

Cite and Credit Images



YOU'VE FOUND THAT great image! Now what? You'll need to cite or credit the image when you use it, and this chapter will help you do it right. Citing images is a fundamental part of using images in academic work, but it remains a source of confusion and anxiety for students, faculty, and many of us working with them. Style guides do not always provide complete or extensive discussion or examples of image citations, and citation generation and management tools are geared more for text materials. So you're often left to piece together a best-guess approach.

The broad range of contexts in which students use images also presents challenges for citing and crediting images appropriately. Of course images need to be cited in research papers, but what about posters or creative work? What is the best way to credit an image online? In this chapter, we explore these questions and more, and we offer examples and activities for modeling and practicing image citations. You will deepen your understanding of why we cite images, build confidence for citing and crediting images in a variety of contexts, and open discussion about how image citation can advance creative work and engagement with visual materials.



ACTIVITIES IN THIS CHAPTER

- 5.1: Why Cite Images?
- 5.2: Gathering Information for Image Citations
- 5.3: Crediting Images

Foundational Questions

Am I Using an Image Someone Else Created?

Use images created by other people deliberately and thoughtfully. If you're using someone else's image in your work, remember that you'll always need to cite or credit it.

Why Do I Need to Cite an Image?

Cite images others create in order to give credit to the creator, to provide information so others can find and reuse the image, and to participate in ongoing scholarly conversations.

Where Do I Find Information to Create a Citation?

Explore the caption and text around the image, reference lists, and links. It can take detective work to find all the information you need!

What Is the Best Way to Cite an Image in My Project?

You can provide a citation or a credit, depending on your project and where and how you are using the image. Know your options and best practices.

How Do I Format the Citation?

Use the citation style recommended by your instructor, and follow our tips for citing images in different contexts.

Why Cite Images?

Have you ever come across an image and wondered where it originated? Or have you tried to use an image for a project, and then realized the image might not be from the same time period as your research topic? Or maybe you needed to refer to an image when discussing it, but couldn't find a title. Citing images heads off these problems by providing the information we need to engage in conversations about visual materials.

Understanding image citation best practices helps us to ethically and productively use images others create, which in turn advances discussion and inquiry. Citing images in academic work acknowledges the work of others and provides information about the image so it can be identified, understood, and evaluated by your readers or audience.

Build familiarity with common image citation practices across disciplines and the information typically included in citations by looking for image credits or citations in research and study materials. Closely examining image citations also gives context and meaning to images and can expose gaps in information provided, prompting further research. The activities in this chapter provide an opportunity to apply citation practices and to discuss when and why to cite images. **Activity 5.1: Why Cite Images?** provides prompts to open a discussion about images in the scholarly communication process.

Formulating Image Citations, Credits, and Captions

Gathering all the necessary information for an image citation can involve some sleuthing. Captions, credits, and citations may not provide all the information you need to reuse and cite an image. You may need to read the text surrounding an image, inspect a website address, check a list of illustrations in a book, interpret tags, or deploy strategies such as reverse image searching. In **Activity 5.2: Gathering Information for Image Citations**, practice looking at the text that accompanies images to figure out the key information needed for generating citations and credits.

Once you have found all the relevant information about your image, you will need to formulate your image citation, credit, or caption. How you format the citation and where it appears depends on the type of project. Online image credits are structured differently than image citations in an academic paper's reference list, for example. Use the **Citing and Crediting Practices by Project Type** chart to help you decide how and where to cite or credit the images you are using.

Citing and Crediting Practices by Project Type

TYPE OF PROJECT	LOCATION OF CITATION OR CREDIT	STYLE AND TIPS
Research paper	Reference list and figure or caption	<p>Academic citation style</p> <p>Use a standard citation style such as APA or MLA.</p> <p>Use the style recommended by your instructor.</p> <p>Use the same style for images that you use for other research materials such as books and articles.</p>
Poster	Caption directly under each image or brief caption and reference list	<p>Adapted academic citation style</p> <p>Format captions or reference list citations following standard citation style guidelines.</p> <p>Consider the overall style and appearance of your poster when deciding whether to use captions or a reference list. Citation information may be more appropriate or visually appealing in one location or the other.</p> <p>Image credits should appear on the front of the poster with the images, not on the back of the poster where they cannot be seen or in a separate handout.</p>

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TYPE OF PROJECT	LOCATION OF CITATION OR CREDIT	STYLE AND TIPS
Presentation	Caption directly under each image or in an images list at the end of your presentation	Adapted academic citation style Format captions or images list following standard citation style guidelines. Consider the overall style and visual impact of your presentation when deciding whether to use captions or an images list. Citation information may be more appropriate or visually appealing in one location or the other.
Online space	Caption directly under image	Image credit with title, creator, date, link to source, and license or copyright information if relevant.
Creative work	Caption accompanying the image	Image credit with information about the new work and any reused images created by others.

CITING IMAGES IN ACADEMIC STYLES

Citing images in an academic style can be confusing if you're accustomed to citing primarily text sources. APA (American Psychological Association) and MLA (Modern Language Association) are two of the most common citation styles that students are asked to use. The *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th edition) and the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* (7th edition) provide some guidance for image citation, but they contain a limited number of examples and do not account for the variety of image types and the contexts in which images may appear. In this section, we bring together image-related citation guidelines dispersed throughout the citation manuals. We suggest best practices and models for citing the types of images and sources most commonly encountered by students and faculty.

Citing Images in APA Style

In-Text Citations

When citing images in APA style in the text of a paper, the creator's last name and the date of creation of the image are included in parentheses after the cited material, like this: (Creator, 1990). If there is no creator, a title can be used instead: (*Title*, 1990). If there is no title, use whatever information comes first in the complete citation in the reference list. Each in-text citation should clearly correspond to an item in the reference list.

Figures and Captions

In APA style, images are referred to as *figures* and can include graphs, charts, maps, drawings, and photographs. All images that are reproduced in a paper should be labeled as Figure 1, Figure 2, Figure 3, and so on. Tables are labeled as Table 1, Table 2, Table 3, and so on.

Figures are placed as close to their reference in the text as possible, with figure labels placed below the figure, followed by a brief explanatory caption. If you've created the figure yourself, a caption you create is sufficient. If using an image someone else created, include the complete citation information in the caption and in the reference list. Use the words "Retrieved from" prior to the source URL. Include institution credit line information before the "Retrieved from" information, if required by the museum or archive.

APA image captions generally follow this pattern:

Figure 1. Author, A. A. (Year). *Title of material*. [Description of material].
Retrieved from <http://www.xxxx>

The following example shows how an image would be referenced in the text and in the caption.

Example: APA Figure Reference in the Text

Sargent's *Egyptians Raising Water from the Nile* demonstrates the atmospheric qualities apparent in his later works (see Figure 1).

Example: APA Figure Caption



Figure 1. Sargent, J. S. *Egyptians Raising Water from the Nile* [Painting]. 1890–91. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Mrs. Francis Ormond, 1950 (50.130.16). Retrieved from www.metmuseum.org/collection/the-collection-online/search/12074

Reference List

Some variation exists in how images are cited in the references, depending on where the images are found. However, APA image citations generally follow this pattern:

Creator, C. (Year of production or publication). *Title of work* [Description, Medium, or other relevant information]. Retrieval information or location of the work.

Figure 5.1 breaks down the different parts of an APA entry for an image found online, as it would appear in the reference list.



Figure 5.1. Parts of an image citation in the APA reference list

The **Elements of APA Citations** chart describes these citation elements in more detail for a variety of image types and sources.

Elements of APA Citations	
ELEMENT	CITATION FORMAT
Creator or producer	The creator's name is listed as Last name, First initial(s). If there is no individual creator, an organization may be used instead. If no creator or organization is available, then the title begins the citation. When citing an image found online, use the proper name of the creator if available; however, if only a screen name is available, use that instead.
Year of production or publication	If no date is available, n.d. should be used instead. If necessary, a date range may be used (1990-1992) or the abbreviation ca. can be used to indicate an approximate date (ca. 1956).
Title and format of image	The title of a stand-alone image is italicized; if the image is part of a larger work, then the image title should not be italicized and the name of the complete work should be included in italics. The title should be followed by the format in brackets, such as [Photograph], [Print], [Map], or [Sculpture]. If no title is available, then a description of the image may be used and should be placed in brackets.

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Other repository, publication, or production information

If the image was found on a website, list the URL; if the image was found in a subscription database, list the name of the database. If the image was from a museum or archive website, include any additional information the institution requires, such as the institution's name. For a museum or archive image captured on-site and in person (not downloaded from a website), list the city and institution. If the image was found in a book or serial, include the word *in* followed by the publication information of the work and the page number on which the image appears.

For original images produced in scholarly articles, magazines, or newspapers, it is sufficient to cite the work as a whole. See **APA Image Citations in the Reference List** for examples of how citations should appear in the reference list.

Example: APA Image Citations in the Reference List**Image Found on the Web**

Nunley, D. (2012). *Big fish* [Photograph]. Retrieved from <https://flic.kr/p/dHH6uu>

Image from a Database

Motherwell, R. (1970). *Africa suite: Number 2* [Print]. Retrieved from Artstor.

Image from a Book

Cézanne, P. (1904–1906). *Mont Sainte-Victoire* [Oil painting]. In Sayre, H. M., *Writing about art* (6th ed.) (p. 53). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2009.

Image from a Museum or Archive Website

Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn. (1642). *Militia Company of District II under the command of Captain Frans Banninck Cocq, Known as the 'Night Watch'* [Painting]. Retrieved from <https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/nl/collectie/SK-C-5>

Image in a Museum

Miró, J. (1980–1981). *Woman addressing the public: Project for a monument* [Sculpture]. Fort Worth, TX: Kimbell Art Museum.

Citing Images in MLA Style**In-Text Citations**

When citing images in MLA style in the text of a paper, the creator's last name and the page number(s) from which the material came are included in parentheses after the cited material, like this: (Creator 54). If there is no creator, a title can be used instead: ("Title" 54). If there is no title, you should use whatever information comes first in the complete citation in the list of works cited. For

images found online, do not list a page number. Each in-text citation should clearly correspond to an item in the list of works cited.

Figures and Captions

In MLA style, images are called *figures*, and all images that are reproduced in a paper should be labeled as Fig. 1, Fig. 2, Fig. 3., and so on. Exceptions to this style are tables, which are labeled Table, and musical illustrations, which are labeled Ex. (for “Example”).

Figures are placed as close to their reference in the text as possible. When referring to figures in the text, use lowercase letters, like this: (see fig. 1). Figure labels are placed below the figure, followed by a brief explanatory caption. If the figure caption contains complete citation information and is not referenced in the text, it is not necessary to include the item in the list of works cited.

MLA image captions follow this pattern:

Fig 1. Ann Author, *Title of Work*, Museum and/or Publication information. The following example shows how an image would be referenced in the text and caption.

Example: MLA Figure Reference in the Text

Painted toward the end of his life, El Greco's *The Adoration of the Shepherds* contains attenuated figures and striking contrasts between light and dark (see fig. 1).

Example: MLA Figure Caption



Fig. 1. El Greco (Domenikos Theotokopoulos), *The Adoration of the Shepherds*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Bequest of George Blumenthal, 1941 (41.190.17).

Works Cited List

Some variation exists in how images are cited in the MLA Works Cited list. However, MLA citations for images found online generally follow this pattern:

Creator, Creator. *Title of Material*. Year of Composition. Holding Entity. Title of Website or Database. Medium. Date of Access.

Figure 5.2 breaks down the different parts of an MLA entry for an image found online, as it would appear in the Works Cited list.

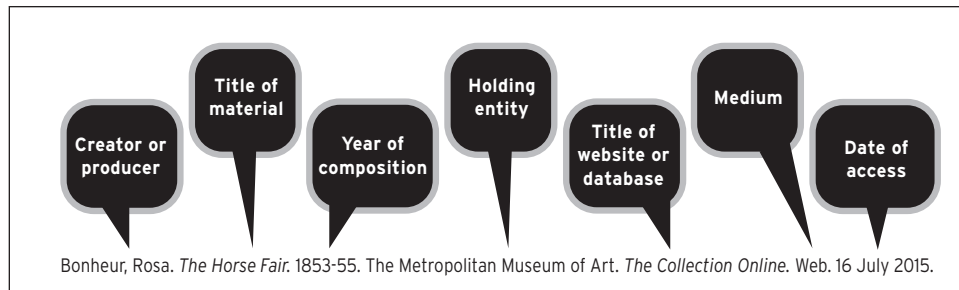


Figure 5.2. Parts of an image citation in the MLA Works Cited list

The **Elements of MLA Citations** chart describes these different elements in more detail for a variety of images types and sources.

Elements of MLA Citations	
ELEMENT	CITATION FORMAT
Creator or producer	The creator's name is listed as Last name, First name. If no individual creator is listed, an organization may be used instead. For advertisements, begin with the name of the product or company. If no creator or organization is available, the citation begins with the title. When citing an image found online, use the proper name of the creator if available; however, if only a screen name is available, use that in the citation instead.
Title of image	Italicize the titles of works of art. If a map or chart appears to stand alone, italicize the title; if it appears to be part of a collection, place the title in quotation marks and include the title of the collection in italics. Place the titles of comic strips in quotation marks and place the source title in italics. If there is no title, as with a cartoon or advertisement, skip this part.
Year of composition	If no date is available, n.d. should be used instead. If necessary, a date range may be used (1990-1992) or a question mark can be used to indicate an uncertain date (1956?).

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ELEMENT	CITATION FORMAT
Medium of composition	When citing a work in its original context (i.e., Photograph, Map, Advertisement, Cartoon, or Comic strip), include the medium of composition. For reproductions of images online or in print, the medium of composition does not need to be included.
Other publication information	For works of visual art, list the institution that houses the work or the name of the private collection that the work is in, as well as the city where the institution or collection is located. For images found in books, follow this information with the publication information about the book, as well as the page, figure, or plate number where the image can be found. For images on museum or archive websites, follow this information with the online publication information.
Online publication information	MLA style does not require that a URL be included for images found online. Include the title of the database or website, the medium of publication (Web) and the date of access. If supplementary publication information is available for an image found online, that information can be included prior to listing the website or database name.

Example: MLA Image Citations in the Works Cited List

Image Found on the Web

Nunley, Donnie. *Big Fish*. 2012. *Flickr*. Web. 31 July 2014.

Image from a Database

Motherwell, Robert. *Africa Suite: Number 2*. 1970. *Artstor*. Web. 21 Aug. 2014.

Image from a Book

Cézanne, Paul. *Mont Sainte-Victoire*. 1904–6. *Writing about Art*. 6th ed. Henry M. Sayre. Upper Saddle River: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2009. 53. Print.

Image from a Museum

Miró, Joan. *Woman Addressing the Public: Project for a Monument*. 1980–81. Bronze. Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth.

CREDITING IMAGES

Crediting images with a credit statement is an alternative to a full academic citation and is an appropriate way to acknowledge authorship of an image in some circumstances. Credit statements give attribution to image creators, provide title and date information, and include a link to the original image. Credit statements are especially useful when writing for the Web. You can learn to use image credits in your own work, such as with images used to enliven research guides.

You can also teach these skills as part of any class where there is an assignment involving images with a web component such as a blog post or a website.

As with any citation practice, the first step in crediting images is to gather the relevant information about the image. Using images that give enough information to attribute them makes giving credit easier. **Activity 5.3: Crediting Images** takes students through the process of gathering information about an image and creating an image credit statement. At minimum, follow these tips:

- Give credit to the image creator.
- Provide a title and date (if available).
- Include the Creative Commons license type, if applicable.
- Link to the original work (page with the metadata).
- Follow any additional attribution instructions provided by the source.

Example: Sample Image Credits

General Format

Title by A. Creator, date (if available), via source (Creative Commons License Type, if applicable).



An aircraft view of high cirrus and stratocumulus undercast with altostratus, image ID wea00016 by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration/Department of Commerce, via the NOAA Photo Library.

PROVIDING INFORMATION WITH IMAGES YOU CREATE

When creating and sharing images, it is important to provide information with the images so others can cite your work when they use or repost your image. Because we know how important it is to be able to find the basics about an image's creator, date, source information, and usage restrictions, it is clear that we all have a responsibility to provide such information with images we create and share. Adding a Creative Commons license or other rights statement can enhance the usability of your images, and your contribution to visual conversations will have greater impact.

Images you create may be entirely your own work, such as original photographs. You may also build on other people's images with collages or other creative adaptations. Image captions should reflect this adaptation and provide information about all contributions. Phrases such as "based on" or "including" can connect information about the new work with citation information about others' work that has been built upon or incorporated. The Creative Commons Wiki (wiki.creativecommons.org) includes best practices for attribution and illustrated examples for acknowledging material that you modified or used to create a derivative work.

Next Steps

Like all other resources, images must be cited. Once you feel comfortable with the whys of image citation, try some of the following:

- Practice gathering information needed to generate image citations.
- Credit images on any research guides, blogs, or websites that you write.
- Treat an image citation as a resource for further exploration.
- Provide textual information with images that you make available so that others can cite your work.

REFERENCES

American Psychological Association. 2010. *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Modern Language Association of America. 2009. *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. New York, NY: Modern Language Association of America.



ACTIVITY 5.1

Why Cite Images?

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Engage with questions about the purpose and function of citations.
- Relate citation to the scholarly communication process and participate in research as a conversation.

DESCRIPTION

Use the following discussion prompts to open a conversation about images and scholarly communication:

- How do scholars communicate with each other?
- What happens when scholars use images in their work?
- How do scholars communicate about image content?
- How do image citations facilitate that conversation?

VISUAL LITERACY STANDARDS CONNECTION

- ACRL Visual Literacy Standard 7, Performance Indicator 3

ACTIVITY 5.2

Gathering Information for Image Citations

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Look carefully at text that accompanies images for context.
- Prepare for image citation.

DESCRIPTION

Students access an image related to the course or their research topics, in the image's original location or context, for the purpose of examining the information that accompanies it. Using an image they're familiar with or one that you provide, students complete the **Gathering Information for Image Citations Worksheet** and record the information they find about the image. Students can work in pairs or groups, helping each other gather the appropriate information. Conclude the exercise with a group discussion.

DISCUSSION PROMPTS

- Where did you look to find information about your image?
- What kinds of information did you discover?
- Was the text information different within different sources?
- Is there information you're lacking, and where might you go to find it?

TIP FOR SUCCESS

- Familiarize yourself with images related to the course, and work through the information-finding process with several of them. What challenges do you anticipate students will face as they try to find enough information for their citations?

OPTIONAL EXTENSIONS

- This activity can also be done as a class, examining image information together.
- Ask students to create a complete image citation using the information they have found.

VISUAL LITERACY STANDARDS CONNECTION

- ACRL Visual Literacy Standard 7, Performance Indicators 2 and 3

Gathering Information for Image Citations

Step 1: Bring up an image related to your research question or project.

Make sure you are looking at the image in its original context (wherever it originated or wherever you found it), such as its original website, museum website, article, blog, or other source.

Tip: If you found the image by using a web search engine such as Google Images, go to the image's original website to gather citation information.

Step 2: Within the image's original source, find out as much information as you can about the image and read any accompanying text.

Places you can find information about the image include the following:

- Captions accompanying the image
- Tags associated with the image
- Text on the same page as the image or surrounding the image
- Reference pages or bibliographies in an article
- The website address or URL

Step 3: Record information about your image.

Where did you find the image? Include the name of the website and the web address, the book citation and page number, the database name and image web address, or other source information.	
What is the title of the image? If there's no title, write down a brief description.	
Who made the image? This might be the photographer, artist, Flickr username, or the like.	
When was the image created? Find the most specific date you can.	
If the image is of a work of art or other object, is it in a museum or archive? Record the name and place here (for example, Seattle Art Museum, Seattle, Washington).	
Is rights information included with the image, such as a Creative Commons license or terms of use?	
Is there any other identifying information available about your image? Include it here.	
Is there information you'd like to know about your image for purposes of a citation but weren't able to find?	

Step 4: Compare notes and discuss your findings.

ACTIVITY 5.3

Crediting Images

LEARNING OUTCOME

- Give credit for images used in web-based communications and environments.

DESCRIPTION

Discuss the types of situations in which it is appropriate to use an image credit line, explaining how crediting images on web pages differs from citation in scholarly research papers. Review Creative Commons licenses and how to find Creative Commons images. Students find a Creative Commons image, then the **Crediting Images Worksheet** leads them through gathering information about the image and creating the image credit using the suggested format.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- Remind students that they need to do their best to give credit to the image creator, provide a title and date, link to the original work, and follow any attribution instructions and license information provided by the source.
- Prior to conducting this activity, review strategies for gathering information about images, especially those found on the Web.

VISUAL LITERACY STANDARDS CONNECTION

- ACRL Visual Literacy Standard 7, Performance Indicators 1, 2, and 3

Crediting Images

Find an image available under a Creative Commons license and complete the steps.

Step 1: Gather image information.

Provide the image title.

- The image is called: _____

Link to the original work.

- The image URL is: _____

Give credit to the image creator.

- The image was created by: _____

Include the image date.

- The date of the image is: _____

Make note of the image source.

- The source of the image is: _____

Follow attribution instructions provided by the source.

- The image creator asks me to: _____
- There is a Creative Commons license on this image, and it is: _____

Step 2: Create an image credit.

Example: Title by A. Creator, date, via source (CC License Type).

Following the preceding example, write your credit line here:
