**Citing Indigenous Oral Teachings**

**and Sources from Oral Traditions**

Metro State Writing Center

Resources

* Modern Language Association. *How do I cite Indigenous oral teachings?* (Dec 7, 2022). https://style.mla.org/citing-indigenous-oral-teachings/
* Macleod, Lorisia. (2021). More Than Personal Communication: Templates for Citing Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers. *KULA: Knowledge Creation, Dissemination, and Preservation Studies*, 5(1). https://doi.org/10.18357/kula.13
* The University of British Columbia Library. (July 11, 2022). *Indigenous Citation Guide*. [Chicago Notes-Bibliography - Indigenous Citation Guide - Research Guides at University of British Columbia (ubc.ca)](https://guides.library.ubc.ca/IndigenousCitationGuide/Chicago_NotesBib)
* Kwantlen Polytechnic University. (Feb 2, 2023). *Indigenous Studies: Citations & References*. [Citation & References - Indigenous Studies - LibGuides at Kwantlen Polytechnic University (kpu.ca)](https://libguides.kpu.ca/indigenous/citation)

Principles for Attribution

Colleges and universities have revised citation formats to provide respectful, direct attributions for oral teachings of Elders and Knowledge Keepers in Indigenous communities that can be placed in bibliography lists. The following principles can also be adapted for properly citing knowledge imparted formally in communities with oral traditions.

* Include tribal names, clan names, community roles, or ethnic group in full bibliography entries.
* Titles should be descriptive and may include information on how the teaching was communicated or its heritage.
* Include exact dates if possible.
* For each element, consult with the oral author on how to accurately and respectfully represent their knowledge.
* **Note Well Please**: Templates include the fullest possible level of detail for the sake of completeness; some may be considered unnecessary or the oral author may not desire to share an element.

Suggested General Template

Last name, First Name. Nation/Community/Ethnic Group/Clan. Treaty Territory/Reservation/Country of Origin. Where they Live. Oral Teaching: Descriptive Title. Where Teaching Was Shared. Month, Day, Year.

This document is available in alternative formats upon request by contacting the Center for Accessibility Resources, [accessibility.resources@metrostate.edu](mailto:accessibility.resources@metrostate.edu) or 651.793.1549.

Suggested Formats for

APA, MLA, Chicago N&B, Chicago A-D, CSE, ASA

**please note**, our fictional oral author Saw Htoo represents a community that may not use last names

**APA**

APA Reference Entries

Last name, First initial. Nation/Community/Ethnic Group/Clan. Treaty Territory/Reservation/Country of Origin. Where they live. (Month Day, Year). *Descriptive title* [Oral teaching]. Location of sharing.

Nesser, D. Fond du Lake Band of Lake Superior Chippewa. LaPointe Treaty. Lives in Cloquet, MN. (May 25, 2015). *Oral teaching about traditional knowledge* [Oral teaching]. Shared at Neighborhood Community Center, Cloquet, MN.

Saw Htoo. Pwo Karen. Lives in St. Paul, MN. (Sept. 30, 2019). *Story about a tradition as told to Saw Htoo by his grandfather* [Oral teaching]. Shared at Saw Htoo’s home.

APA In-text Citations

Seasonally timing storytelling is important and so . . . (Nesser, 2015).

According to Saw Htoo (2019), the oral teaching …

**MLA**

MLA Works Cited Entries

Last name, First name. (Nation/Community/Ethnic Group/Clan). City/Community they live in. Description of the teaching, Name of story keeper who passed on the teaching to the author, Treaty Territory/Reservation/Country of Origin for author, Day Month Year.

Nesser, David (Fond du Lake Band of Lake Superior Chippewa). Lives in Cloquet, MN. Oral teaching about turtle management in lake systems. LaPointe Treaty, 25 May 2015.

Saw Htoo. Pwo Karen. Lives in St. Paul, MN. Story about an oral tradition, as passed on to Saw Htoo by his grandfather Saw Schwe, 30 Sept. 2019, CityPlace Community Center.

MLA In-text Citations

This knowledge of seasonally timing storytelling is important and so . . . (Nesser).

According to Saw Htoo, the oral teaching is . . .

**Chicago Notes & Bibliography**

Chicago N&B Bibliography Entries

Last name, First name. Nation/Community/Ethnic Group/Clan. Treaty Territory/Reservation/Country of Origin. Where They Live. “Descriptive Title.” Oral teaching shared at location/event, Month Day, Year.

Nesser, David. Fond du Lake Band of Lake Superior Chippewa. LaPointe Treaty. Lives in Cloquet, MN. “Turtle Management in Lake Systems.” Oral teaching shared at Coffee with the Elders in St Paul, Minnesota, May 25, 2015.

Saw Htoo. Pwo Karen. Lives in St. Paul, MN. “Story about a Tradition as Told to Saw Htoo by His Grandfather.” Oral teaching shared at Saw Htoo’s home, September 30, 2019.

Chicago N&B Notes

Full Note

1. Nesser, David. Fond du Lake Band of Lake Superior Chippewa. LaPointe Treaty. Lives in Cloquet, MN. “Turtle Management in Lake Systems” (Oral teaching shared at Coffee with the Elders in St Paul, Minnesota, May 25, 2015).

Short Note

1. Saw Htoo, “Story about a Tradition,” oral teaching shared in St Paul, MN.

**Chicago Author-Date**

Chicago A-D Reference List Entries

Last name, First name. Nation/Community/Ethnic Group/Clan. Treaty Territory/Reservation/Country of Origin. Where They Live. (Month Day, Year). “Topic/subject of communication.” Oral teaching shared at location/event.

Nesser, David. Fond du Lake Band of Lake Superior Chippewa. (May 25, 2015). “Teaching about Traditional Knowledge.” Oral teaching shared at Coffee with David event at the Neighborhood Community Center, Cloquet, MN.

Saw Htoo, Pwo Karen. (September 30, 2019*).* “Story about an Oral Tradition as Told to Saw Htoo by his Grandfather.” Oral teaching shared at Saw Htoo’s home in St Paul, MN.

Chicago A-D Parenthetical Citation

Seasonally timing storytelling is important and so . . . (David Nesser, oral teaching, May 25, 2015).

According to Saw Htoo seasonally timing storytelling is important and so . . . (oral teaching, September 30, 2019).

**CSE Name-Year**

CSE Name-Year Reference Entries

Last name First Initial, Nation/Community/Ethnic Group/Clan, Treaty Territory/Reservation/Country of Origin, Where They Live. Year Month Day. Descriptive title of the teaching. Oral Teaching; Place oral teaching was shared.

Nesser D, Fond du Lake Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, lives in Duluth. 2022 May 25. Turtle management in streams. Oral Teaching; shared in St Paul, Minnesota.

Saw Htoo, Pwo Karen. Thailand, Lives in St Paul, Minnesota. 2019 September 30. Story about an Oral Tradition as Told to Saw Htoo by his Grandfather. Oral Teaching; shared in St Paul, Minnesota.

CSE Name-Year In-text Citations

Seasonally timing storytelling is important and so . . . (Nesser 2022).

According to Saw Htoo seasonally timing storytelling is important and so . . . (2019).

**ASA**

**please note**, ASA suggests using Chicago Style for anything not covered in their print manuals, thus these examples are the same as Chicago A-D

ASA Reference Entries

Last name, First name. Nation/Community/Ethnic Group/Clan. Treaty Territory/Reservation/Country of Origin. Where They Live. (Month Day, Year). “Topic/subject of communication.” Oral teaching shared at location/event.

Nesser, David. Fond du Lake Band of Lake Superior Chippewa. (May 25, 2015). “Teaching about Traditional Knowledge.” Oral teaching shared at Coffee with David event at the Neighborhood Community Center, Cloquet, MN.

Saw Htoo, Pwo Karen. (September 30, 2019*).* “Story about an Oral Tradition as Told to Saw Htoo by his Grandfather.” Oral teaching shared at Saw Htoo’s home in St Paul, MN.

ASA In-text Citations

Seasonally timing storytelling is important and so . . . (David Nesser, oral teaching, May 25, 2015).

According to Saw Htoo seasonally timing storytelling is important and so . . . (oral teaching, September 30, 2019).