

When to cite – the six-point code

1 Distinctive ideas

Whenever the ideas or opinions are distinctive to one particular source.

2 Distinctive structure or organising strategy

Even though you may have put it into your own words, if the author has adopted a particular method of approaching a problem, or there is a distinctive intellectual structure to what's written, for example to an argument or to the analysis of a concept, then you must cite the source.

3 Information or data from a particular source

If you've gathered information from a source in the form of facts, statistics, tables and diagrams, you will need to cite the source, so your readers will know who gathered the information and where to find it.

4 Verbatim phrase or passage

Even a single word, if it is distinctive to your author's arguments – use quotation marks and cite the source.

5 If it's not common knowledge

Whenever you mention some aspect of another person's work, unless the information or opinion is widely known.

6 Whenever in doubt, cite it!

It will do no harm, as long as you're not citing just to impress the examiner.