

Recognizing Intellectual Property

Intellectual property

The first column shows the types of information that are considered intellectual property. The second column gives an example from a student essay using and citing a source with the MLA style of documentation.

Type of information	Examples with appropriate citations
Any <i>exact</i> words from a published source (even if the source provides a fact)	In-text citation Luis N. Rivera writes, “Five hundred years ago, thanks to the nautical audacity and cosmographical ignorance of an Italian mariner . . . the Atlantic Ocean ceased to be a divider and became the waterway connection between Europe, Africa, and the Americas” (270). Works cited entry Rivera, Luis N. <i>A Violent Evangelism</i> . Westminster John Knox Press, 1992.
Any original ideas from a published source—even if you’ve paraphrased the source (written the information in your own words)	In-text citation Historian Paul Gordon Lauren shows that even though the First World War did not seem to be about race at first, a number of racial issues had surfaced by the time the war ended in 1918 (75). Works cited entry Lauren, Paul Gordon. <i>Power and Prejudice</i> . 2nd ed., Westview Press, 1996.
Results of a study	In-text citation One study showed that cutting down trees that have been burned in forest fires prevents new trees from growing in the area (Donato et al. 352). Works cited entry Donato, D. C., et al. “Post-Wildfire Logging Hinders Regeneration and Increases Fire Risk.” <i>Science</i> , vol. 311, no. 5759, 2006, p. 352.
Statistics	In-text citation Gore writes, “In 1988, the EPA reported that the ground water in thirty-two states was contaminated with seventy-four different agricultural chemicals, including one, herbicide atrazine, that is classified as a potential human carcinogen” (xxii-xxiii). Works cited entry Gore, Al. Introduction. <i>Silent Spring</i> , by Rachel Carson, Houghton Mifflin, 1994, pp. xv-xxvi.
Theories	In-text citation While many linguists have argued that language is a “cultural invention,” Steven Pinker claims that language is an “instinct”; he writes that it is “not a cultural artifact” but “a distinct piece of the biological makeup of our brains” (4). Works cited entry Pinker, Steven. <i>The Language Instinct</i> . Harper Perennial, 2000.

Source: Hacker Handbooks (Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2016, 2007).



Not intellectual property

The first column shows the types of information that are *not* considered intellectual property and that may be used in a paper without citing a source. The second column gives examples of each type.

Type of information	Examples
Well-known historical, scientific, or cultural facts	Christopher Columbus sailed across the Atlantic Ocean in 1492. World War I ended in 1918. Forest fires are sometimes caused by lightning. Rachel Carson wrote <i>Silent Spring</i> .
Broad, general observations	Many languages are spoken in the United States. Some students tend to have more motivation than others. Many US residents own cars and computers.

NOTE: For types of information not on this list, check with your instructor or your school's writing center to determine whether you need to cite the source. When in doubt, you are always safe to cite the source.