

citation styles for citing interviews

The Importance of Citing Interviews Correctly

citation styles for citing interviews are crucial for academic integrity, scholarly communication, and ensuring proper attribution of information. Whether you've conducted a formal interview for research, quoted a podcast, or referenced a personal conversation, knowing how to cite it accurately is paramount. This guide will delve into the intricacies of citing interviews across various popular citation styles, illuminating the specific requirements and nuances of each. We will explore how to handle different types of interviews, including published and unpublished, recorded and unrecorded, and how to present this unique source material effectively within your work. Understanding these conventions not only prevents plagiarism but also allows your readers to locate the original source, thereby verifying your claims and adding credibility to your arguments. Mastering citation styles for interviews is an essential skill for any serious researcher, writer, or student.

- Understanding the Need for Interview Citations
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Understanding the Need for Interview Citations

When incorporating information gathered through interviews into your academic papers, research projects, or even professional reports, proper citation is non-negotiable. Interviews represent primary source material, offering direct insights and unique perspectives that cannot be found elsewhere. Failing to acknowledge the source of these insights can be considered a form of plagiarism, undermining the trust between you and your audience. Furthermore, accurate citations allow your readers to access the original interview material if they wish to verify your interpretations or delve deeper into the subject matter. This transparency is a cornerstone of scholarly practice and ensures the replicability and verifiability of your research findings.

The process of conducting interviews often involves significant time, effort, and ethical considerations, including obtaining consent and ensuring confidentiality where applicable. Properly citing an interview acknowledges the interviewee's contribution and respects their intellectual property. It demonstrates a commitment to ethical research practices and strengthens the

overall credibility and authority of your work. Without correct citation, the value and impact of your interview-based research are significantly diminished.

Key Elements in Citing Interviews

Regardless of the specific citation style you employ, certain fundamental pieces of information are typically required when citing an interview. These elements help readers identify and locate the source of the information. While the order and formatting will vary between styles, understanding these core components is the first step toward accurate referencing.

Essential Information for Interview Citations

- **Interviewee's Name:** The full name of the person who was interviewed.
- **Interviewer's Name:** Your name or the name of the person who conducted the interview, if different from the author of the paper.
- **Date of Interview:** The specific date on which the interview took place. This is crucial for establishing context and timeline.
- **Location of Interview:** This can include the physical location (e.g., the interviewee's office, a specific conference) or the medium through which the interview was conducted (e.g., phone call, video conference, email).
- **Title of the Interview (if applicable):** Some interviews may have a specific title, especially if published.
- **Format or Medium:** Whether the interview was recorded (audio/video), transcribed, or simply noted.
- **Access Information:** For published interviews, this includes journal titles, book titles, websites, or any other publication details that allow for retrieval. For unpublished interviews, it might include archival information or simply confirmation that it is a personal communication.

Common Citation Styles for Interviews

Several major citation styles are prevalent in academic and professional writing. Each has its own set of rules for presenting interview citations. Familiarity with the most common styles will equip you to handle a wide range of citation requirements.

Modern Language Association (MLA) Style

MLA style is commonly used in the humanities, particularly in English and literature studies. When citing interviews in MLA, the focus is on providing enough information for the reader to find the source, prioritizing clarity and conciseness.

Citing Personal Interviews in MLA

For interviews you conducted yourself and that have not been published, MLA treats them as personal communications. These are typically mentioned in the text (parenthetically or in the narrative) and may not require a full entry in the Works Cited list unless they are deemed essential to understanding your argument. If included, the format is generally: Interviewee's Name. Personal Interview. Date.

Citing Published Interviews in MLA

If you are citing an interview that has been published in a journal, book, or online, the citation will resemble other published works. You will need to include details about the publication venue. For example, a published interview in a journal would include the interviewee's name, the title of the interview (if it has one), the journal title, volume, issue, date, and page numbers.

American Psychological Association (APA) Style

APA style is widely adopted in the social sciences, including psychology, sociology, and education. APA has specific guidelines for citing interviews, distinguishing between personal communications and published interviews.

Citing Personal Interviews in APA

In APA, interviews that have not been published or recorded and cannot be retrieved by the reader (e.g., a personal conversation or an interview you conducted that will not be archived) are treated as personal communications. These are cited in the text only, with the interviewee's name, the phrase "personal communication," and the date. No entry is made in the reference list. For example: (J. Smith, personal communication, March 15, 2023).

Citing Published Interviews in APA

If you are citing an interview that has been published (e.g., in a magazine, newspaper, or online archive), you will treat it as a published work. The format will depend on the publication type. For a magazine or newspaper interview, you'll typically include the interviewee's name, the date of the publication, the title of the article (if applicable), and the publication name, followed by page numbers or a URL.

Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS)

The Chicago Manual of Style offers two distinct citation systems: the notes-bibliography system and the author-date system. Both are used in various academic disciplines, with the notes-bibliography system being more common in the humanities and the author-date system in the sciences and social sciences.

Notes-Bibliography System for Interviews

Under the notes-bibliography system, interviews are cited in footnotes or endnotes and in the bibliography. For unpublished interviews you conducted, the note would include the interviewee's name, the type of interview (e.g., "personal interview"), the date, and the location or medium. The bibliography entry would be similar, often presented as: Last Name, First Name. Personal interview. Date. For published interviews, the format aligns with other published sources.

Author-Date System for Interviews

In the author-date system, in-text citations would include the interviewee's name and the date of the interview. The corresponding entry in the reference list would provide full publication details. For unpublished interviews, the format in the reference list would include the interviewee's name, the title of the interview (if any), the date, and information about its availability (e.g., "interview by author" or archival details).

Specific Examples Across Styles

To solidify your understanding, let's look at some concrete examples of how to cite an interview in different scenarios across the major styles. These examples illustrate the practical application of the rules discussed.

Example: Personal Interview (Unpublished)

Imagine you interviewed Dr. Anya Sharma on October 26, 2023, via video call, and you are the interviewer.

- **MLA:** Sharma, Anya. Personal interview. 26 Oct. 2023. (Often cited in text only, with no Works Cited entry for personal communication.)
- **APA:** (A. Sharma, personal communication, October 26, 2023) (Cited in text only, no reference list entry).
- **CMOS (Notes-Bibliography):** In-text note: Anya Sharma, personal interview, October 26, 2023. Bibliography entry: Sharma, Anya. Personal interview. October 26, 2023.

- **CMOS (Author-Date):** In-text citation: (Sharma 2023). Reference list entry: Sharma, Anya. Personal interview. October 26, 2023.

Example: Published Interview in a Magazine

Consider an interview with musician David Lee published in "Rolling Stone" magazine on November 15, 2022, on pages 45-48.

- **MLA:** Lee, David. Interview by Sarah Jenkins. "The Evolution of Sound." *Rolling Stone*, 15 Nov. 2022, pp. 45-48.
- **APA:** Lee, D. (2022, November 15). The evolution of sound [Interview]. *Rolling Stone*, pp. 45-48.
- **CMOS (Notes-Bibliography):** Footnote: Sarah Jenkins, "The Evolution of Sound" (interview with David Lee), *Rolling Stone*, November 15, 2022, 45. Bibliography entry: Jenkins, Sarah. "The Evolution of Sound." Interview with David Lee. *Rolling Stone*, November 15, 2022.
- **CMOS (Author-Date):** In-text citation: (Jenkins 2022). Reference list entry: Jenkins, Sarah. "The Evolution of Sound." Interview with David Lee. *Rolling Stone*, November 15, 2022.

Citing Different Types of Interviews

The format for citing interviews can also vary based on the medium and availability of the interview. Being aware of these distinctions is crucial for comprehensive and accurate referencing.

Published vs. Unpublished Interviews

As demonstrated in the examples, published interviews (found in journals, books, newspapers, websites) are cited similarly to other published works, with details about the publication venue being key. Unpublished interviews, especially those you conducted yourself, are treated differently, often as personal communications or with specific archival information if they are to be preserved.

Recorded (Audio/Video) vs. Transcribed Interviews

If an interview is recorded (audio or video), it's good practice to note this in your citation, especially if the recording is accessible. For transcribed interviews, you would cite the transcript itself. The specific details required will depend on the citation style. For instance, some styles may ask for information about the archive where the recording or transcript is

housed.

Broadcast Interviews

Interviews that are part of television or radio broadcasts also require specific citation formats. You'll typically need to include the name of the program, the network, the date of broadcast, and any specific segment or episode information. This allows readers to locate the broadcast if it is archived or available for viewing/listening.

Tips for Accurate Interview Referencing

Achieving accuracy in citing interviews involves attention to detail and consistent application of the chosen style guide. Here are some practical tips to help you:

- **Always Consult the Official Style Guide:** When in doubt, refer to the most current edition of the style manual for MLA, APA, CMOS, or any other style required by your institution or publication.
- **Be Consistent:** Whichever style you choose, apply its rules consistently throughout your document. Inconsistency can be distracting and unprofessional.
- **Record All Necessary Details During the Interview:** From the outset, make it a habit to note the interviewee's full name, the date, the exact time (if relevant), the location, the medium, and any specific titles or identifiers.
- **Distinguish Personal Communications Clearly:** Understand when an interview falls under the category of "personal communication" within a style guide and follow its specific in-text citation rules, as these often do not have a reference list entry.
- **Provide Access Information for Published Interviews:** For interviews found online or in print, ensure you include all details necessary for retrieval, such as URLs, DOIs, journal names, volume, issue, and page numbers.
- **When in Doubt, Over-Cite:** It's generally better to provide more information than too little when citing a source. If you're unsure whether a piece of information is necessary, include it according to the style guide's recommendations.
- **Keep Track of Your Sources:** Maintain a detailed record of all interviews conducted and consulted. This will streamline the process of creating your bibliography or reference list.

FAQ

Q: How do I cite an interview I conducted myself for a university paper, and it won't be published?

A: In most academic settings, interviews you conduct yourself that are not intended for publication and cannot be accessed by your readers are treated as personal communications. In APA style, you would cite these in-text only with the interviewee's name, "personal communication," and the date, and they do not appear in the reference list. MLA style generally also only requires in-text mention, though a full entry in the Works Cited list might be necessary if it is crucial to your argument. Chicago style's notes-bibliography system would include them in a note and bibliography, while author-date would cite them in-text and list them in the reference list with specific details about the interview. Always check your specific style guide and instructor's requirements.

Q: What if I found an interview online that isn't in a journal or magazine?

A: If you found an interview on a website that isn't part of a larger publication like a journal or newspaper (e.g., an interview on a personal blog or a dedicated interview website), you would generally cite it as a web page. This typically involves the interviewee's name, the title of the interview or article, the website name, the publication date, and a URL. Specific formatting will vary by style guide (MLA, APA, CMOS).

Q: Do I need to include the interviewer's name when citing an interview?

A: Yes, in many citation styles, particularly MLA and CMOS, the interviewer's name is included when citing published interviews. This acknowledges the role of the interviewer and helps differentiate the source if multiple interviews with the same interviewee exist. APA style also includes the interviewer's name, often indicating "Interview by [Interviewer's Name]." For personal interviews you conducted, you are effectively the interviewer, and your role may be implied or explicitly stated depending on the style and context.

Q: How should I cite a podcast interview?

A: Citing a podcast interview requires specific formatting. Generally, you will need to include the interviewee's name, the title of the podcast episode (if it has one), the name of the podcast itself, the host's name (if different from the interviewee), the date of the episode, and a URL or other access information. Each style guide (MLA, APA, CMOS) has detailed guidelines for citing podcasts.

Q: What if the interview is in a language other than English?

A: When citing an interview conducted in a language other than English, you

should generally follow the standard citation format for the chosen style guide. You may also need to provide a translation of the interview title or key phrases if the original is not readily understandable to your audience. Some style guides may suggest noting the original language of the interview.

Q: Do I need to get permission to cite an interview I conducted?

A: You do not need to get formal permission to cite an interview you conducted yourself if you have already obtained consent from the interviewee to conduct and record the interview, and to use the information for your research or academic work. However, you must always adhere to any promises of anonymity or confidentiality you made to the interviewee. If you are citing someone else's interview that has been published or archived, permission is typically not needed as the source is publicly available.

Q: How do I handle interviews where the interviewee requested anonymity?

A: If an interviewee requested anonymity and you have agreed to it, you will cite them using a pseudonym or a descriptive placeholder (e.g., "Participant A," "Anonymous Source"). Ensure this pseudonym is used consistently throughout your text and in any bibliography or reference list entry. You should still include the date and medium of the interview if possible. Always be transparent about the use of pseudonyms due to anonymity requests.

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