



Record where every fact came from.

Person, event or fact this source supports

Date accessed

Source type

- ☐ Birth, marriage or death certificate ☐ Census ☐ Parish register ☐ Will or probate ☐ Newspaper
☐ Military record ☐ Directory or electoral register ☐ Photograph ☐ Family document or letter ☐ Interview
☐ Book or article ☐ Website or database

Other

Title of record, collection or book

Creator or issuing authority

Where found (archive, library, website, URL)

Reference (piece, folio, page, certificate no., GRO ref.)

Date of the record itself

Place covered

Saved file name

Quality check

What did you actually see?

- ☐ Original image ☐ Index or transcript only ☐ A copy of a copy (derivative)

Who gave the information?

- ☐ Someone who was there, at the time (primary) ☐ Second-hand or later (secondary) ☐ Unknown

How does it answer your question?

- ☐ Directly ☐ Indirectly (a clue) ☐ Negative (the expected entry is missing)

What the record says (names, dates, places, ages, relationships, exact wording)

Reliability notes: doubts, conflicts, other records that agree or disagree

Written citation (copy into your tree software)



Patterns for the records you will meet most often.

A good citation lets a stranger find the same record from your note alone. Fill in the square brackets with your own details. Keep the order the same every time, so your notes stay consistent.

Birth, marriage or death certificate

[Event] certificate for [full name], [date of event]; registered [district, county]; GRO index reference [year, quarter, volume, page]; certificate number [no.], issued [date]. Held by [you].

Census (England and Wales)

[Year] census, [parish or township], [registration district, county]; [class and piece, e.g. RG 11/1234], folio [no.], page [no.], schedule or household [no.]; image viewed on [website], [date accessed].

Parish register

[Parish], [county], [baptism, marriage or burial] register [years], [entry number or date]; [archive and reference]; image [no.] on [website], [date accessed].

Wills and probate

Calendar of Grants of Probate and Letters of Administration, [year], entry for [surname, first names], page [no.]; viewed on [website or at archive], [date accessed]. The will itself: [court or archive reference].

Newspaper

[Newspaper title], [place], [day month year], page [no.], column [no.]: [headline or short description]; [archive or website], [date accessed].

Military record

[Name], [regiment, ship or service], service number [no.]; [archive reference or collection name]; [website or archive], [date accessed].

Interview, letter or family papers

Interview with [name] by [you], [date], [place]; recording or notes held by [you]. OR: Letter from [writer] to [recipient], [date]; held by [owner].

Online tree, book or website

[Author or tree owner], "[title]", [website or publisher], [date or version], [URL], accessed [date]. Treat other people's trees as leads, not proof.

Golden rule: cite as you go. Add the source the moment you find the fact, not weeks later.