

Research Info

When a person or a group writes an article or book or website, he or she or it has what is called **Intellectual Property**. What is written and published belongs to the author or authors.

If you are a person with **ethics** (what Mother Estes defines as “values in action”), you do not want to steal that person’s Intellectual Property and pretend it is yours (called **plagiarism**). No, as an ethical student, you want to give that author credit for his or her work.

You do this by citing your sources at the end of a research paper or project. When you arrange the information about your source in a specific order, it is called a citation. A list of citations is called a “Works Cited” page.

Every educational institution has a preferred method of citation. At St. Andrew’s, our teachers prefer the MLA method. MLA is an acronym for Modern Language Association. This association is constantly coming up with ways to help students and teachers give authors credit for their Intellectual Property, whatever media (print or electronic), the author has used.

Citing a book, printed magazine, or an electronic database article is usually pretty simple since the information you need: title of article, title of book or magazine, date of publication, name of publisher – is readily available. World Book online and SIRS Discoverer even give you the correct citation at the bottom of each article.

Citing a website gets a little trickier since you have to decide if the website is **credible** (believable and reliable), and the information you need may be difficult to discover. The harder it is to find this information: *title of article, author or editor, website title, publisher or sponsor, date of publication or date the site was updated – the more wary you should be about using it!

Using a search engine, like Webpath Express or Sweetsearch, which contains sites that are teacher-approved, is a great idea for a beginning researcher. If you find a website on your own, use this checklist to see if it is credible:

Is it a personal page? If yes, is the author an expert or authority?

Is the domain appropriate? (edu or gov)

Does the publisher make sense...New York Times, Tulane University, etc.?

When was the website last updated?

What kinds of links are on the page? Are they all advertising? Do they work?

Is this an original source? Remember, it is very easy to cut & paste in today’s electronic environment. You do not want to give credit to someone who has stolen Intellectual Property.

Is there a bias? A researcher wants to uncover facts and then draw his or her own conclusions before forming an opinion.

Can you find all of the information that you need to cite this site? *

Once you have all the information you need to cite your source, it is very easy to generate a Works Cited page in MLA format. Check the library’s homepage for an Easy Bib or Citation maker link.