

How to Cite ChatGPT in APA

What You Need to Know

Prepared by Med Kharbach, PhD
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When to Cite ChatGPT?



In-Text Citation Format

- 1 Cite ChatGPT when you **reproduce** text it generated in your work.
- 2 Explain how you used ChatGPT in the **Method section** or **Introduction**, depending on context.
- 3 Always include the prompt used and the AI-generated response, either in the text or in an **appendix**.

Narrative:
OpenAI (Year)

Parenthetical
(OpenAI, Year)

1

Example of Narrative Citation

According to OpenAI (2023), the notion of left-brain versus right-brain dominance is largely considered a myth.

2

Example of Parenthetical citation

The response stated that "the idea of people being strictly 'left-brained' or 'right-brained' is an oversimplification" (OpenAI, 2023).

Appendices or Supplemental Materials

- Include full responses in an appendix or supplemental material if they're long or essential to your work.
- Label clearly and reference them in the body of your paper.

Reference List Entry

Author → OpenAI. (2023). ChatGPT (Mar 14 version) [Large language model].
Year of the version used → (2023).
Title: ChatGPT (Version), italicized, with version in parentheses → ChatGPT (Mar 14 version)
Bracketed Description of the model → [Large language model].
URL of ChatGPT interface → <https://chat.openai.com/chat>

References

McAdoo, T. (2023, April 7). How to cite ChatGPT [Blog post]. APA Style Blog. <https://apastyle.apa.org/blog/how-to-cite-chatgpt>

APA Template for Citing ChatGPT



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APA Reference Template



OpenAI. (YEAR). ChatGPT (MONTH YEAR version) [Large language model]. <https://chat.openai.com/chat>



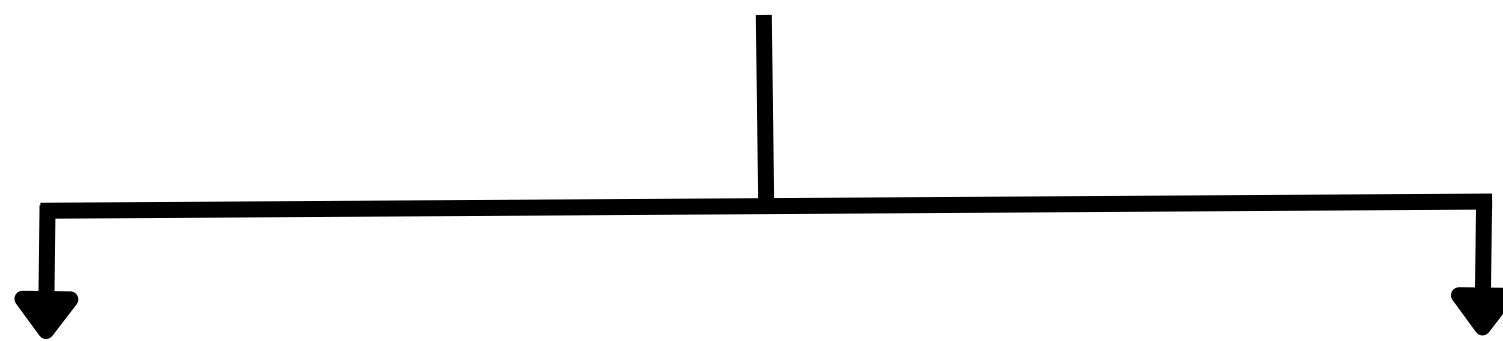
Example

(for a response generated today in June 2025):



OpenAI. (2025). ChatGPT (Jun 2025 version) [Large language model]. <https://chat.openai.com/chat>

In-Text Citation Templates



Parenthetical: (OpenAI, YEAR)
→ e.g., (OpenAI, 2025)

Narrative: OpenAI (YEAR)
→ e.g., OpenAI (2025)

Students should:

- Replace YEAR and MONTH YEAR with the version they used (visible in the ChatGPT interface).
- Use direct quotes from ChatGPT if applicable.
- Mention the prompt used and optionally include the full output in an appendix.

How to Use It



References

McAdoo, T. (2023, April 7). How to cite ChatGPT [Blog post]. APA Style Blog. <https://apastyle.apa.org/blog/how-to-cite-chatgpt>

APA Tips for Using AI in Academic Writing

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Disclosure Required



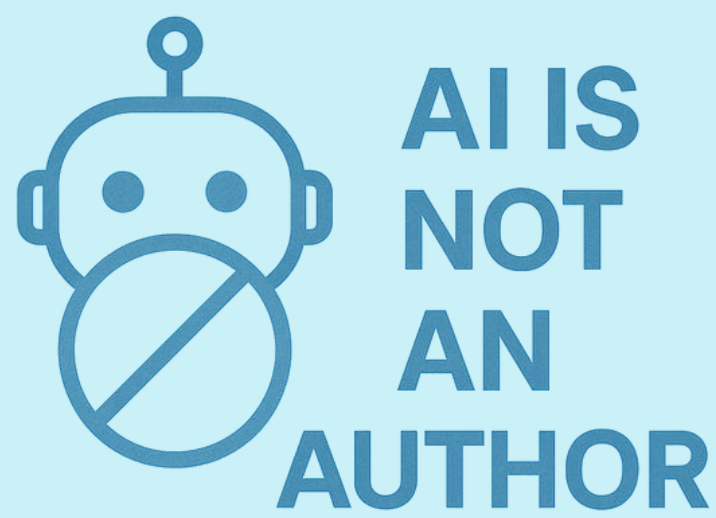
Any use of generative AI must be disclosed in the methods section and properly cited.

Author Responsibility



Authors are responsible for verifying all AI-generated content including facts and citations.

AI Is Not an Author



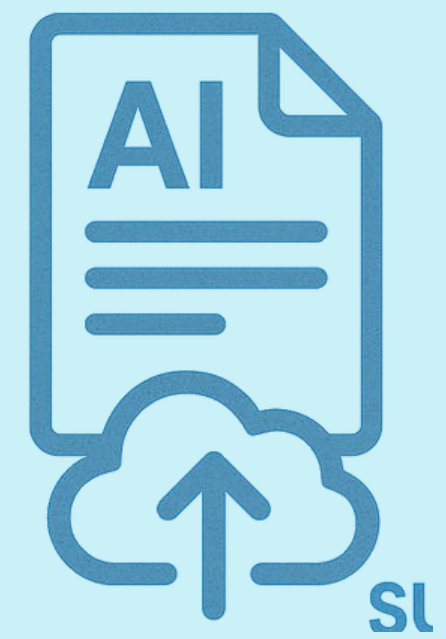
AI tools cannot be credited as authors.

Limited Use Allowed



AI tools can be used for specific tasks like editing, but this must be disclosed.

Supplemental Material



The full AI output must be uploaded as supplemental material.

Confidentiality Rule



Authors must not input unpublished or confidential material into AI tools.

References

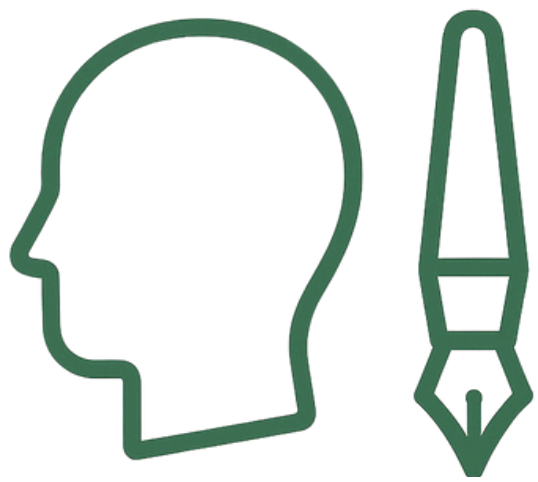
American Psychological Association. (n.d.). APA publishing policies. APA. Retrieved June 9, 2025, from <https://www.apa.org/pubs/journals/resources/publishing-policies?tab=4>

Copyright and AI

US Copyright Office Guidance

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Human Authorship Required



Only human-created content is eligible for copyright protection. AI-generated material alone cannot be copyrighted.

Creative Input Matters



If you creatively select, arrange, or modify AI-generated content, your contributions may be copyrightable—even if the AI content is not.

AI Is Not an Author



You cannot name an AI tool or company as an author or co-author on a copyright registration.

Use Tools, Not Creators



Using AI as a tool (like Photoshop or a music pedal) is acceptable. What matters is whether you control the creative expression.

Disclose AI Use Clearly



If your work contains AI-generated elements, you must explicitly disclose them in your copyright application.

Case-by-Case Review



The Copyright Office evaluates works individually, assessing the extent of human creativity and control.

References

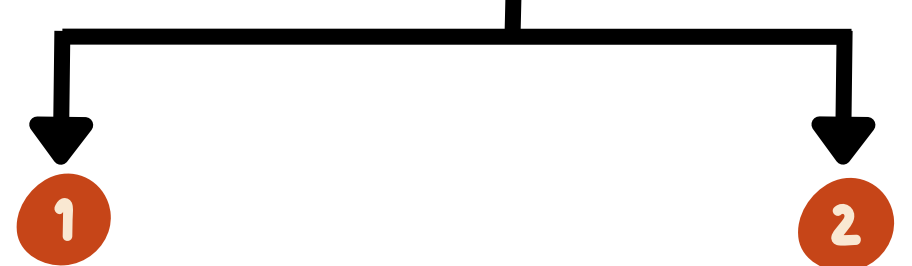
How to Cite ChatGPT in MLA



What You Need to Know

Component	Rule
Author	Omit. AI is not the author
Title	Describe the prompt or use user-given title
AI Tool	List AI tool, version, date
Publisher	List company (e.g., OpenAI)
Date	Date of content generation
Location	General or shareable URL
In-text	Use shortened prompt or title in parentheses

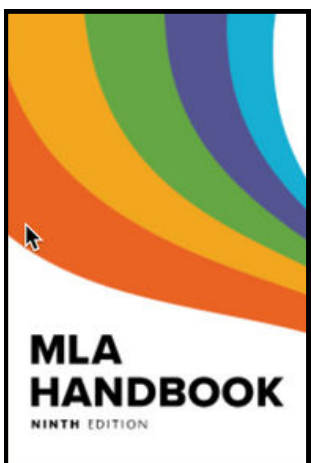
When to Cite ChatGPT?



1
When you quote, paraphrase, or incorporate AI-generated content (text, image, data, code).

2
When you use AI tools for editing, summarizing, translating—acknowledge this in-text or in a note.

MLA Citation Format (Works Cited)



- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

“Description of prompt or output.” AI Tool, Version, Company, Date, URL.

Example: Paraphrased or Quoted Text

Prompt

Explain the role of fate in Macbeth in 100 words.

Citation

“Explain the role of fate in Macbeth in 100 words” prompt. ChatGPT, 4 June version, OpenAI, 20 June 2025, chat.openai.com/chat

Example: AI Generated Image

Prompt

Surrealist painting of a crow flying over a city at night

Citation

“Surrealist painting of a crow flying over a city at night” prompt. DALL-E, v3, OpenAI, 22 June 2025, labs.openai.com/chat

In-Text Citation Rules

In MLA, cite the prompt title or a shortened version of it in parentheses.

AI tools do not count as authors.



Examples

- ✓ Paraphrasing: → Fate drives Macbeth's decisions far more than free will ("Explain the role of fate").
- ✓ Quoting: → As one AI-generated response puts it, "fate wraps around Macbeth like an invisible thread" ("Explain the role of fate").
- ✓ Creative work: → The haiku *Autumn Fog* captures "the hush between seasons" (*Autumn Fog*).



Use quotation marks for long prompts or untitled works. Use italics if you gave it a title.

Paraphrased or Quoted Text



Prompt



Explain the role of fate in Macbeth in 100 words.



Citation



“Explain the role of fate in Macbeth in 100 words”
prompt. ChatGPT, 4 June version, OpenAI, 20 June
2025, chat.openai.com/chat

AI-Created Poem (Titled)



Prompt



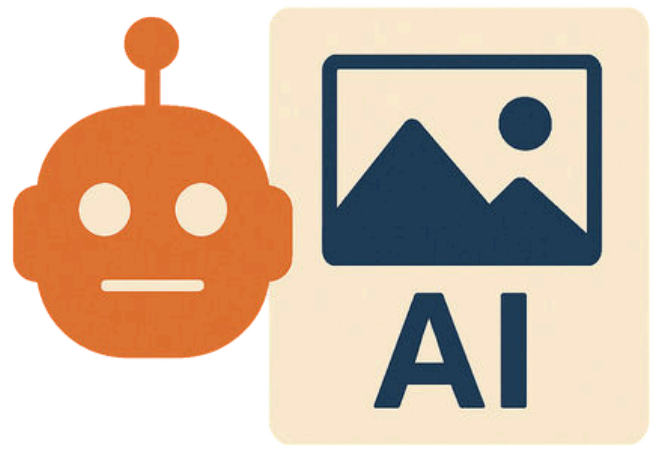
Write a haiku titled Autumn Fog



Citation

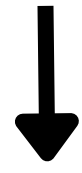


Autumn Fog haiku about seasonal change. ChatGPT, 4 June version, OpenAI, 21 June 2025, chat.openai.com/chat



AI Image

Prompt



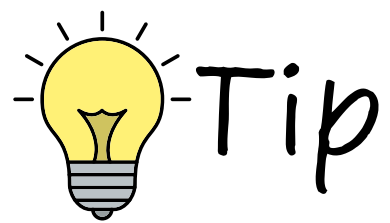
Surrealist painting of a crow flying over a city at night.



Citation



“Surrealist painting of a crow flying over a city at night”
prompt. DALL·E, v3, OpenAI, 22 June 2025, labs.openai.com/



Tip

To caption your images in MLA, follow this formula:
Figure number, a description of the prompt, followed
by the AI tool, version, and date created.

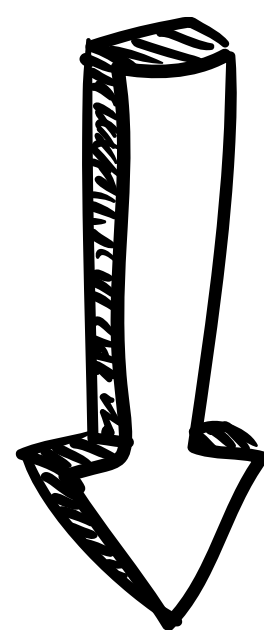




Fig. 1. "Surrealist painting of a crow flying over a city at night" prompt. DALL·E, v3, OpenAI, 22 June 2025, labs.openai.com/.