HOW TO CITE THE BIBLE*

Guide for Four Citation Styles: MLA, APA, SBL, CHICAGO

MLA

[Refer to *MLA Handbook*, **8th ed.** (2016), pp. 122-23.] Copy at Reference Desk. For guidelines for citing the Bible following *MLA* **7th ed.**, see here.

General
- Do not italicize, underline, or use quotation marks for books and versions of the Bible.
- Do italicize the titles of individual published editions of the Bible.

Examples: In Romans, Paul asserts that justification comes through faith (5.2).
     The King James Version of the Bible was originally published in 1611.
     The New Oxford Annotated Bible includes maps of the Holy Land.

Works Cited
- Identify the core elements of the edition of the Bible you are using as you would for any source.
- Generally, your citation will start with the title of the Bible used rather than a particular translator or editor. However, if you are focusing on the contribution of the translator or editor in your writing, it is appropriate to treat that contributor as the author. (C.f. discussion of translators on p. 23 and authorship in film and television on p. 24.)
- Typical Bible citations will include the title of the Bible, editor/translator (when relevant), the version (if different from the title) and/or edition, publisher, year, URL (for online editions).

Examples:
   ESV Study Bible. English Standard Version, Crossway, 2011.
   Holy Bible. King James Version, Reference ed., Thru the Bible Radio, 1976.
   New International Version. Biblica, 2011. *Bible Gateway,* www.biblegateway.com/versions/New-
     International-Version-NIV-Bible/
   Wright, N.T., translator. *The Kingdom New Testament: A Contemporary Translation.* 1st ed., Harper One,
     2011.

In-Text Citations
- For a first parenthetical citation to a particular version, cite the element that begins the work cited entry (usually the title of the edition), followed by a comma, and then the passage.
- Abbreviate titles of books that are more than four letters long; use a period to separate chapter and verse. (See pp. 97-99 for lists of abbreviations of biblical books).

    Examples: (*New International Version*, Gen. 3.15)
          (Wright, Rom. 8.28)

- For subsequent references, do not identify the version unless you use a different version.

     ▪ *Examples:*   (Gen. 1.1-2)
            (Phil. 3.8)

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* This guide addresses citations of the text of Scripture itself. If you are citing supplementary material in a published edition of the Bible, such as book introductions or study notes, consult your style guide of choice for guidance on citing material from reference books.

APA

References (i.e. Bibliography)
• Cite the specific edition of the Bible that you consulted in preparing your paper.
• Bibles are usually treated as having no author. If you consult a study Bible with a named editor or a Bible with an individual translator, that name should be included in the reference as shown below. Translation committees are not credited in reference list entries.
• If the year of original publication of the translation or edition of the Bible you are using is known, include it in parentheses at the end of the reference list entry.

Examples:
> *King James Bible*. (n.d.). King James Bible Online. https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/ (Original work published 1769)
> Carson, D. A. (Ed.). (2015). *NIV Zondervan study Bible*. Zondervan.
> *The kingdom New Testament: A contemporary translation* (N. T. Wright, Trans.). (2011). Harper One.

In-Text Citations
• Cite the element that begins the reference list entry (usually the title of the edition), then the date(s), then the passage by book, chapter, and verse. (Use whatever degree of precision is appropriate to your citation.)
• Do not abbreviate books of the Bible.
• It is not necessary to repeat parenthetical citation of the Bible in every sentence that refers to or summarizes it as long as the source is clear.
• Every time you quote the Bible directly, include the full citation.

Examples: (*King James Bible*, 1769/n.d., Song of Solomon 8:6)
        (Carson, 2015, 1 John)
        (*The kingdom New Testament*, 2011, Matthew 5)

SBL

Bibliography: No entries are required for the Bible in SBL. Consult your instructor for exceptions.

In-Text Citations
• When citing chapter or chapter and verse, abbreviate books of the Bible unless they appear at the beginning of the sentence. Spell out the book's name when referring to it as a whole.
  o *Examples*:   The passage in 1 Cor 5 is often considered crucial.
            First Corinthians 5:6 is a crucial text.
• Identify the version used with the appropriate abbreviation from SBL **8.2.1**. If you use the same version throughout your paper, cite the version on first reference only; if you use more than one version, include the version in every citation.
  o *Example*:   (1 Cor 5:6 NRSV).
• Use a colon to separate chapter and verse but no punctuation between passage and version. When citing multiple verses, use an en dash (–) for ranges of verses, a comma between non-consecutive verses in the same chapter (e.g., Luke 3:6, 8), and a semi-colon between different chapters or books (e.g., Matt. 2:3; 4:3; John 3:18).
• For abbreviations of Bible books and versions, see sections **8.2**, **8.3.1**, **8.3.2**.

CHICAGO

[Refer to *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 16th ed. (2010), sections *14.253, 14.254*.] Copy at Reference Desk.

General

[Refer also to sections *8.102, 8.103, 8.104, 8.105*].

- Do not italicize, underline, or use quotation marks for the names of scriptures, books and sections of the Bible, and Bible versions, but do capitalize these names.
    Examples: the Bible; the Holy Bible; Genesis; the book of Genesis; John; the Gospel according to John; the Pentateuch; the Gospels; the King James Version; the Message.

Bibliography

- No entries are required for the Bible in Chicago Style.
- If your instructor asks you to include full citation information for the edition of the Bible you used, follow the CMS style you deem most suitable for the edition you consulted (e.g., book with unknown author [*14.79/15.32*], book with editor/translator [*14.87/15.35*], book with organization as author [*14.92/15.36*], or website [*14.243*]).

In-Text Citations

[Refer also to sections *10.46, 9.27*].

- Spell out books of the Bible in the text of the sentence.

    Examples: The opening chapters of Ephesians constitute a sermon on love.
                    Jeremiah, chapters 42–44, records the flight of the Jews to Egypt.
                    According to Genesis 1:27, God created man in his own image.

- In parenthetical citations or footnotes of passages or verses, abbreviate books of the Bible (see sections *10.48-10.50* for abbreviations). Use a colon between chapter and verse.

    Example: (Gen. 25:19-36:43)

- Also abbreviate when numerous citations occur in the text of the paper.
    Example: My concordance lists five instances of the word *nourish*: Gen. 47:12, Ruth 4:15, Isa. 44:14, Acts 7:21, and 1 Tim. 4:6.

- For a first reference of a parenthetical citation, identify and *either* spell out the Bible version, *or* use the abbreviation of the version. (Some abbreviations are provided in section *10.51*, see SBL *8.2.1.* for a fuller list.)
    Example of first reference: (2 Kings 11:8 New Revised Standard Version)
    Example of first reference: (I Cor. 6:1-10 NRSV)

- For subsequent references, do not identify the version, unless you use a different version.