Indirect Sources

When you use research material from one source that you’ve located in another, you are relying on secondhand information that you must cite as an indirect source. For example, when you decide to “use a quotation that is already in quotation marks—indicating that the author you are reading is quoting someone else,” then your citation must indicate that the quotation does not come from the original source.¹

If you paraphrase the quotation, rather than quote it word for word, you must also cite it as an indirect source. Whenever possible, avoid using such secondhand information by going to the original source to confirm the accuracy of the material and to place it in its initial context. In writing a research paper, you are responsible for evaluating your research material, so you should use indirect sources sparingly and only when the original source is unavailable.

Citing Indirect Sources in a Research Paper

**MLA Style**

*In-Text Citation:*
Larry McMurtry observes that “the highways seem to be where frontier individualism is making its last-ditch stand” (qtd. in Trimble 139).

The term “qtd. in” is used to specify that the quotation from McMurtry was found in Trimble. Only the bibliographic information for Trimble is given in the list of works cited.

*Works Cited Entry:*

**APA Style**

*In-Text Citation:*
Hanushek and Woessmann conclude that a nation’s economic growth depends upon its quality of education (as cited in Breton, 2011).

The phrase “as cited in” is used to specify that the reference to Hanushek and Woessmann’s study was found in Breton. Only the bibliographic information for Breton is given in the reference list.

*Reference List Entry:*

**Turabian – Notes-Bibliography Style**

*In-Text Citation:*  
Accomplished writers know that “revising is part of writing.”²

*Footnote or Endnote:*  

In the note, the phrase “quoted in” is used to specify that the quotation from Strunk and White was found in Williams. The bibliographic information for Strunk and White and for Williams is also given in the bibliography entry where the phrase “Quoted in” is used to specify that the quotation from Strunk and White was found in Williams.

*Bibliography Entry:*  

**Turabian – Author-Date Style**

*In-Text Citation:*  
Accomplished writers know that “revising is part of writing” (Strunk and White 1979, 72).

In the parenthetical citation, only the name, year of publication, and relevant page number(s) of the original source are given. However, in the reference list entry, the bibliographic information for Strunk and White and for Williams is given. The phrase “Quoted in” is used to specify that the quotation from Strunk and White was found in Williams.

*Reference List Entry:*  

**Contact**

Want to talk about citing an indirect source in your paper? Come work with a tutor at the Writing Center! Drop by or use the information below to contact us and set up an appointment.

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