

# Writing in the Disciplines Handout

Created by UW Tacoma faculty

## What citation style should I use?

What kind of course are you in?

Course	Natural Sciences	Psychology	Literature, Art, some Communication courses	Other social science courses (TEGL, THIST) and some Communication courses
Answer	<a href="#">CSE-modified</a> or instructor preference	<a href="#">APA</a>	<a href="#">MLA</a>	<a href="#">Chicago</a> or <a href="#">APA</a> or instructor preference
Explanation	The formatting of bibliographic information varies widely amongst scientific journals, but the Division of SAM has chosen CSE as a default format. Typically, author/s last name/s and year of publication are used for	APA uses author/s last name/s and year of publication for in-text citations of paraphrased information (Author, 2018). In the instance of a direct quotation (rarely used) the page number is also included (Author, 2018, p. 100). Both author and year	MLA uses author names and page numbers for in-text citations because when analyzing a novel, for example, it matters more for readers to be able to find the exact passage the person is analyzing than to have other information (such	The Chicago formatting style has two systems: the footnotes/endnotes with bibliography; or an author/date in-text citation with reference list attached. Chicago uses footnotes because historians often cite numerous source documents, and they

	<p>in-text citations. Page numbers are not needed in text as most cited literature should be short primary research articles.</p> <p>Example: (Morrison 2018)</p>	<p>are included to help the reader identify the source and because APA values information that is current.</p>	<p>as what year the article, commentary, or novel was written).</p> <p>Example: (Morrison 27)</p>	<p>want their claims to be tied to explicit evidence without the reader losing track of the narrative. Both author and year are included to help the reader identify the source; the year situates the information in the record of publications.</p>
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# When should I use quotations?

What type of assignment or genre are you writing?

<b>Examples of types of assignments or genres</b>	<b>Natural scientific manuscript/lab report</b>	<b>Literature review</b>	<b>Film scene analysis</b>	<b>Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods research interviews; short commentaries</b>
<b>Answer</b>	NEVER (unless the data you are analyzing are quotes)	Quotations are rarely used. Rely on paraphrasing.	When quoting character dialogue that you wish to analyze.(You should also cite secondary criticism.)	Quotations should be used only to support your argument.
<b>Explanation</b>	In the sciences, only data are considered evidence. In the Results section, data are presented without interpretation. In the Discussion, it is author's interpretation of the data that is reported.	In the social sciences, the author (you) is expected to make their own interpretations of the literature, not report someone else's interpretation.	In order to understand your argument about a character's actions, feelings, or motivations in a scene, it helps readers to hear that character's dialogue directly (instead of in paraphrase).	You are expected to make your argument in your own words and paraphrase the argument of other authors. You should use direct quotes sparingly to provide direct evidence for your argument.

# How should I use the first person / “I”?

What type of assignment or genre are you writing?

Examples of types of assignments or genres	Natural scientific manuscript/Lab report	Literacy narrative	Commentary/Opinion paper
<b>Answer</b>	Discipline specific (ask your instructor)	“I” can be used frequently.	“I” can be used frequently.
<b>Explanation</b>	Because it generally improves clarity, there has been a shift towards allowing 1st person (“I” or “we”) writing, particularly in the Introduction and Methods of manuscripts where authors describe why and how the study was conducted. In mathematics, “we” is most frequently used, as the author and reader notice things together. Some instructors will prefer the traditional 3rd person approach.	Because you are narrating your experiences with reading, writing, or other sites of literacy, it is necessary to use your personal experience as evidence and to refer to yourself in the first person (“I”).	When writing a commentary on a text/film or social phenomena, the “I” allows you to own your own opinion and include yourself in the text. The first-person subjective experience is provided with the “I”.

## How should I use active or passive voice?

What type of assignment or genre are you writing?

<b>Examples of types of assignments or genres</b>	<b>Natural scientific manuscript/Lab report</b>	<b>Social science and Humanities papers</b>
<b>Answer</b>	Usually active voice. Discipline specific (ask your instructor)	You should generally avoid using the passive voice.
<b>Explanation</b>	The active voice typically allows for more concise writing and is therefore increasingly favored by scientific journals. But traditionally, scientific manuscripts were written in the passive voice. Some instructors still prefer the passive voice in sections such as Procedures because passive voice emphasizes what was done rather than who did it.	The active voice typically allows for more concise writing. The passive does not state the person or thing responsible for the action and can therefore create uncertainty. The passive could be used in cases when the author intentionally wants to be vague or wants to emphasize the direct source of action (click to learn more about <a href="#">active voice</a> ).

*Created by Leighann Chaffee, Jeremy Davis, Margaret Griesse, LeAnne Laux-Bachand, and Ben Meiches in collaboration with UWT's School of Interdisciplinary Arts & Sciences and Writing Center staff, Fall 2018.*