ for more than one.

p. 14 = page 14   pp. 14-19 = pages 14-19
v. 7 = verse 7   vv. 7-11 = verses 7-11
§14.1 = section 14.1   §§14.1-3 = sections 14.1 to 14.3

● If a different citation intervenes, you must provide enough of the citation to make clear what you are citing. The situation occurs when you cite source A, then source B, then source A again. For the second citation from source A, you may give only the name and page number as long as this leaves no doubt about the source's date. If there is any potential for ambiguity, provide a full citation.

Mills (2007:144) announced, "A literal interpretation of Genesis 1-3 is no longer tenable." In response to Garrison's (2003:13-27) "case for a literal interpretation", Mills claims that "Dawkins has proved the foolishness of belief in creation" (p. 152).

Conclusion

This chapter has been a brief introduction to an important topic, namely, how to cite sources. The preferred method is *in-text citation,* which is less space consuming and less disruptive than footnotes. Each in-text citation should answer three questions: Who? When? Where? In most citations, these correspond to author, date and page, but there are many variations on the standard citation.