

Citations

Math 497 - Spring 2026

What to Cite?

- Original proofs
- Unique methods
- Specific counter-examples
- “Elegant” shortcuts found in other papers

“Folklore” exception

If a result is "well-known" (found in standard undergraduate textbooks), you may omit a formal citation.

When in doubt, cite the textbook.

Authorship and Collaboration

- In mathematics, the order of authors is **alphabetical**
(not true in other disciplines)
- Every listed author must have made a substantial contribution (also not always true in other disciplines)
- Acknowledgements: Use this for people who provided help, but did not have a substantial contribution.

Should I Cite It?

I'm using the **Pythagorean Theorem**.

- No- common knowledge.

I'm using a lemma from an earlier paper to prove my result.

- Yes

I'm using a technique I saw in a YouTube video lecture.

- Yes

I'm using a definition from Rudin's "Principles of Mathematics"

- Optional, but good practice

In general, use citation for quotations.

Quotations:

... must be identical to the original, using a narrow segment of the source. They must match the source document word for word and must be attributed to the original author.

Use citations for paraphrased material:

Paraphrasing

...puts the passage from source material into your own words. *A paraphrase must also be attributed to the original source.* Paraphrased material is usually shorter than the original passage, taking a somewhat broader segment of the source and condensing it slightly.

Use citations for summaries:

Summarizing involves putting the main idea(s) into your own words, including only the main point(s). Once again, it is necessary to attribute summarized ideas to the original source. Summaries are significantly shorter than the original and take a broad overview of the source material.

From the Journal of the AMS

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