AI: CITING IN APA & MLA

Generative AI models, such as ChatGPT, produce output in response to prompts asked by users. The algorithms behind such models collect and learn from mass sets of textual and visual information and synthesize new output to respond to a user's prompts.

In academic writing, you are required to cite the use of AI so that readers know the source of your information. You must include an in-text citation and an entry on the reference page when citing generative AI in APA and MLA formats, just like you would cite material from other sources.

When citing AI, it is important to cite the AI tool and version used, the date used, the prompt that generated the referenced output, and how the AI was functionally used (ex. used to translate or summarize an online article). A citation is needed regardless of whether AI output is being summarized, paraphrased, or quoted.

APA

In-text Citation

You must directly quote the exact prompt and the AI output in the sentence or in an appendix. You may not paraphrase or summarize this language. The in-text citation will appear directly following the quoted material.

Formula

(Company that operates the AI, year accessed)

Example

When prompted with "give me some basic facts about carpenter bees," the ChatGPT-generated text indicated that "unlike social bees, carpenter bees are solitary" (OpenAI, 2024).

Reference Page Entry

Treat an AI citation as you would any other entry in the Reference page and organize them alphabetically.

Example	Formula
OpenAI. (2024). *ChatGPT* (May 13 version) [Large multimodal language model]. https://chat.openai.com/chat	AI Company. (Year of Version Used). *AI model name* (AI model version) [additional model descriptor]. Source URL

Disclosure of AI use in editing process

APA has no clear guidance on how writers should disclose the use of generative AI in their writing when used for editing, translating, or grammar correction. Follow your instructor's AI policy when choosing to use generative AI. If they require a disclosure statement, you may use the example below.

Example

This paper was produced with drafting and editing support from [Name of AI Tool, e.g., Grammarly AI, QuillBot Premium, Microsoft Copilot]. The content has been reviewed and revised by the author to ensure accuracy and adherence to academic standards.

MLA

In-text Citation

You may summarize, paraphrase, or directly quote output generated by AI in your text. The in-text citation will appear directly following the summarized, paraphrased, or quoted material.

The in-text citation will include the first word(s) of the prompt. Since user prompts are generally long, it is common practice to only include the first few words of the prompt in an in-text citation for AI output.

Formula

("first word(s) of prompt")

Example

When prompted with "give me some basic facts about carpenter bees," the ChatGPT-generated text indicated that "unlike social bees, carpenter bees are solitary" ("give me some basic facts").

Works Cited Entry

In MLA format, the first word(s) in the in-text citation must be the first word(s) of the Works Cited entry. However, the Works Cited entry will state the full prompt.

Treat an AI citation as you would any other entry in the Works Cited page and organize them alphabetically.

Example	Formula
"Give me some basic facts about carpenter bees" prompt. *ChatGPT,* 13 May version, OpenAI, 7 Oct. 2024, https://chat.openai.com/chat.	"Full Prompt" prompt. *AI model name,* AI model version, AI company, date of output, Source URL.

Disclosure of AI use in editing process

MLA requires writers to "acknowledge all functional uses of the tool (like editing your prose or translating words) in a note, your text, or another suitable location" (MLA). We suggest using signal phrasing, such as that in the in-text citation example above.