ANTHROPOLOGY STYLE GUIDE

The ability to use formal styles correctly makes your work look expert and professional, which is valuable when communicating with employers and grad schools. Different disciplines (like different tribes) have their own standards for citing and referencing the sources you use—English wants MLA, Psychology APA—so when you choose a major, be sure to master their dominant style. However, in Anthropology classes you need to use Anthropology style. Being behaviorally flexible (able to use more than one culture/style) is a great adaptive advantage!

CITATIONS

None of us can observe everything in the world, so we need to refer to information or ideas we got from someone else. You might write “According to Boas,” but what Boas wrote in 1883 was different from what he wrote in 1942. So we need more information, and we need to slip it in without breaking the flow of our own argument.

This is the purpose of citations. The major anthropological journals use a parenthetical citation style similar to MLA: you put the last name of your source’s author(s) and the date of the source in parentheses, right after (or before) the information you took from the source. If the source has page numbers, you include the number(s) of the page(s) where that specific information was found. Here is an example (boldface is to make it stand out; don’t bold citations or references in your papers):

Over seven million pounds of silver were taken to Spain from American mines during the 16th and early 17th centuries (Wolf 1997: 139).

Here is another, where the author’s name is already part of the sentence:

David Anthony (2007:206–213) used the presence of bit-wear on prehistoric horses’ teeth to prove they were ridden.

In anthropology, all citations must include the name and date, and page numbers if applicable. If there is no date on the document, let readers know that with the abbreviation n.d. (“no date”) in the place where the date would go, in the citation and in the reference.

Here’s one for multiple authors:

Anthropology has often been used by Mediterranean historians to illustrate what they saw as an unchanging rural past (Horden and Purcell 2000: 463–466).

If you had more than two authors, you would use the last name of the first author listed (senior author) followed by et al. (“and others”)—(Champion et al. 1984). If you have different authors with the same last name, then give their first initial as well (T. Champion).

REFERENCES

Citations are supposed to be a kind of shorthand. The rest of the details are found in the reference. This provides the author(s)’s full name, the date of publication, the full title of the work, and other important information that would help you find a copy.
So, at the end of the paper, under the heading “References Cited”—include only works you cite—list your sources in alphabetical order by the author’s last name. If there are multiple authors, be sure to list them in the order given in the source and alphabetize using the senior author’s name. If there is more than one work by an author, give the author’s name once and list the works under it in chronological order, oldest to most recent.

Anthony, David

Champion, Timothy, Clive Gamble, Stephen Shennan, and Alasdair Whittle

Horden, Peregrine, and Nicholas Purcell

Wolf, Eric R.

All of these are books, and your references should follow this format exactly. Make sure you get the punctuation right! Last name first for authors (or senior authors; others authors’ names are given in the normal order); title of the book italicized; the name of the publisher and the city where it was published. Often there are several cities listed in the book: choose the nearest one. If the city isn’t well-known (like Malden), include a reference to the state/country to narrow it down. Here are the formats for other common scholarly sources:

Journal or other periodical (such as a newspaper) article

Lowell, Julia C.

The article title is not italicized; the journal title is. Do not put the article title in quotes. Include the number of the volume the article was published in and its page numbers.

Journal article published online (if there is also a print/PDF version)

Lowell, Julia C.

The DOI (Digital Object Identifier) number will take readers directly to the article online. It can usually be found near the title on the article’s webpage.
Chapter/article in an edited book

Higham, Charles

Be sure you lead off with the name of the author of the piece, not the editor of the whole book—their name comes later. The chapter/article title is not italicized; the book title is.

Web pages, electronic documents, and blogs

Society for American Archaeology (SAA)

Here we have an institutional author: a source that was put together by an organization. Since institutions often have long names, they are commonly abbreviated—that’s the bit in parentheses on the first line—and the abbreviation is used in citations (SAA 2014). The title is the name of the specific document or webpage, NOT the title of the entire website. Provide the full URL, and say when you used the site—information can change quickly on the web.

QUOTING VS. PARAPHRASING

We use information and ideas we get from other people all the time—but when is it appropriate to use someone else’s words, and when is it not? There are two situations when you should copy text exactly. First, when you strongly disagree with an author, it’s wise to let them state their own position through a quote, so no one can accuse you of twisting what they said. Second, if the way something was said is so meaningful or beautiful that putting it into different words would destroy much of its value. These are the only times you should use direct quotes. In all other instances, you should acknowledge your source with a citation and put that information into your own words (paraphrase). Changing a few words in an otherwise identical passage or rearranging the source’s words is not paraphrasing.

When you choose to use someone else’s words, you need to signal that to the reader, so they know “someone else is talking.” There are two ways to do this: to set off the words with quotation marks, which is the preferred method for short passages. Run the quote into the rest of the sentence, like “these weapons, together with over 1,000 coins, fragments of military belts and uniforms, and bones of humans, horses, and mules, are all that survived of some 15,000–20,000 Roman soldiers” (Wells 1999:3). Citations come after the quotations marks and before punctuation such as commas or periods.

If the quote is longer than four lines, format it as a block quote. All lengthy passages must be set as block quotes: separated from the rest of the text by a blank line before and after, single-spaced, with 1.5-inch margins on both sides; there are no quotation marks, and the citation (in square brackets rather than parentheses) goes at the end of the block.