

Citing the Bible

Citing the bible is different from citing other books, in part because page numbers are so unhelpful. Also, the translation you use is more important than who published it; most of what is necessary in a typical citation becomes irrelevant. The following conventions should be followed. Whatever you do, be consistent.

- Although it is the name of a book, the word Bible is not italicized.
- The word ‘book’ is usually lowercased. The words ‘Gospel’ and ‘Epistle’ are usually capitalized.
- In the body of your paper, books of the Bible are spelled out. For example:
The opening chapters of Ephesians constitute a sermon on love.
Jeremiah, chapters 42-44, records the flight of the Jews to Egypt.
According to Genesis 1:27, God created [humanity] in [God’s] own image.
- A quotation from the Bible should be followed by a parenthetical citation which gives the book, chapter, and verse—never a page number. The name of the book is usually abbreviated (see reverse for abbreviations). A colon is used between chapter and verse. For example:

After the voice spoke, “they saw no one with them any more, but only Jesus”
(Mark 9:6).

Notice that the period comes after the parenthetical citation.

- The NRSV is preferred for academic work. As such it is generally unnecessary to include the abbreviation NRSV in your parenthetical citation. Instead, put a footnote at the end of the sentence in which you first use a parenthetical citation [see example below] and have the text of the footnote read: All scripture citations are taken from the NRSV unless otherwise noted.

After Jesus spoke, “the crowds were astounded at his teaching” (Matt. 7:28)
because it was so different from what they were used to.¹

If for some reason you quote another version, the abbreviation of the version goes after the book, chapter and verse. For example:

Peter was so taken aback, he “hardly knew what to say” (Mark 9:6 NAB).

¹ All scripture citations are taken from the NRSV unless otherwise noted.

Abbreviations

These are traditional abbreviations and commonly used shorter forms for books of the Bible. Note that the traditional abbreviations use periods but the shorter forms do not. Whichever you use, be consistent. The listing is alphabetical.

The Jewish Bible/the Old Testament

Amos	Amos <i>or</i> Am
1 Chronicles	1 Chron. <i>or</i> 1 Chr
2 Chronicles	2 Chron. <i>or</i> 2 Chr
Daniel	Dan. <i>or</i> Dn
Deuteronomy	Deut. <i>or</i> Dt
Ecclesiastes	Eccles. <i>or</i> Eccl
Esther	Esther <i>or</i> Est
Exodus	Exod. <i>or</i> Ex
Ezekiel	Ezek. <i>or</i> Ez
Ezra	Ezra <i>or</i> Ezr
Genesis	Gen. <i>or</i> Gn
Habakkuk	Hab. <i>or</i> Hb
Haggai	Hag. <i>or</i> Hg
Hosea	Hosea <i>or</i> Hos
Isaiah	Isa. <i>or</i> Is
Jeremiah	Jer. <i>or</i> Jer
Job	Job <i>or</i> Jb
Joel	Joel <i>or</i> Jl
Jonah	Jon. <i>or</i> Jon
Joshua	Josh. <i>or</i> Jo
Judges	Judg. <i>or</i> Jgs
1 Kings	1 Kings <i>or</i> 1 Kgs
2 Kings	2 Kings <i>or</i> 2 Kgs
Lamentations	Lam. <i>or</i> Lam
Leviticus	Lev. <i>or</i> Lv
Malachi	Mal. <i>or</i> Mal
Micah	Mic. <i>or</i> Mi
Nahum	Nah. <i>or</i> Na
Nehemiah	Neh. <i>or</i> Neh
Numbers	Num. <i>or</i> Nm
Obadiah	Obad. <i>or</i> Ob
Proverbs	Prov. <i>or</i> Prv
Psalms	Ps. (<i>pl</i> Pss.) <i>or</i> Ps (<i>pl</i> Pss)
Ruth	Ruth <i>or</i> Ru
1 Samuel	1 Sam. <i>or</i> 1 Sm
2 Samuel	2 Sam. <i>or</i> 2 Sm
Song of Solomon*	Song of Sol. <i>or</i> Sg
Zechariah	Zech. <i>or</i> Zec
Zephaniah	Zeph. <i>or</i> Zep

*also known as Song of Songs. Be consistent in using one or the other.

The New Testament

Acts of the Apostles	Acts
Apocalypse**	Apoc.
1 Corinthians	1 Cor. <i>or</i> 1 Cor
2 Corinthians	2 Cor. <i>or</i> 2 Cor
Ephesians	Eph. <i>or</i> Eph
Galatians	Gal. <i>or</i> Gal
Hebrews	Heb. <i>or</i> Heb
James	James <i>or</i> Jas
John (Gospel)	John <i>or</i> Jn
1 John (Epistle)	1 John <i>or</i> 1 Jn
2 John (Epistle)	2 John <i>or</i> 2 Jn
3 John (Epistle)	3 John <i>or</i> 3 Jn
Jude	Jude
Luke	Luke <i>or</i> Lk
Mark	Mark <i>or</i> Mk
Matthew	Matt. <i>or</i> Mt
1 Peter	1 Pet. <i>or</i> 1 Pt
2 Peter	2 Pet. <i>or</i> 2 Pt
Philemon	Philem. <i>or</i> Phlm
Philippians	Phil <i>or</i> Phil
Revelation**	Rev. <i>or</i> Rv
1 Thessalonians	1 Thess. <i>or</i> 1 Thes
2 Thessalonians	2 Thess. <i>or</i> 2 Thes
1 Timothy	1 Tim. <i>or</i> 1 Tm
2 Timothy	2 Tim. <i>or</i> 2 Tm
Titus	Titus <i>or</i> Ti

**Apocalypse and Revelation refer to the same book of the Bible. Be consistent in using one or the other.

Versions of the Bible

New Revised Standard Version	NRSV
New American Bible	NAB
New International Version	NIV
New Jerusalem Bible	NJB
Revised English Bible	REB