

CITATION VERIFICATION STRATEGIES

Gathering Information about the Citation

Sometimes you can verify a citation just knowing an author's name and the title of the work. Usually, however, you will need more information than that. Gather as much information as you can, such as:

- Author(s) names, with first name or initials
- Year of publication
- Words from the journal or book title
- Subject of the citation
- Reference type, see below

Having as much information as possible helps by giving you many different search options. NOTE: Just because someone gave you information does not mean the information is correct. It is very easy for people to forget the details of a reference.

Determining the Reference Type

One of the first steps in verifying a reference is determining what type of reference it is: journal article, book, book chapter, dissertation, report, etc. Without this information, it will be more difficult to verify the citation.

Strategy One: Ask the person who gave you the incomplete reference if they know what type of reference it is. Sometimes he or she will remember what it was. Even if all they know is that it was in a book they read, that can be enough to help select the appropriate search tools.

Strategy Two: Look for clues in the incomplete citation. Use the *What makes a reference complete?* help sheet to look for clues. For example, if the citation has a publisher or location, it probably will not be an article. If, on the other hand, the citation has a volume and issue, it probably will be an article.

Strategy Three: Get help from Mulford Reference Assistance. The reference librarians can make educated guesses about the reference type because they have extensive exposure to the literature. Stop by the library, call 383-4218, send email to MulfordReference@utoledo.edu, or chat with a librarian using instant messaging by going to <http://www.utoledo.edu/library/mulford/resources.html>.

Selecting and Searching Resources

For help selecting an appropriate resource to verify a citation, consult the help sheet *Resources Used When Verifying Citations*. Many of us are familiar with searching resources like MEDLINE by topic. There are other options as well: searching or limiting by author, year, words in the title, volume, publisher, etc. Consult the help sheets and online help of the resource you are searching. When searching these references, remember to search using a variety of search combinations: author and year, author and subject, words in the title and year, just words in the title, etc.

If you are having problems verifying a citation, contact Mulford Reference Assistance (419-383-4218, MulfordReference@utoledo.edu or at <http://www.utoledo.edu/library/mulford/resources.html>).

