



University of Southern Mississippi, Department of History's

# History Writing Lab

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<http://www.usm.edu/history/writinglab.html>



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## Documenting Electronic Sources—An Example Sheet\*

For every source in your paper, you must provide complete bibliographical information so your reader will know where you got the information. This allows readers to find the sources in order to evaluate your interpretation of them or to read more extensively from them to gain a deeper understanding of the topic. There are numerous ways to document sources, and most academic disciplines have their own preferred methods and style manuals to guide the way. While each historian is different and opinions are in a constant state of flux, the most widely used style manual for historians continues to be the *Chicago Manual of Style*.<sup>1</sup>

*The Chicago Manual of Style* uses a system of footnotes or endnotes for documentation, along with a bibliography. Kate Turabian's *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* and Mary Lynn Rampolla's *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History* are also widely used by historians, since both are based on the Chicago system of documentation.<sup>2</sup> Most historians and history publications, believing the system imprecise and prone to misunderstandings, do not use or accept parenthetical documentation as promoted by the Modern Language Association. However, as with all issues about writing, you should consult your professor's guidelines for documentation and follow them. The following examples, based on the Chicago system, are simply models for instruction. They should not take the place of using the appropriate style manuals for your classes, especially since the examples treat only the most common citations. Please direct any questions you have to your professor or the HWL.

Despite the benefit of modern convenience, it is important to avoid exclusive dependence on electronic sources. When used in conjunction with scholarly books, articles and/or primary sources, electronic sources offer additional information that can often bring additional color or detail to your paper. Be sure to adhere strictly to material from academically accredited institutions whenever possible. If you are concerned about the viability or accuracy of an online source, please consult your professor or a member of the HWL staff for help with verification.

**\*\*Note:** The first example in each case is the note form, footnote or endnote, and the second example in each case is the bibliographic form. Take notice of the differences between the two forms in word order, punctuation, spacing, and format.

**WEB SITES**--Include in the following order: the author; the page or document title in quotation marks; the title of the complete work or site in italics or underlined; the date of publication or last revision (or n.d. for "no date" if unknown); the URL in angle brackets; and the date of access in parentheses. If any of the above information is unknown, except the date of publication as above, simply omit that part of the citation. It is important to list your date of access because web sites are often updated or deleted, and information available at one date may not be available later.

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<sup>1</sup> *Chicago Manual of Style*, 15th ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).

<sup>2</sup> Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 7th. ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), and Mary Lynn Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide for Writing in History*, 5th ed. (Boston: Bedford and St. Martin's Press, 2006).

<sup>15</sup>USM Library Website Help, "Documentation Style Guides," *The University of Southern Mississippi Libraries*, n.d. [http://lib.usm.edu/help/style\\_guides.html](http://lib.usm.edu/help/style_guides.html) (accessed September 4, 2006).

USM Library Website Help, "Documentation Style Guides." *University of Southern Mississippi Libraries*. n.d. [http://lib.usm.edu/help/style\\_guides.html](http://lib.usm.edu/help/style_guides.html) (accessed 4 September 2006).

<sup>21</sup>Cotton Mather, "The Wonders of the Invisible World (1693)," *Houghton Mifflin's @History*, 1999, <http://college.hmco.com/history/us/primary/wonders.htm> (accessed September 11, 2006).

Mather, Cotton. "The Wonders of the Invisible World (1693)." *Houghton Mifflin's @History*. 1999. <http://college.hmco.com/history/us/primary/wonders.htm> (accessed September 11, 2006).

<sup>24</sup>National Park Service, "Washita Battlefield: National Historic Site," *National Park Service ParkNet*, 10 September 2000, <http://www.nps.gov/waba/> (accessed September 11, 2006).

National Park Service. "Washita Battlefield: National Historic Site." *National Park Service ParkNet*. 10 September 2000. <http://www.nps.gov/waba/> (accessed September 11, 2006).

**ARTICLE IN AN ONLINE JOURNAL**—Include in the following order: the author; the article title in quotation marks; the title of the complete work in italics or underlined; the volume number; the date of publication; the URL in angle brackets; and the date of access in parentheses. It is important to list your date of access because web sites are often updated or deleted, and information available at one date may not be available later.

<sup>4</sup>Richard Slotkin, "Ask the Author: Fiction for the Purposes of History," *Common-Place: The Interactive Journal of Early American Life*, 1 (September 2000) <http://www.common-place.org/vol-01/no-01/author/> (accessed September 12, 2006).

Slotkin, Richard. "Ask the Author: Fiction for the Purposes of History." *Common-Place: The Interactive Journal of Early American Life*. 1 (September 2000) <http://www.common-place.org/vol-01/no-01/author/> (accessed September 12, 2006).

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**\*\*NOTE ON WIKIPEDIA:** The popular open-source encyclopedia 'Wikipedia' (<http://www.wikipedia.org>) is NOT a viable scholarly source. While the site offers a wealth of information on a variety of topics, very little of the material is checked for factual accuracy. To avoid use of invalid information or data as evidence in a history paper, it is best to avoid citation of 'Wikipedia' altogether.

<sup>23</sup>"Ming Dynasty," *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*, n.d. <http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-9052837/Ming-Dynasty> (accessed September 12, 2006).

"Ming Dynasty." *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*. n.d. <http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-9052837/Ming-Dynasty> (accessed September 12, 2006).

**E-MAIL**—Include in the following order: the author’s name; the author’s email address in angle brackets; the subject line of the posting in quotation marks; the date of publication; the type of communication; and the date of access in parentheses.

<sup>50</sup>University of Southern Mississippi History Writing Lab, [historywritinglab@gmail.com](mailto:historywritinglab@gmail.com). “HWL Open for Business,” 5 September 2005, personal e-mail, (accessed September 5, 2005).

University of Southern Mississippi History Writing Lab. [historywritinglab@usm.edu](mailto:historywritinglab@usm.edu). “HWL Open for Business.” 5 September 2005. Personal e-mail (accessed September 5, 2005).

<sup>32</sup>Sarah Franklin, [sarah.franklin@usm.edu](mailto:sarah.franklin@usm.edu). “How to Document E-mail,” 13 July 2007, personal e-mail, (accessed July 13, 2007).

Franklin, Sarah. [sarah.franklin@usm.edu](mailto:sarah.franklin@usm.edu). “How to Document E-mail.” 13 July 2007. Personal e-mail (accessed July 13, 2007).

**LISTSERV OR NEWSGROUP MESSAGE**— As you research your topic, you may stumble across sources from ‘listserv’ (electronic mailing lists) or ‘newsgroups’ (online discussion groups). Scholars and students regularly contribute and share reviews, articles, and other information through these systems. The software to view discussion groups is commonly integrated into the interface for most modern email services. Searchable newsgroup databases, like Google Groups (<http://groups.google.com>) are also available online. Discussion groups can often provide valuable information or evidence where other internet sources fall short. The H-Net Humanities and Social Sciences Online database is another particularly valuable tool for historians.

To document these sources, include information in the following order: the author’s name; the author’s email address in angle brackets; the subject line of the posting in quotation marks; the date of publication; the name of the LISTSERV or newsgroup in angle brackets; and the date of access in parentheses. It is important to list your date of access because LISTSERV and newsgroup messages are often updated or deleted, and information available at one date may not be available later.

<sup>33</sup>Deidre McCarthy, [DMcCarthy@nps.gov](mailto:DMcCarthy@nps.gov). “National Park Service Study of Revolutionary War and War of 1812 Sites,” 8 June 2000. [H-OIEAHC@H-NET.MSU.EDU](mailto:H-OIEAHC@H-NET.MSU.EDU) (accessed June 10, 2007).

McCarthy, Deidre. <[DMcCarthy@nps.gov](mailto:DMcCarthy@nps.gov)> “National Park Service Study of Revolutionary War and War of 1812 Sites.” 8 June 2000. [H-OIEAHC@H-NET.MSU.EDU](mailto:H-OIEAHC@H-NET.MSU.EDU) (accessed June 10, 2007).

<sup>12</sup>Kyle F. Zelner, [kyle.zelner@usm.edu](mailto:kyle.zelner@usm.edu) “Eighteenth-Century Militia in U.S.,” 11 November 1999, [H-WAR@H-NET.MSU.EDU](mailto:H-WAR@H-NET.MSU.EDU) (accessed June 10, 2007).

Zelner, Kyle F. [kyle.zelner@usm.edu](mailto:kyle.zelner@usm.edu) “Eighteenth-Century Militia in U.S.” 11 November 1999. [H-WAR@H-NET.MSU.EDU](mailto:H-WAR@H-NET.MSU.EDU) (accessed June 10, 2007).

#### **\*Listserv Book Review**

<sup>71</sup>Michael S. Neiberg, [michael.neiberg@usm.edu](mailto:michael.neiberg@usm.edu) “Why Does Military Service Produce Civil Equality? Book Review of Ronald R. Krebs, *Fighting for Rights: Military Service and the Politics of Citizenship*.” April 2007. [H-War@h-net.msu.edu](mailto:H-War@h-net.msu.edu) (accessed June 20, 2007).

Neiberg, Michael S. [michael.neiberg@usm.edu](mailto:michael.neiberg@usm.edu) “Why Does Military Service Produce Civil Equality? Book Review of Ronald R. Krebs, *Fighting for Rights: Military Service and the Politics of Citizenship*.” April 2007. [H-War@h-net.msu.edu](mailto:H-War@h-net.msu.edu) (accessed June 20, 2007).