HOW TO CITE THE BIBLE
Guide for Four Citation Styles: MLA, APA, SBL, CHICAGO

MLA

[Refer to MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, 7th ed. (2009), sections 6.4.8, 7.7.1]. Copy at Reference Desk.

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.

Example: The King James Version of the Bible was originally published in 1611.

In-Text Citations

• Abbreviate titles of books. [See section 7.7.1 for lists of abbreviations of Old and New Testament books].

Examples: Gen. 1.1-2
(Phil. 3.8) [parenthetical citation]
Note: Use a period to separate chapter and verse.

• For a first parenthetical citation to a particular version, cite the name, followed by a comma, and then the passage.

Examples: (New International Version, Gen. 3.15)
(New Jerusalem Bible, Ezek. 2.6-8)

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

Works Cited (i.e. Bibliography)

• Include the title of the Bible, the version, and publication information (city, publisher, year), followed by Print or Web designation.


APA


In-Text Citations

- Do not italicize, underline, or use quotation marks for books and versions of the Bible.
- Abbreviate books of the Bible [see section 7.7.1 in the *MLA Handbook* for lists of abbreviations].
- For a first parenthetical citation, identify the version of the Bible.

  *Example:* (1 Cor. 13:1 Revised Standard Version)

  *Note:* Use a colon to separate chapter and verse, but there is no punctuation between passage and version.

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

References (i.e. Bibliography): No entries are required for the Bible.

SBL

[Refer to *The SBL Handbook of Style* (1999), sections 8.2, 8.3.1, 8.3.2]. Copy at Reference Desk.

In-Text Citations

- Abbreviate books of the Bible cited with chapter, or chapter and verse, unless they appear at the beginning of the sentence.

  *Example:* The passage in 1 Cor 5 is often considered crucial.

  *Example:* The passage, 1 Cor 5:6, is often considered crucial.

  *Example:* First Corinthians 5:6 is a crucial text.

- Abbreviate names of biblical books in parenthetical citations. If you cite more than one Bible version, identify the version used in a particular citation, and abbreviate the name of the version.

  *Example:* “Do you not know that a little yeast leavens the whole batch of dough?” (1 Cor 5:6 NRSV).

  *Note:* Use a colon to separate chapter and verse, but there is no punctuation between passage and version.

- For abbreviations of Bible books and versions, see sections 8.2, 8.3.1, 8.3.2.

Bibliography: No entries are required for the Bible.

**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.

**In-Text Citations**
[Refer also to sections 10.46, 9.27].

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

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

- In parenthetical citations of passages or verses, abbreviate books of the Bible.

  *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.
  *Note:* Use a colon between chapter and verse.

- For abbreviations of Old and New Testament books, and Bible versions, see sections 10.48, 10.50, 10.51.

- For a first reference of a parenthetical citation, identify and *either* spell out the Bible version, *or* use the abbreviation of the version.

  *Example of first reference:* (2 Kings 11:8 New Revised Standard Version)
  *Example of first reference:* (1 Cor. 6:1-10 NRSV)

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

**Bibliography:** No entries are required for the Bible.

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