



# CITATIONS MADE SIMPLE (I HOPE 😊)

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## Genealogical Standards for Documentation<sup>1</sup>

1. Covers the purposes of citations
2. Defines the scope with which citations should be used
3. Identifies how/when they should be used
4. Delineates the citation style/format to be used
5. Describes the essential elements of a citation
6. Explains the use of short-form citations
7. Defines the safeguards required to prevent the separation of citations from the statement or fact they document when transmitting or storing document materials

## Why use citations?

1. To identify all sources examined and all information (including images) derived from a source
2. To connect one or more sources to each -
  - a. Fact that is not common knowledge
  - b. Image used of someone else's creation
  - c. Conclusion made – including each parent-child link.

## Genealogy Citation Style

1. *Chicago Manual of Style*. 17<sup>th</sup> ed. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2017. URL: [www.ChicagoManualofStyle.org](http://www.ChicagoManualofStyle.org)
2. Elizabeth Shown Mills. *Evidence Explained citing History Sources from Artifacts to Cyberspace*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Company, 2024. URL: <https://www.evidenceexplained.com>

## Type of Citations

1. Reference Notes
  - a. Document the source(s) of specific information: facts, images, statements, and conclusions
  - b. Give credit to others for their words, ideas, or intellectual or physical property
  - c. Typically placed as footnotes or endnotes
  - d. May include comments relevant to the source
2. Shortened Reference Notes
  - a. Used AFTER a source has been previously cited, in full, as a complete reference note.
  - b. Do not require repetition of the full name of author, title of the source, or information pertaining to the publisher (or the URL).

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<sup>1</sup> Board of Certification of Genealogists (BCG), *Genealogy Standards*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., revised (Nashville, Tenn.: Ancestry.com, 2021) 5-9.

3. Source List (AKA Reference List or Bibliography)
  - a. General list of sources consulted, general references related to the topic, or a simple reading list.
  - b. Do not document specific statements, facts, conclusions, or citation author's comments pertaining to the source or its information.
  - c. Usually do not point to specific pages or items in the cited reference/source.
4. Source Labels
  - a. Attachment of a physical or virtual label to a stand-alone source or "container". Examples: Family artifacts, documents, photographs.
  - b. Ideally placed on the front of the object to prevent loss of the information during copying or digitization.
  - c. Prevents the separation of citations from the statement or fact they document when sharing/transferring, transmitting, or storing documented materials.

### **Essential Elements of a Citation – the five Ws**

1. Who: identifies the creator of the information (author, editor, compiler, transcriber, organization)
2. What: identifies the source (title, description of the source, name of the database)
3. When: identifies the date the source was created, published, revised, and/or updated
4. Where is: identifies the origin of the source (publisher, URL, and/or physical location)
5. Wherein: identifies where within the source the specific information is located/found (volume number, page number(s), image number, etc.)

### **Citation Conventions**

1. Brackets [ ]
  - a. Used to denote translations of foreign language not included within the source title. Example: Geburten [Births]
  - b. Indicates information or clarification inserted by the researcher that was not in the source itself. Examples: [sic] fol. [229]B Geo[.] Lewis
2. *Italicized words*
  - a. Title of publications (including websites)
  - b. Names of ships or other named vehicles
  - c. Italicize the abbreviation *sic*
3. Quotation marks " " - Used around the titles of a part of a publication. Example, Chapter heading, article title in a journal, title of something on a website (title is in quotations, website is italicized)
4. Parentheses ( ) - Used to offset publication details: location, name of publisher (or URL), date published (or URL access date).
5. Colon :
  - a. Separates publisher's location from publisher's name and date of publication
  - b. Separates a work's title from its subtitle. Example: *Historical and biographical album of the Chippewa Valley Wisconsin: including a general historical sketch of the Chippewa Valley; ancestral records ...*
6. Semicolon ; - Separates layers of the citation

7. Commas ,
  - a. Separate elements/components within each layer of the citation
  - b. Separate words in a series. Example: red, white, and blue
8. Greater-than-sign > - Used to separate **way-points** to find on online source. Example: "1880 United States Federal Census," database with images, *Ancestry* (<https://ancestry.com/search/collections/6742/> : 15 Dec 2024) > Iowa > Mitchell > Wayne > 315 > image 12 of 12 . . .

### **Multilayer Citations**

Layer 1: Details about the record

Layer 2: Where to access the record

Final Layer: "Citing" origin and location of the original source from which this record was derived.

### **Sequencing of Citation Components *within each layer***

1. Author/creator – including editor, compiler, transcriber
2. Title (or description) of the work – title of the book, title of a chapter within a book, title of a published article, description of a collection of records (e.g. Birth Records, Death Register, Wills, etc.)

Occasionally you need to repeat no. 1 and 2

1. Author/creator of the work in which this source appears
2. Title of the work in which this source appears

3. Descriptor (for the title), if applicable – examples: thesis, dissertation, blog, span of years, letter, photograph, etc.
4. Specific location – where the source was published (may be the URL for websites)
5. Publisher
6. Date(s) associated with the record – publication date, date website accessed, date revised, date reprinted, etc.
7. Specific item within the source - certificate no., volume, page(s), person, etc.
8. Descriptor and/or date associated with the specific item

*Remember – citations are a researcher's tool and creation.  
Do yourself a favor and err on the side of too much information.*

### Citation Writing Worksheet

Author	
Title or label	
Author	
Title	
Descriptor	
Location	
Publisher (URL)	
Date	
Specific item	
Descriptor	

#### Layer 2

Bridge Word(s)	
Author	
Title or label	
Descriptor	
Location	
Publisher (URL)	
Date	
Specific item	
Descriptor	

#### Final Layer: Citing original source of information in the record and its location

Author	
Title or label	
Descriptor	
Location	
Publisher (URL)	
Date	
Specific item	
Descriptor	