The Art and Science of Good Writing

Good writing allows your voice to be heard and respected. Be clear and direct. Your papers should reflect careful and patient analysis, so use language and style that help to communicate that to your reader.

When using sources, avoid:

- excessive quotation
- reliance on too few sources
- excessive paraphrasing
- failing to acknowledge a source
- ambiguous footnotes

Citing biblical texts:

When referring to a biblical text in a sentence, write out the full name of the book, then use numbers to show chapter and verse...

“In Matthew 5:1-11, Jesus begins by focusing on…”

Not: “In Matthew chapter five verses one through eleven…”
Not: “In Matt. 5…”

When quoting or paraphrasing a biblical text, give the proper reference in parentheses following the sentence. Use standard abbreviations and numbers)...

“The opening verses of John echo another beginning: “In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth…” (Gen. 1:1).

If your sentence already clearly indicates what book of the Bible you are discussing, then the parenthetical reference should provide whatever information is missing in the sentence...

“The rhetorical high point of 1 Corinthians is the hymn to love (ch. 13).”
The period always goes after the parenthetical reference at the end of the sentence.
Footnotes, Parenthetical References, and Bibliographies, oh my!

For papers where you will be citing sources, you have two options:

1. In-Text Citations/Parenthetical References

   The landowner’s behavior violates the tenets of fairness because “justice requires even more generosity for those who have labored the whole day” (Scott, 296).

Or:

   Scott argues that “justice requires even more generosity for those who have labored the whole day” (296).

2. Footnotes

   The landowner’s behavior violates the tenets of fairness because “justice requires even more generosity for those who have labored the whole day.”

Or:

   Scott argues that true justice demands that the landowner extend more generosity to those who have worked for him since the earliest hours of the day.

These are examples of citations following MLA format for a book with one author. There are many, many more types of sources available to you, and it’s important to follow the guidelines for each particular type of source.

An excellent online resource is Purdue’s Online Writing Lab:

https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/1/

It has examples from almost every type of source, as well as explanations and examples of Bibliographies and Works Cited pages.

When in doubt, ask your professor and follow their guidelines.

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