Interpreting Citations

One method of identifying relevant sources on a topic is to review the bibliography of a respected source, such as a class text. It is essential to know how to “read” the citations for the items listed in the bibliography. Is the item a book? a journal article? a chapter in a book? Use the clues below to decipher citations – and if you need help, please ask a librarian!

Is it a book?


**Clues:** title is usually underlined or italicized; there is only one title; name and location of the publisher are cited; page numbers are not listed.

**Finding the book:** Search by the title of the book in the UWM Library Catalog (Search@UW).

Is it an article?


**Clues:** there are two titles: journal title is usually underlined or italicized and article title may be in quotes; for scholarly journal articles, volume number and sometimes issue number will be listed immediately following journal title; popular articles usually include a specific date, rather than a volume/issue number; page numbers are listed.

**Finding the article:** Search by the title of the journal using the Citation Linker (Get It!).

Is it a chapter or essay in a book?


**Clues:** there are two titles: book title is usually underlined or italicized and chapter title may be in quotes; sometimes the word “In” precedes the title of the book; name and location of the book publisher are cited; page numbers are listed.

**Finding the book chapter:** Search by the title of the book (NOT the chapter title) in the UWM Library Catalog (Search@UW).