
REFERENCING 1: GATHERING INFORMATION

by Paul Sandringham

We have talked a lot about referencing and why it is important. It isn't just that correct referencing means we do not get in trouble for plagiarism! Correct referencing shows that we have understood the principles of scholarly work, and it enables us and our readers to follow our arguments and build on the knowledge that we are reporting.

There are many different systems of referencing, and we will look at four of them in the next lesson. But first, we will discover what they all have in common, and the information you need to collect whenever you reference anything.

THE BASIC PURPOSE

The first aim of referencing is to make it easy for the reader to locate the source for our arguments and statements. Whether we are referring to original data or an interpretation; whether we are agreeing or disagreeing; whether we are referring to words or some other form of representation: we want to make sure that the reader can find it, reliably and easily.

That reader may be us – if we come back to our own work much later, we want to be able to find the original sources of our arguments and statements, too.

To make it easier to use our references, we should present things in a consistent way. That is what the various referencing styles are for: they define set ways to present the information.

GOOD AND BAD PRACTICE

Humans seem to like being lazy. Laziness, though, seldom pays off.

Let's think of referencing as a form of housework, like keeping your kitchen clean and tidy.

And now, let's think about that kitchen.

How do you keep your kitchen clean? If you spill something, do you wipe it up straight away or leave it until the end of the month? When you are preparing food, do you put things away as soon as you have finished with them, or do you leave them all out until someone complains or they get in your way? What about the dirty dishes after the meal: do you wash them (or put them in the dishwasher) straight away, or do you just pile them up until they start to smell or until you don't have any clean things left?

If you are messy in the kitchen, I bet you hate tidying up. It's so much work. All of those dishes to be washed, and the leftover food to scrape off the plates first. The spilled coffee staining the sink. It's much easier just to leave it for today and go out to Burger King instead.

Now let's think of referencing again. If you just use your sources as you go, but don't "clean up", then when you have finished your project you will have a very big job ahead of you. You will need to find all of the references. And maybe you can't find them all, or you overlook one, or you just don't have time. This is how you end up (a) hating the job of referencing, and (b) getting it wrong – which may end up with unwanted plagiarism. And we know where plagiarism can end.

However you are in the kitchen, try not to be a messy with referencing. Every time you find information that might be of use to you, make a note of where you found it. Have some sort of method or system for recording

the information. Maybe you will use special software, or maybe just a pencil and paper. But keep all the information you need. And when you actually use it in your writing, put in the reference straight away. That way, you won't forget it. Referencing will become part of writing, and you will not have a big task at the end. Your writing, just like a tidy kitchen, will not stink.

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

What all referencing systems have in common is the data they require. This should be obvious, because the information needed to locate our sources will be the same, no matter how we present it.

It is important to realise that there will be different information needed for different types of source. Photographs, sound recordings, movies, for example, require very different information to identify and locate them. We will just look at written sources for now.

Even with written sources, though, there are differences. We have journal articles, newspaper articles, chapters in anthologies (*Sammelbänder*), brochures, flyers, and "normal" books. By "normal", I mean that it is not an anthology or a reference book, but rather a single text with the same author(s) all the way. In an anthology (*Sammelband*) you will have one or more editor/s (*Herausgeber*) who have managed and coordinated the project, but each chapter will have a different author. The chapters are almost like articles in a journal. For reference books such as dictionaries or encyclopaedias, it can be even more complicated, because we often don't know who wrote the individual articles. We won't cover all of these things here. If you need to refer to a reference book, you will find information online about how to do so, or you can always send me an email to ask.

Before you turn to the next page, start off by making your own list. What do you think a reader will need in order to always find, for example, a journal article or book that you have referred to?

Over the next pages, I list the items you need to record for books, book chapters, journal articles, brochures and web pages. For any other sort of media, you can probably figure it out for yourself. Simply record:

- everything that someone could need to locate your source (or everything you would need to find it again)
- and everything needed to clearly identify whose work it was.

You may be surprised to see that I have not listed the ISBN, ISSN or DoI. Well, not every book has an ISBN. Not every regular publication has an ISSN. Not everything useful has a DoI. Older books, in particular, do not have them. And if a book is available in hardcover (*gebunden*) and paperback (*Taschenbuch*) forms, they will have different ISBNs although everything is the same. It is never a bad thing to record this data, and I do recommend it if available, but you will not find it listed in the reference styles. Because it is not universally available, it cannot be used for consistent referencing methods.

FOR A “NORMAL” BOOK

- **Title**
- **Subtitle**
Not every book has a subtitle, but if there is one, you must include it. It makes it easier to find the book later, and it is really part of the title.
- **Volume (*Band*)**
If the book is one of a series or set, you need to record the number and/or title of the volume (*Band*).
- **Author(s)**
Different referencing styles have different rules about authors. Do you provide the full name, or just the surname and initials? If there are multiple authors, how many do you list? But these are style questions. When it comes to recording the data, list EVERY author, and the full name if you can find it. Sometimes, you will not find an author listed. In that case, the book may be from a company or organisation, and that will be the author. This is often the case with official publications from government departments, etc.
- **Translator**
If the book is not in the original language, you have to say who translated it.
- **Edition (*Ausgabe/Auflage*)**
There is a difference between *Ausgabe* and *Auflage*. But unfortunately, some very important publishers in Germany do not seem to know the difference any more. Theoretically, a new *Ausgabe* is a new version of the book, with some changes to the text. A new *Auflage*, technically, just means that it was printed again, without any changes at all. So this doesn't matter to us. But some publishers now use *Auflage* to mean *Ausgabe*, so the only way to be safe is to record this information, whatever they call it.
- **Year**
The year the book was published in this form. If several years are listed inside the front of the book, normally you want the most recent one.
- **Publisher (*Verlag*)**
This helps to locate the exact version of the book you were using, and also helps if someone has to order the book.
- **City**
There may be more than one “Müller Verlag”. How do I know if the book came from Müller Verlag in Berlin, Müller Verlag in Innsbruck, or Müller Verlag in Zürich? This information is always listed in the front of the book. If more than one city is listed and it is not clear which office of the company published the book, use the first one.
- **Page(s)**
For each actual reference to the book, you need the page number(s).

All of the information about the book can be found just inside the front cover on one of the first pages.

FOR AN ANTHOLOGY (*SAMMELBAND*)

You need very similar information for other types of publication. Let's take an anthology (*Sammelband*) in which the work of several different authors on a particular subject is combined. I will only put extra comments on things that are different or could cause confusion.

- **Chapter title**
- **Chapter subtitle**
- **Page range for chapter**
The pages within the book for that chapter.
- **Book title**
- **Book subtitle**
- **Volume (*Band*)**
- **Author(s)**
The author(s) of just this chapter.
- **Editor(s) (*Herausgeber*)**
Just like authors, you need the names of all the editors of the book. Sometimes, one or more of the editors may also be authors of the chapter.
- **Translator**
- **Edition (*Ausgabe/Auflage*)**
- **Year**
- **Publisher (*Verlag*)**
- **City**
- **Page(s)**
Just as with a reference to a whole book, you need the page number(s) for each actual reference to the chapter.

FOR AN ARTICLE

A chapter in such a book is very much like a journal article, so the list for an article is similar. Here, instead of identifying the book, we need to identify the journal.

- **Article title**
- **Article subtitle**
- **Page range for article**
The pages within the journal for that article.
- **Journal title**
- **Journal subtitle**
- **Issue (*Ausgabe*)**
This can be tricky. Some journals come out monthly, some come out quarterly, some annually. There are even journals that come out five times a year. And then there are weekly publications too. Every journal will have its own way of identifying the issue. Often it is something like "Issue 4, 2019". But it could also be "Summer 2019" or "June-July 2019", for example. And many English-speaking scholarly journals use a special format like "Vol. 37 No. 6". This means the 37th year (*Jahrgang*) of the journal, and the 6th issue in that year.
- **Author(s)**
The author(s) of just this article, where identified (by newspapers or mixed journals, sometimes missing).
- **Translator**
- **Month & year**
Even though it is often part of the "Issue" details, you still record it separately – it makes it easier later.
- **Page(s)**
Just as with any other reference, you need the page number(s) for each actual reference to the article.

FOR A BROCHURE, FLYER OR REPORT

If you want to refer to a flyer or brochure, or perhaps a statistical publication that comes out regularly, it may be almost the same as a book, except you will probably not have the author's name. The author here becomes the organisation or department that is responsible for the content of the item (ViSdP). The publisher will be the organisation itself – possibly the same as the author, but record it as publisher too.

FOR A WEB PAGE

Sometimes we need to refer to text that is only available online. It may be an online book or an online journal, but it may also be just a “normal” web page. It is very important to remember that online resources are “volatile” (*flüchtig*) and transient (*unbeständig*). A web page may change from one second to the next, or it may disappear entirely or be available at a different location. This makes it very difficult for your reader, and it could easily make you seem unreliable.

For online books, articles, reports, etc. you should record all of the same information listed above, to the point that it is possible. Page numbers may not apply – but for some online resources, they do. The same also applies to any other web page. Often, there will be no obvious author, so you list the organisation or publisher (from the *Impressum* on a German page, not always easy to find for English sites, but try “About us”, “Contact” or “Legal information” pages if you can't find it elsewhere.

And then there are two extra things you have to record for any online resource:

- **URL**
The *exact* URL for the resource – but if at all possible, in such a way that it does not include any “session variables” that would make the URL not work for other users. You have to try this, otherwise the URL becomes almost useless.
- **Timestamp**
The exact date and time that you looked at/downloaded the online resource.

Finally, ALWAYS download a copy to your own device at that exact time/date, and store it permanently with your project. You **MUST** be able to prove that this is what was published at that web address at that time. It is best to do a screenshot AND a PDF “print” of the page, as both of these include the web address as well.

TOOLS

Now I have some good news for you.

As you know, there are different styles of putting the references into your work. But with the information above, you can satisfy any one of those styles. And there are software tools which make it all happen automatically for you. You can record all of your sources, and choose what style you want, and the references will be created for you automatically – at least in the *Verzeichnis* and footnotes (if you use a footnoting style).

Many of these tools create a reusable database as well, so that you can just keep using it for every scholarly project you work on, and do not have to re-enter information when you refer to the same publication again somewhere else.

We will look at these tools in our final session for this semester.