

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* (ninth edition), *The Chicago Manual of Style* (eighteenth edition) and the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (seventh 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 note-bibliography system. Both are included in this handout, but religious and historical papers usually require a note-bibliography citation style. **Note:** Citing scripture is mostly the same in Chicago and Turabian formats.

Note-Bibliography System (Chicago 14.138–14.141) (Turabian 17.8.2)

Footnotes or Endnote Citations: The first note includes the name of the book, chapter, verse, and version. Separate the chapter and verse with a colon and use an en dash for a range of verses. The version follows the chapter and verse in parentheses and can also be abbreviated after the first note. Sections 10.51–10.54 address abbreviations for scriptural books and versions in detail.

Text Reference: Nephi decided to “go and do.”¹

Note Example: 1. 1 Ne. 3:7 (The Book of Mormon).

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

Author-Date System (Chicago 14.138–14.141) (Turabian 19.8.2)

In-Text Citations: Author-Date uses parenthetical citations which include the abbreviated name of the book, chapter, verse, and version. The version follows the chapter and verse and, in Turabian, is put in brackets.

Chicago Examples: (1 Pet. 4:1–4 NRSV) **AND** (Hel. 5:1 The Book of Mormon)

Turabian Examples: (1 Pet. 4:1–4 [NRSV]) **AND** (Hel. 5:1 [The Book of Mormon])

Bibliography or Reference List Format (Chicago 14.2)

Sacred works are not required in the bibliography or reference list. If a citation is requested, we would recommend following the format for books, including the title, version, publication year, and publisher.

Example: *The Bible: Authorized King James version*. 1998. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

The Book of Mormon. 2013. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

APA Format (8.13, 9.42 & 10.2)

In-Text Citations: An APA in-text citation will consist of a comma-separated list with the title, publication date (or dates), and abbreviated book name, chapter, and verse (with a colon between chapter and verse). If these elements are mentioned in the text, you can omit them from the in-text citation.

Examples: (*King James Bible*, 1769/2017, 1 Cor. 13:1)

(*The Book of Mormon*, 1830/2013, 1 Ne. 3:7)

Reference Citation Format: In APA religious works are cited like books, and you include the title and publication information, as well as a URL if accessed online.

Examples: *King James Bible*. (2017). King James Bible Online. <https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/>

(Original work published 1769)

The Book of Mormon. (2013). The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. (Original work published 1830)

MLA Format (2.110 & 6.25)

In-Text Citations (6.25): MLA in-text citations include the first element of the works cited entry (usually the title but occasionally the editor or translator's name), followed by a comma and then the book, chapter, and verse. Abbreviate the name of the book and use a period to separate the chapter and verse. The title of the sacred work (or author/translator's name) is not included after the first citation and is only italicized when referring to a specific version.

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 (6.25): Include the 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, italicize the title but not the version (see the second example below).

Examples: *The Book of Mormon*. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2006.

The Bible. The New Oxford Annotated Version, 3rd ed., Oxford UP, 2001.

The New Jerusalem Bible. Henry Wansbrough, general editor, Doubleday, 1985.

Title Formatting (2.110): Unless an individual published edition is being used, titles of sacred works should be capitalized like other titles but not italicized or put in quotation marks. Individual published editions are treated like a book and italicized.

Examples: The Bible **AND** *The New Jerusalem Bible*

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.)