

The D.B. Weldon Library - The University of Western Ontario

Citing Government Publications: Detailed Guide

Elements in Citations

A bibliographic citation to a government publication is composed of the following elements and are in the format shown:

Issuing agency. Title: Sub-title, Personal author. Series. Place of publication:
Publisher, Date of publication.

The following table lists, in order, the seven elements of a government publication citation.
NOTE: Many citations will not include all seven elements.

- A Issuing agency (corporate author)
- B Title
- C Personal author
- D Series
- E Place of publication
- F Publisher
- G Date of publication

Bibliographic Format

Examples of specific sources in bibliographic format are shown below. Note that not all elements exist for every citation.

SAMPLE 1 (includes elements A, B, E, F, and G)

Canada. National Energy Board. Annual report 1986. Ottawa: Supply and Services
Canada, 1986.

- A Canada. National Energy Board
- B Annual report 1986
- C
- D
- E Ottawa
- F Supply and Services Canada
- G 1986

SAMPLE 2 (includes elements A, B, C, D, E, F, and G)

Environment Canada. Parks. National Historic Parks and Sites. Urban domestic servants
in 19th-Century Canada, by Claudette Lacelle. Studies in Archaeology, Architecture
and History. Ottawa: Supply and Services Canada, 1987.

Footnotes

The major differences when changing from bibliographic to footnote format are changes in punctuation. It is also necessary to include the page number. Look at Sample 3 below; it is an example of a footnote.

SAMPLE 3

Public Archives of Canada, Federal Archives Division, Records of the Canadian Forestry Service (RG39), General Inventory Series (Ottawa: Public Archives, 1982), 3.

Commas replace the periods separating levels of the issuing agency and separating elements of the citation. The publishing information is placed within round brackets. There is no punctuation immediately before the brackets. At the end of the bracket place a comma and then the page number(s) followed by a period.

Government Publications in Micro-format

Publishing information about the micro-publisher (micro-set and item number in the set if applicable) should be added after the publishing information of the original document. The name of the microform set and the item number of the document in the set then follows, enclosed in round brackets.

SAMPLE 4

New Brunswick. Dept. of Labour. Consultation document on employment standards, 1986. Fredericton: Department of Labour, 1986. Toronto: Micromedia, 1986 (Microlog 86-06748).

SAMPLE 5

United States. General Accounting Office. Trucking regulation: Price competition and market structure in the trucking industry: Report to congressional requestors. Washington, D.C.: General Accounting Office, [1987]. New Canaan, CT: Readex, 1989 (U.S. Government Publications (depository) 89-17707).

Element A: Issuing Agency

When identifying the issuing agency there are several possible levels:

- Level 1: name of country, city, province, international organization, etc.
- Level 2: department, agency, legislative body, commission
- Level 3: division, branch, regional office, committee
- Level 4: any further divisions noted on the publication

When composing the issuing agency, place a period between each level.

FOR EXAMPLE:

New Brunswick. Department of Natural Resources.
Canada. Office of the Prime Minister.
London, Ont. City Engineer's Department.
Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. Committee on Consumer Policy.
Canada. Royal Commission on New Reproductive Technologies.
British Columbia. Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources. Energy Resources
Branch. Analysis and Forecasting Division.
Canada. Parliament. House of Commons. Standing Committee on External Affairs and
International Trade.
Ontario. Legislative Assembly. Select Committee on Retail Store Hours.

If the name of the country (Level 1) is included in the name of the department or agency (Level 2), it is not necessary to list the name of the country twice (see Samples 2, 3, 8, 9, 10).

FOR EXAMPLE:

Statistics Canada NOT Canada. Statistics Canada.
Ontario Hydro NOT Ontario. Ontario Hydro.
Economic Council of Canada NOT Canada. Economic Council of Canada.

If there is more than one issuing agency or government listed on the publication, use only the government listed first (reading from top to bottom or from left to right).

Element B: Title

Take the title from the title page of the publication. If there is a sub-title, place a colon after the title and then add the sub-title, capitalizing the first word of the sub-title. Italicize the title and sub-title and place a period at the end unless it is to be followed by a personal author.

Element C: Personal Author

Most government publications do not have personal authors but if this information is included on the title page you should include it in the citation.

After the title, place a comma and then whichever of the following phrases is applicable:

by edited by compiled by prepared by

List the author (first name first; see Sample 2) or authors (see Sample 6). If there are more than 3 authors, list only the first author and after his/her name place the abbreviation et al.

SAMPLE 6:

United States. Department of State. Foreign Service Institute. Center for the Study of Foreign Affairs. *Toward a better understanding: U.S.-Japan relations: Report of a conference on U.S.-Japan relations Sept 28-29, 1983*, edited by Diane B. Bendahmane and Leo Moser. Washington: Department of State, 1986.

Element D: Series

Not all government publications are part of a series but if the title page includes series information, include it in the citation since it can be very useful for someone trying to find the publication.

Some series are numbered (see Samples 7 & 8) and some are unnumbered (see Sample 2).

SAMPLE 7:

Great Britain. Central Office of Information. Britain and the Falklands crisis: A documentary record. Central Office of Information Reference Pamphlet 176. London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1982.

If the title of the series is very general, e.g. occasional paper, technical report, etc., it is useful to provide information on the issuing agency as part of the series name (see Sample 8).

SAMPLE 8:

Environment Canada. Lands Directorate. Land Use Policy and Research Branch. Land planning framework of Canada: An overview, by R. Audet and A. Le Henaff. Environment Canada Lands Directorate Working Paper no. 28. Ottawa: Supply and Services Canada, 1984.

Some government agencies, for example Statistics Canada, assign catalogue or publication numbers to their publications. These numbers are very useful and should be placed in the same location as series information (Sample 9). If there is a series statement as well as a catalogue number, the catalogue number follows the series entry (Sample 10).

SAMPLE 9:

Statistics Canada. Enterprising Canadians: The self-employed in Canada, by Gary L. Cohen. Cat. no. 71-536. Ottawa: Supply and Services Canada, 1988.

SAMPLE 10:

Statistics Canada. Economic characteristics: Industry trends, 1951-1971. 1971 Census of Canada. Special Bulletin. Cat. no. 94-793. [Ottawa], 1978.

Element E: Place of Publication

If this information is not obvious, read the next section of this guide (Element F: Publisher) to determine whether the document is published centrally or by a department.

If the document is published centrally, check section Element F: Publisher of this guide for the place of publication for the major official publishers. Information on the official publisher for other countries can be located from a government directory or publications catalogue. Reference staff can help you, so don't hesitate to ask for assistance.

If your document is published by a department there are several possibilities for place of publication, only one of which will be relevant for a given department.

The possibilities are:

- location of the seat of government (e.g. Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources in Toronto)
- location of head offices of the department (e.g. the Canadian Federal Atmospheric Environment Service is based in Downsview, Ontario)
- location of a regional office if the document has been produced directly by a department's regional office (e.g. the Western and Northern Region office of the Canadian Wildlife Service is located in Edmonton, Alberta).

If you cannot determine a place, leave it out and punctuate as publisher, year. If both publisher and place of publication are unknown use n.p., and punctuate as n.p., year.

Element F: Publisher

With most government publications there are two major possibilities for publisher: either it is published centrally or by the issuing ministry or department.

The central publisher (with location) for the governments most heavily represented in the collection are:

- London: Her (or His) Majesty's Stationery Office
- Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office
- Canberra: Australian Government Printing Service
- New York: United Nations
- Toronto, Ont.: Queen's (or King's) Printer or Ministry of Government Services
- London, Ont.: City of London

The Canadian federal government publisher (Ottawa) has gone through several name changes:

- Queen's (or King's) Printer
- Department of Public Printing and Stationery
- Department of Supply and Services
- Information Canada
- Canadian Government Publishing Centre
- Supply and Services Canada

Not all documents in the government publications collection are formally published nor are they distributed through a central publisher. Many of these are produced and distributed by a government department. If you can ascertain this from information on the document, list the name of the department as publisher (Sample 3 and Sample 6).

If you cannot determine who published the document, leave it out, leave out the colon, and punctuate as place, year (see Sample 10). If both publisher and place of publication are unknown use n.p. and punctuate as n.p., year.

Element G: Date of Publication

The date of publication can usually be found on the front or back of the cover or title page. List only the year, not the month or day.

If the date is not listed in those places, see if there is a date mentioned in the preface, in a letter of transmittal at the beginning of the document or on the last page or back cover of the document. The date you find in these places should be enclosed in square brackets (see Sample 5).

If you do not find a date, use n.d. in the place where the year would go

Further Information

For a quick summary of this guide see Citing Government Publications (Brief Guide).
To cite hearings and submissions see information guide Citing Royal Commissions, Commissions of Inquiry & Task Forces.

See information guide Citing Sources: Electronic.

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URL: <http://www.lib.uwo.ca/weldon/docs/citinggovpubdetailed.html>