

Research and Citing Sources

The amount of research you do for your presentation will have an impact not only on the quality of the content but also on the audience. A talk prepared superficially that fails to examine your chosen topic critically is insulting for your audience and will also affect your final grade. Do not be tempted to rely solely on one source of information such as Wikipedia. You belong to a scholarly community and are therefore expected to use a variety of sources in order to build up your information. You need to demonstrate that you have investigated the subject and are knowledgeable about it.

The sources that you use will depend on the topic you are researching. They may range from print materials such as books and newspapers to scholarly articles but could easily include audio-visual clips or other material available on the internet. Part of your task is to consider the reliability of the sources you decide to use. Whereas serious print publications undergo a stringent process of editing and revision, this does not hold true for everything available on the internet. This means that you need to ask yourself what you know about the author and their credentials, whether a publisher takes responsibility for the content, if a bibliography or external links are available and the currency of the information, for example when a web page was last updated. If you have any doubts, you can simply google an author or an institution or paste part of the text into google to see if it appears on multiple sites.

It is also good practice to consult both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources comprise original information such as a diary, an interview, a national census or a newspaper article reporting an event that has just happened. Articles published immediately following the outcome of the Brexit Referendum on 23rd June 2016 are considered primary sources since at the time they described a 'new' event. In scientific research, primary sources share new information or present original thinking. In all instances, this original material is then the basis for further research and writing.

The term secondary sources, on the other hand, describes materials that have been produced through the analysis and interpretation of primary sources of information. For example, an article examining the consequences for the UK in the aftermath of the Brexit Referendum would fall into this category. In other words, secondary sources rely on information contained in primary sources. You are advised to consult the following links which provide guidance about conducting research and primary and secondary sources.

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/8/>

<https://www.slideshare.net/arisbx/primary-secondary-sources-14970608>

Acknowledging your sources is an intrinsic part of your task when researching a subject. This acknowledgement is a courtesy to the writers of the materials whose studies you have relied on to produce your own contribution. In writing, for example, whether it be an academic paper, a dissertation or a book, besides in-text citation, the reader expects to find a list of the sources that the writer has consulted in the references at the end of the work. There are various reasons for including this information. In academic circles, readers expect writers to research the topic in some depth which means consulting various sources which must then be acknowledged. By doing so, the writer also avoids any possible accusation of plagiarism. Finally, the reader may also want to learn more and can therefore consult other publications listed in the references. The same is true for a presentation. The references give your audience the chance to find out more for themselves and also demonstrate the amount and quality of your research.

It is advisable to compile your reference list as you conduct your research. You can either create a file for this purpose or use the bibliography facility on your computer to do so. For this course you are required to format your references according to APA style. Information about APA can be consulted at the following link.

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>

Besides consulting sources to research your topic for facts and sound argumentation, you may also need to use images such as paintings, photographs, tables, charts and maps on your slides to support your points. Their sources must also be cited, as must any video clips or film footage that you view to gain information on your chosen subject. There may also be copyright issues but since you are preparing a presentation for an internal exam we will not address this point here. Be aware, however, that if you ever need to give a presentation to a wider audience you must ensure that the material you use is not covered by copyright or if it is, seek permission to use it. If your slides do contain images of paintings, photographs, tables, charts or maps, it is normally sufficient to cite the source at the bottom of the slide in question. The sources do not then have to be included in the references at the end.

All other print or web sources such as books, journals, video clips, or film footage that you have consulted while researching your topic need to be listed in the references. For our purposes, your last slide should display this information. You must however also provide your examiner with a printed list of references, together with the thumbnails of your slides.