

Preparing Bib Cards

The following suggestions will help you develop a clear, accurate set of bibliography cards. Following this list of general guidelines, you will find a complete set of sample bibliography forms in both the humanities style and the science style.

1. *Use bibliography cards of a different size or color from your note cards.* Some writers prefer 3.5 x 5 cards for the bibliography and 4 x 6 cards for notes; others prefer a pastel color for bibliography cards and white for note cards. To distinguish them by size or color is to keep from accidentally losing a bibliography card later among your many note cards.
2. *Use a separate card for each bibliography entry.* As part of your final manuscript, you will prepare an alphabetical list of works cited. With each resource listed on a separate card, you will be able to alphabetize easily. Remember to turn in your cards in alphabetical order.
3. *Write in ink.* Pencil smears, and ultimately it may render an entry illegible.
4. *Be sure to list all necessary information.* For books, most information will be on the title and copyright pages. For magazines, most information will be on the front cover or on one of the first pages, like the table of contents page or the page listing the editorial staff. For online or Web resources, most information is on the opening or closing screen.
5. *Separate titles from subtitles.* If a book or magazine article title includes a subtitle, separate it from the main title by a colon. Follow this guideline no matter how the title and subtitle appear together in the book or magazine.
6. *For books, note the call number in the lower left corner of the card.* Always record the library call number of any book you use. If for some reason you need the book again later, you will be able to find it quickly without again searching the catalog.
7. *Record the library name.* If you get materials from more than one library, also record on each bibliography card the name of the library from which you obtained the reference. That information will prove invaluable in case you need to check some detail later.
8. *Make a note of any outstanding features.* Some sources will include special features like good charts, an extensive index, a bibliography, or good background. Others may be less impressive, perhaps too technical or include only a brief chapter. Making notes of such features will help you remember which sources initially seem most beneficial.

9. *Punctuate titles within titles correctly.* Consider these examples:
(Book titles are shown here in italics but should be underlined in your manuscript.)

"Imagery in F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*"
(article title including a book title)
"Imagery in Robert Frost's 'Birches'"
(article title including a poem title)
Critical Reflections on The Great Gatsby
(book title including another book title)
Imagery in "The White Heron"
(book title including a short story title)

TECH TIP

You can easily record bibliography information on your computer. You may want to insert information alphabetically as you go. Remember to keep your sources in alphabetical order. Be sure to create a separate file for your list of bibliography references.

When you have finished entering the information, save it, but also print out a copy so you can refer to it quickly while taking notes. And remember to make a backup!

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