Creating a Works Cited Page

So you have to write a paper for a class and your instructor is demanding that you include a Works Cited page. You are not even sure what a Works Cited page is, let alone why you have to cite your sources. Before you hit that panic button, here are some answers to those questions and some tips to make your Works Cited page the easiest page of your paper.

What is a Works Cited page? Simply put, it is a page in a paper or article (usually the last page) that lists all the sources used. There are four popular formats (MLA, APA, Turabian, and Chicago), each with their own rules on punctuation and setup. MLA is by far the easiest to use, but please check with your instructor to discover which one you need to use. OK, that explains what a Works Cite page is, but why must you cite your sources?

There are many reasons why you need to cite your sources; some of the more important reasons are:

* To give clues to your readers so they can find the sources you used to do further reading.
* To avoid plagiarism.
* To show understanding of the material you have read.
* To support ideas in your paper.
* To distinguish your analysis of what you've read from the author's analyses

HINT: When citing a source use CITATION MAKER. A direct link to this can be found on the LRC homepage. A simple electronic source, just let the program know what format you are using, what you are trying to cite, and fill in the form. Hit submit and copy and paste to your Works Cited Page.

HINT: If you use something from the Databases on the LRC site and are using MLA, choose the MORE option on the second page. From the expanded list, choose “Works from a subscription service accessed through a library” for the correct form.
Plagiarism, what’s that? It is claiming another author’s work as your own, and it is a form of stealing! You can commit plagiarism intentionally by copying from a book or article and pasting it into your paper or by paraphrasing incorrectly. If you intentionally copy and paste from another’s work, your instructor will find out and you may fail the assignment, the class, or be expelled!

Paraphrasing incorrectly can also get you in trouble. You will need to state the information used in your own words. More that just changing a few words, you really need to state the information in your own ‘voice’, using vocabulary you would normally use (and understand). If you use words that you do not fully understand, it will be noticeable to your reader and make the paragraph awkward to read.

**HINT:** If you need help paraphrasing a passage, ask your instructor or friendly librarian for help!

When using a quote or idea from another’s work you will need to include a Parenthetical Citation. A parenthetical citation needs to clearly point out which one of source from your Works Cited page you used for this information. At the end of the sentence or paragraph you put the author’s last name and the page number (s) in quotes (Jones, 6-8) after the period. If you have more than one source with the same last name or are using more than one source by the same author, you need to clearly point out which source you are referring to. You can do this by using the first couple words or a distinct word of the title of the source you are using (ex: (Frogs, 6-8) after the period.

**HINT:** When in doubt, cite! It will avoid confusion and keep your ideas separate from your sources and help your instructor distinguish between your analysis and another’s work.

OK, now you know why you include a Works Cited page, how do you write one? Format of the page depends on which citing style you are using. You may check the reference section of the Learning Resource Center for books on each style for exact requirements, but here are some ground rules to get you started:

- Your page will have 1 inch margins and 1 inch header and footer.
- The words Works Cited should appear 1 inch from the top, centered, with the W and C capitalized.
- The first listing should be double spaced down from the title; there should be double spacing between each listing.
- The listings should be in alphabetical order by author’s last name. If the author is unknown, alphabetize by the first word of the title ignoring any initial A, An, or The.

**HINT:** Keep a running Works Cited page! As you start your research, create a Works Cited page. When you find a source, cite it and include it on the page. When you finish
writing your paper, you can then alphabetize your list and be done. It is much easier to erase a source if you decide not to use it than it is to go back after finishing your paper to find your sources again.

So now you should understand the importance of a Works Cited page, and citing your sources. If you use these simple tips, you can throw away that panic button and work towards making that paper easier to write. Check out the pages on Tips to Writing, Research Hints, and Evaluating Sources for more help on completing your paper. Remember your friendly librarian is always here to help.