

# Citing Scripture



This handout gives basic information on citing scripture according to the MLA, Chicago/Turabian, and APA formats. Although this handout focuses mainly on citing the Bible and the Book of Mormon, the guidelines provided apply generally to religious works (e.g., the Qur'an or Bhagavad Gita) with chapters and verses, or similar components, standardized across versions and translations. Other religious texts, such as the words of current religious leaders, are cited according to media type: book, magazine, website, etc.

This handout is based on *MLA Handbook* (eighth edition), *The Chicago Manual of Style* (seventeenth edition) and the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (sixth edition). For each topic below, the corresponding handbook section is listed in parentheses. While this handout provides general guidelines, writers should always tailor their work to their audience and assignment.

## Chicago and Turabian

**Two Citation Styles:** There are two styles for citing sources in Chicago: the author-date system and the notes-bibliography system. Examples of both are included in this handout, but religious and historical papers usually require a notes-bibliography citation style. **Note:** Citing scripture is the same in Chicago and Turabian formats.

### Note-Bibliography System (14.238–14.241)

**Footnotes or Endnote Citations:** The first note includes the full or abbreviated name of the book (10:44-48 addresses abbreviations in detail), chapter, verse, and version. Separate the chapter and verse with a colon. A range of verses is marked with an en dash. The version (if applicable) follows the chapter and verse and is put in parentheses. Subsequent notes list only the book, chapter, and verse.

**First reference in text:** Nephi decided to “go and do.”<sup>1</sup>

**First note:** 1. 1 Ne. 3:7 (The Book of Mormon)

**First Note:** 2. 1 Thess. 4:11 (The King James Version) **OR** 2. 1 Thess. 4:11 (KJV)

**Shortened Note:** 2. 1 Thess. 4:11

**In-Text Citations:** Nephi’s brothers were angry with him (1 Ne. 3:28).

### Author-Date System (15.34)

**In-Text Citations:** In-text citations should be adapted from notes-bibliography format, setting the parentheses and replacing original parentheses of the citation in brackets.

**Examples:** (John 4:1-4 [NRSV])  
(Hel. 5:1)

### Bibliography or Reference List Format

Sacred works are not required in the bibliography or reference list. If a citation is requested, follow this format: *Title and Version*. Year of Publication. City of Publication: Publisher.

**Examples:** *The Bible: Authorized King James version*. 1998. Oxford: Oxford University Press.  
*The Book of Mormon*. 2000. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

## APA Format (6.18)

**In-Text Citations:** An APA in-text citation will include the abbreviated book name, chapter, verse, and version (the King James Version for example). The version only needs to be included in the first citation. The name of the version or edition will follow the scriptural reference.

**Initial citation:** 1 Cor. 13:1 (King James Version)

**Subsequent citations:** (2 Cor. 10:2)

**Reference Citation Format:** Sacred works such as the Bible do not need to be included in the references.

## MLA Format (3.3.2 and 2.3)

**In-Text Citations (3.3.2):** MLA in-text citations include the title of the sacred work, the book, the chapter, and the verse. Abbreviate the name of the book and use a period to separate the chapter and verse. The title of the sacred work must be included in your first citation but is left out of subsequent citations. Italicize the title of the sacred work only when referring to a specific version.

**Note:** In the event that the editor or translator's name is listed as the first element in the works cited entry (instead of the title), use the editor or translator's last name in the in-text citation.

**Initial citation:** (*The King James Version Bible*, Rev. 4.6-8) **OR** (The Bible, Rev. 4.6-8)

**Subsequent citations:** (Rev. 5.7)

**Initial citation:** (The Book of Mormon, 1 Ne. 3.7)

**Subsequent citations:** (Hel. 3.7-9)

**Works Cited Format (3.3.2, 2.3):** Include the published title, the edition (if applicable), the publisher, and the year of publication. If applicable, include the editor/translator. If the text has multiple editions or versions, like the King James Version of the Bible, italicize the title: *The Bible*, but not the version: Authorized King James Version.

**No Other Editions:** *The Book of Mormon*. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2006.

**Specific Edition:** *The Bible*. The New Oxford Annotated Version, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., Oxford UP, 2001.

**Individual Published Edition:** *The New Jerusalem Bible*. Edited by Susan Jones, Doubleday, 1985.

## General Formatting Tips (2.2.1)

Titles of sacred works should be capitalized like other titles but not italicized or put in quotation marks.

**Note:** If an individual published edition is being used, it is treated like a book title and italicized.

**Examples:** The Bible teaches of the creation of the world in Genesis.

*The New Jerusalem Bible* brings new insight to this passage.

## Citing Modern-Day Scripture in all Formats

General conference talks, devotionals, and other forms of modern-day scripture should be cited based on how they were accessed (e.g. video, online text, print magazine, audio, etc.)