

Citing Secondary or Indirect Sources

Sample text

In analyzing “what holds marriage together” Jan Trost (1986) proposes that most of the standard bonds have declined.

The above passage is found in *Earning and Caring in Canadian Families*, written by Rod Beaujot in 2000, and let’s just say it is the information you’ve been searching for to include in your paper. However, the information you found is Jan Trost’s idea, not Beaujot’s! What do you do?? When you find information you want to use, but it is found as part of another author’s argument, it is called a secondary or indirect source. Many students, including myself, are often confused by indirect sources and how to cite them correctly. This handout will show you the APA, MLA and Chicago styles for citing these kinds of references. Most importantly, for each style, **whenever possible, it is better to find and reference the original source rather than use an indirect source.**

APA Format

Strong writing is based on primary sources, the source of the original information, rather than a quoted or paraphrased version of that material. But if you can’t find the primary source or if the author has applied the information in a way you prefer, you can use the secondary source. However, **cite the secondary source**, (Rod Beaujot in the sample text) **not the original** (Jan Trost), in your in-text citation and acknowledge the person whose idea you are citing.

Example #1 – Quotes

Trost (1986) researched “what holds marriage together,” (as cited in Beaujot, 2000, p. 110) and found that several typical bonds had weakened.

Because the above passage contained a quote, the in-text citation required not only the name and date of publication of the indirect source, but also the page number, just as in regular quotes in APA style.

Example #2 – Paraphrases

Trost (1986) proposes that the customs and connections keeping marriages together are no longer as effective (as cited in Beaujot, 2000).

Compared to quotes, paraphrases only require the author’s last name and date of publication in both indirect and regular paraphrases, but note that the phrase “as cited in” is essential for citing indirect sources.

Also remember to put the full citation of the secondary source in your reference list, which for this example would be Beaujot’s full citation.

The above information is found in the fifth edition of the *APA Manual* on page 121, in the section titled “Citations Within Quotations,” and on page 247 titled “Citation of a Work Discussed in a Secondary Source” and on page 29 in a guide called *Cites and Sources: A Documentation Guide*, in the section titled “Work Discussed in a Secondary Source”.

MLA Format

If the original source (Trost) is either unavailable or if the author (Beaujot) has interpreted or used the original author's ideas (Trost) in a sentence in a new way, you'll need to cite the indirect source (Beaujot). If you quote or paraphrase the author of the secondary source, **you only need to cite the indirect source**, i.e. Beaujot.

Example – Both Quotes and Paraphrases

"In analyzing 'what holds marriage together,' Jan Trost (1986) proposes that most of the standard bonds have declined" (qtd. in Beaujot 110).

Whether you're paraphrasing or quoting, your in-text citation is the same in MLA format, with the "qtd. in" phrase before the indirect source's name and page number.

In your works cited list for this paper, you only need to put the indirect source in your list, so in this case Beaujot's full citation. If you choose to give your reader additional information, you may include in your paper the original source in a note at the bottom of the page on which the in-text reference appears. The above information is found in the *MLA Handbook* (6th edition) on page 252, titled "Citing Indirect Sources".

Chicago Style

As in APA and MLA formats, indirect sources are generally discouraged in Chicago style, but if you must use them, **you need to cite both the original source and the secondary source in which you found the information**. Your in-text citation will be of the original source, and then in the reference list you first give the full citation of the original source (Trost) followed by "quoted in" and then a full citation of the secondary source (Beaujot).

Example – Reference System

Trost, J. 1986. What holds marriage together? In *Continuity and Change in Marriage and Family*, ed. J. Veevers, Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Quoted In R. Beaujot, *Earning and Caring in Canadian Families*. (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 2000), 110.

Or if you are using the note system, you simply give the full citation of the original, followed by "quoted in", and the full the citation of the secondary source.

Example – Note System

1. Jan Trost, "What Holds Marriage Together?" in *Continuity and Change in Marriage and Family*, ed. J. Veevers. (Toronto, ON: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1986) quoted in Rod Beaujot, *Earning and Caring in Canadian Families* (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 2000), 110.

The above information is found in *The Chicago Manual of Style*, on page 727 in the section titled "Citations Taken from Secondary Sources."

This glance at secondary sources is merely that, a glance. For more details, consult the specific manual or style guide, reference librarians, or ask your TA's or professors for more help.