Cite What You See, Cite What You Use

by David Becker

*Cite What You See* is the motto I used in my previous post about citing pseudonyms to explain that you should cite whatever author name you noted in the source you used, whether it’s a pseudonym or a real name. This motto can be applied to all the essential elements of a reference list entry. The information you need to properly cite a source should be found within the source itself.

Extend the *Cite What You See* motto to *Cite What You Use*, and you’ll find answers to some other common questions about creating reference list entries. Use only the information provided by the source you are citing—don’t include information from other sources or variants of your source.

Here are two common APA Style questions about citing sources and ways that the *Cite What You See, Cite What You Use* motto can address them.

"The book I’m citing has multiple editions. Which one do I cite?"

Cite whichever edition you used. For instance, even though there’s a more recent edition, if you consulted the fifth edition of the *Publication Manual*, then refer to the fifth edition in your reference list entry:


"I’m citing a video that’s located at multiple places on the Internet. Which source should I cite?"

Cite whichever source you used. If you’re citing a video podcast that you downloaded from iTunes, format your reference entry as in Example 50 from page 210, section 7.07, of the *Publication Manual*. But if you found the video on YouTube, cite it as you would any other YouTube video (see our post on how to create a reference for a YouTube video). Here’s an example of how to cite one video from two different sources:


The bottom line is don’t be concerned that other versions of your source exist or that your source can be found in places other than where you found it. Just remember to *Cite What You See, Cite What You Use*!