

[Handling Citation Questions: The Basics](#) [1]

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Establish Expectations

- Let the student know what kind of citation help you can provide, so they know what to expect.
- Use the *Chat – Citation* script early on in the chat to establish expectations.
 - Chat – Citation: I'm happy to help you learn how to cite your sources and can work with you to find citation guides and examples to follow.

Communicate with Positive Language

- Let the student know what kind of help you can provide instead of what you cannot do.
 - For example, if a student asks you to proofread a citation, instead of saying "I can't proofread your citation," you could say, "I can help you search for citation guides with examples that you can compare with your citation." Or, you could ask the student if they have a specific question about one of their citations.
- If a student is persistent, clearly communicate the service limits using the *Chat – Citation Limits* script:
 - Chat – Citation Limits: On AskAway, we can help you find citation guides and examples that you can compare with your own citations, but we cannot proofread or edit citations for you. Our goal is to teach you how to cite information independently.

Point Students to their Library's Citation Guides First

Library citation guides have often been customized for particular disciplines or courses offered at an institution. By pointing students to their library's guides, they will become more familiar with their library and the resources available to them.

- If a citation guide from the student's institution exists, point them to this guide first.
 - Refer to the [library's Policy Page](#) [7] - *Citation Guides* field for a link to their citation guides.
- Some institutions may not create their own guides but do link to recommended guides. In this case, direct students to these guides.

Encourage Students to Check-In with their Instructor

- Refer students to their instructor for the final evaluation of a citation, as instructors may have individual preferences for how sources are cited.

Source URL: <https://askaway.org/staff/handling-citation-questions/basics>

Links

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