

Citation Guides and Style Manuals for Government Publications

This is a list of some of the major style manuals, as well as the simplest and quickest ways to figure out how to cite a given publication.

A Shortcut: The Modeling Technique

Often you will find that one citation in the correct format can be used as a model for all other citations of the same type of publication. For instance, if you have a citation to a congressional hearing, whether one you created yourself or one you found online or in a published book or article, you can copy the format to create citations of other congressional hearings.

A Shortcut: Suggested Citation within a Document

Occasionally the publication itself will offer a suggested citation, usually on the front or back of the title page, or linked from a menu bar in a Web page. When available, this is by far the quickest easiest way to obtain a citation, but some adjustments may be necessary to make the citation match the requirements of your style manual.

For example, this sample from a National Center for Health Statistics publication appears to use the AMA style, which is recommended for publications in the medical and public health fields:

Suggested citation

Blackwell DL, Lucas JW, Clarke TC. Summary health statistics for U.S. adults: National Health Interview Survey, 2012. National Center for Health Statistics. Vital Health Stat 10(260). 2014.

General Style Manuals and Citation Guides

American Psychological Association. *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association: The Official Guide to APA Style*. 7th ed. Washington, DC: APA, 2020.

There are a few examples of citations to government publications scattered through this manual. They can be found by looking under "Government Agencies" in the index.

Modern Language Association of America. *MLA Handbook*. 8th ed. New York: MLA, 2016.

A few examples of government document citations are listed under information on corporate authors at page 25 and in section 2.1.3 (Corporate Authors) on pages 104 to 105.

The **MLA Style Center** website has a few sample citations for government publications enter the keyword "government" in the search box): <https://style.mla.org/>

Turabian, Kate L. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers*. Revised by Wayne C. Booth et al. 9th ed. (2018). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2018.

Simplified presentation of Chicago style for high school and college students. Most of the information pertinent to citing government publications can be found in the following sections:

- Notes-Bibliography Style: 17.11: Public Documents (213–222).
- Author-Date Style: 19.11: Public Documents (pp. 281–289).

Sample citations are available online at <https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/turabian.html>

University of Chicago. *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 17th ed. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2017.

Subscribers can browse or search this entire manual online at

<https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html>

Relatively extensive discussions of how to cite government documents and legal materials in the following sections:

- Notes-Bibliography Style: 14.269–305: Legal and Public Documents (pp. 875–890).
- Author-Date Style: 15.58: Legal and Public Documents (p. 921).
- Citing periodicals: 14.164 to 14.204: Periodicals (pp. 828–844).

Chicago-Style Quick Guide for Government Documents (Bowdoin College Library)

<https://library.bowdoin.edu/research/chicago-gov.pdf>

Uses citation elements from the more detailed 15th edition of the Chicago Manual, but incorporating the URL, access date, and “look and feel” from the 17th edition.

Citation Machine (a Chegg Service)

<https://www.citationmachine.net/apa>

Creates citations in thousands of different styles based on information entered into a form. Select “More/Government Publication” to generate a citation for a government publication, or select “Website” to cite a government website.

Citation Machine — Resources and Guides provides brief explanations and sample citations in APA, MLA, and Chicago style: <https://www.citationmachine.net/resources/>

CiteSource (Trinity College)

<https://courseguides.trincoll.edu/c.php?g=448378&p=3060109>

Provides numbered templates in a number of different styles—just fill in the information for each numbered element, follow the suggested punctuation and typography, and you have a citation. Some templates are based on older editions, so you may need to compare with more recent editions to be up to date.

CiteFast

<https://www.citefast.com/>

Generates a citation in APA, MLA, or Chicago style based on a title you have entered in.

Select “Style Guide” from the top menu bar, then “Government Publication” or “Website” from the side menu to see a list of sample citations for government publications.

Purdue OWL (Online Writing Lab at Purdue University)

<https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/>

Provides concise summaries of APA, MLA, Chicago, and other styles, and also provides many sample citations for each style, instructions on writing a paper, and other useful resources.

Government Information Citation Guides

These are style manuals and guides to citing government documents and other government information.

Garner, Diane L. and Diane H. Smith, *The Complete Guide to Citing Government Information Resources: A Manual for Social Science & Business Research*. Revised by Debora Cheney. 3rd ed. Bethesda, MD: Congressional Information Service, 2002.

The most comprehensive guide to citing government publications. Format is based on ANSI/NISO standard for bibliographic references (see link below) and may need to be adapted.

Part 1, "Quick Citation Guides" (pp. 7–74) provides sample citations for almost every type of government document you would ever need to cite. Many more sample citations are included throughout the book, where the Garner/Smith citation rules are described in greater detail.

Originally published in 1984 as *The Complete Guide to Citing Government Documents: A Manual for Writers and Librarians*, by Diane L. Garner and Diane H. Smith.

A 2nd edition was prepared by the American Library Association's Government Documents Round Table (GODORT) and published in 1993 as *The Complete Guide to Citing Government Information Resources: A Manual for Writers and Librarians*. It included a new chapter on electronic resources by Debora Cheney and a chapter on foreign government resources by Helen Sheehy. This edition is summarized online at the University of Indiana — Bloomington's "Citing U.S. Government Publications" web page: <https://libraries.indiana.edu/guide-citing-us-government-publications>

Current ANSI Standards: **ANSI/NISO Standard Z39.29—2005** (R2010), "Bibliographic References," https://groups.niso.org/apps/group_public/download.php/12969/Z39_29_2005_R2010.pdf. "This standard provides rules, guidelines, and examples for the creation of bibliographic references to numerous types of print, audiovisual, and electronic materials, both published and unpublished, arranged in fifteen broad categories. The bibliographic references should result in the unique identification of most print and non-print materials. This standard is intended for a broad audience, including the creators of bibliographic references, the processors who publish and otherwise display references, and the ultimate users of the references."

U.S. Government Publishing Office. *GPO Style Manual: An Official Guide to the Form and Style of Federal Government Publishing, 2016*. Official U.S. Government Edition. Washington, DC.: GPO, 2016. Available at: <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/GPO-STYLEMANUAL-2016/pdf/GPO-STYLEMANUAL-2016.pdf>

See Chapter 2, section **2.128 (Bibliographies or References)** for suggestions on how to cite government documents.

Brown, Christopher C. *Mastering United States Government Information: Sources and Services*. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, LLC, 2020.

Chapter 17, "Citing Government Publications" (pp. 372–381) provides up-to-date sample citations for many of the most frequently-cited types of government publications.

Hartnett, Cassandra J., Andrea Severson, and Eric J. Forte. *Fundamentals of Government Information: Mining, Finding, Evaluating, and Using Government Resources*. Chicago: ALA Neal-Schuman, 2016.

For general principles of citing government information and a description of the most useful style manuals, see “**Citation and Style Manuals**” on pages 40 to 44.

Online Government Document Style and Citation Resources

American Memory Citation Guide (Library of Congress)

<https://memory.loc.gov/ammem/amlaw/lwcite.html>

Sample citations in Bluebook or Chicago style of historical legislative materials in the American Memory online collection.

Citation Guide (Dudley Knox Library at Naval Postgraduate School)

<https://libguides.nps.edu/citation>

Provides sample citations of government and military documents in several styles. Select a style from the menu bar at the top of the page, then select “Government/Military Documents”

Common Military Reference List Examples (Walden University Writing Center)

<https://academicguides.waldenu.edu/writingcenter/apa/references/military>

Sample citations for Army regulations, military manuals, internal memos, and other types of documents used in the military. Appears to be using APA style.

ProQuest® Congressional Help - How to Cite

https://congressional.proquest.com/help/congressional/gh_howtocite.html

Sample citations for many types of paper and online congressional publications and legal materials. Examples are adapted from Garner/Smith style or Bluebook style as appropriate.

Style Guides by Government Agencies (Digital.gov)

<https://digital.gov/resources/style-guides-by-government-agencies/>

Many government agencies have created their own style manuals to guide employees who write and prepare their publications. Some of these agency style manuals give advice on how to cite government documents.

Government Agency Citation Guides

Many government agencies provide advice on how to cite their publications and data. If you don't see a particular agency listed here, search the agency website for the term “citing” or “citation” to see if that agency has similar guidance.

Census: <https://www.census.gov/about/policies/citation.html>

National Center for Health Statistics: <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/citations.htm>

National Institute on Drug Abuse: <https://www.drugabuse.gov/about-nida/contact-us/citation>

National Institute of Mental Health: <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/site-info/citing-nimh-information-and-publications.shtml>

Citing Datasets

Data citation is the practice of referencing data used in research. A data citation includes key descriptive information about the data, such as the title, source, and responsible parties.

Ball, Alex, and Monica Duke. *How to Cite Datasets and Link to Publications*. Edinburgh: Digital Curation Centre, 2015. (DCC How-to Guides). Available at: <https://www.dcc.ac.uk/guidance/how-guides/cite-datasets>

The section entitled "Data Citation for Authors" discusses how to construct a data citation and use it in a research paper: <https://www.dcc.ac.uk/guidance/how-guides/cite-datasets#sec:for-authors>

Data Citation (U.S. Geological Survey)

<https://www.usgs.gov/products/data-and-tools/data-management/data-citation>

Discusses the elements of a typical data citation, suggests best practices for citing data and provides examples of properly formatted data citations.

Data Citation Synthesis Group. *Joint Declaration of Data Citation Principles*. Edited by Maryann Martone. San Diego, CA: FORCE11, 2014. Available at: <https://www.force11.org/group/joint-declaration-data-citation-principles-final>.

Guiding principles for citing data within scholarly literature, another dataset, or any other research object. Includes sample citations at <https://www.force11.org/node/4771>

Citing Legal Materials

These are style manuals and citation guides that describe how to cite bills, statutes, regulations, court cases, and other legal documents.

Prince, Mary Miles, coordinating ed. *The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation*. Compiled by the editors of the *Columbia Law Review*, the *Harvard Law Review*, the *University of Pennsylvania Law Review*, and *The Yale Law Journal*. 20th ed. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Law Review Association, 2015.

The most common format for citing legal materials such as bills, statutes, regulations, and court opinions. Style is suitable for notes and in-text citations, but may need to be adapted for use in reference lists. See individual style manuals for specifics of how to cite legal materials in that style.

The **Quick Reference** pages inside the front and back covers provide sample citations for the most commonly cited legal publications.

Texas Law Review Association. *The Greenbook: Texas Rules of Form*. 13th ed. Austin, TX: University of Texas at Austin School of Law, 2015.

Intended primarily as a supplement to *The Bluebook* to address citation problems unique to Texas.

Online Legal Citation Guides

Basic Legal Citation, by Peter W. Martin (Cornell Legal Information Institute)

<https://www.law.cornell.edu/citation/>

Provides sample citations of legal materials in *Bluebook* and related styles. Based on a thorough review of the actual citation practices of judges and lawyers, the relevant rules of appellate practice of federal and state courts, and the latest edition of *The Bluebook*.

Includes cross-references to *The Bluebook*, the *ALWD Guide to Legal Citation*, state-specific manuals, and other authorities.

Supplementary materials include a set of video tutorials on legal citation and a blog discussing current issues in legal citation.

Bluebook Guide (Georgetown Law Library)

<https://guides.ll.georgetown.edu/bluebook/>

Provides an overview of how the *Bluebook* is organized and how to use it. Includes sample citations for cases, statutes, and a few other types of resources. Some short video tutorials explain basic concepts of legal citation.

Bluebook Legal Citation: A Guide to Legal Citation Using Bluebook Rules (Tarlton Law Library)

<https://tarlton.law.utexas.edu/bluebook-legal-citation>

Provides an overview and sample citations of a wide variety of materials in Bluebook style.

The Greenbook is a supplementary page with sample citations of Texas laws in Greenbook style:

<https://tarlton.law.utexas.edu/bluebook-legal-citation/greenbook>

Citing Maps

Kollen, Christine, Wangyal Shawa, and Mary Larsgaard. *Cartographic Citations: A Style Guide*. 2nd ed. Chicago: American Library Association, Map and Geography Round Table, 2010. (MAGERT Print Publication Series).

Based on the *Chicago Manual of Style*, 16th edition. May need to be adapted for use with other styles.

Sample citations in this style (although based on the first edition of 1992) are available online at the NC State University Libraries "Citing Maps" web page: <https://www.lib.ncsu.edu/maps/citingmaps>

Citing Archival Materials and Other Unpublished Works

Unpublished works usually lack the usual information that appears in a citation, and access to them is often restricted. These resources offer advice in making unpublished works more accessible to the public.

Citing Records in the National Archives of the United States (NARA)

<https://www.archives.gov/files/publications/general-info-leaflets/17-citing-records.pdf>

Citing Primary Sources (U.S. Library of Congress)

<https://www.loc.gov/teachers/usingprimarysources/citing.html>

Texas State Archives Citation Form (Texas State Library and Archives Commission)

<https://www.tsl.texas.gov/arc/citation.html>