

Study Advice Services

Part of the IfL Centre for Learning Development

Referencing

(or how to avoid plagiarism)

WHAT IS REFERENCING?

Referencing is acknowledging the sources of information (originated by another person) that you have used to help you write your essay, report or other piece of work. In your work, you should use the existing knowledge of others to back up and provide evidence for your arguments. The sources of information you use may include books, journal articles (paper or electronic), newspapers, government publications, videos, websites and computer programmes.

WHY MUST I REFERENCE MY SOURCES OF INFORMATION?

There are several reasons why you must reference your work. In no order, these are:

- As courtesy to the originator of the material.
- To provide evidence of the depth and breadth of your reading and research (or lack of it!).
- To enable your reader to find and read in more detail, a source of information to which you refer in your work.
- To allow your lecturer/marker to check that what you claim is true; or to understand why you have made a particular mistake, and teach you how to avoid it in future.
- To enable you to find the source of information if you need to use it again.
- To avoid **plagiarism**.

WHAT IS PLAGIARISM?

Plagiarism is using the work of others without acknowledging your source of information; in other words, passing off someone else's work as your own (stealing it). This applies when you use the exact words from someone's work (a quotation) or when you paraphrase (put into your own words) something you have read.

In its Code of Practice on the Use of Unfair Means, the University of Hull defines plagiarism as follows:

"Plagiarism is a form of fraud. It is work which purports to be a candidate's own but which is taken without acknowledgement from the published or unpublished work of others." (University of Hull, 2004)

The same Code of Practice lays down severe penalties for committing plagiarism – it is regarded as a serious offence.

For a more detailed examination of plagiarism and ways of avoiding it other than referencing, please read the Study Advice Services leaflet of the same name. (University of Hull Study Advice Services, 2005)

WHEN MUST I USE A REFERENCE IN MY WORK?

You MUST use a reference whenever you:

- Use a direct quotation from a source of information (see below for how to do this).
- Paraphrase (put into your own words), someone else's ideas. This is an alternative to using a direct quotation.
- Use statistics or other pieces of specific information, which are drawn from a source you have read.

How do I use quotations in the text of my essay?

Quotations should be used sparingly, to back up (evidence) or add to your arguments. They should be fairly brief if possible, so that there is room in your work for plenty of your own arguments, not just those of others. When using quotations in your work, you must:

- Copy the words and punctuation of the original, exactly.
- Use three dots ... if you decide to omit any words, to indicate where the missing words were in the original.
- If necessary, add in square brackets or change a word/words so that the quotation flows on from your introductory sentence, like this: “[and would] impair the judgement of ...”

Your course or programme handbook will have details of how to format and present quotations within the text of your work.

HOW DO I REFERENCE MY SOURCES OF INFORMATION?

Your referencing guidelines

At the beginning of your University career, you should be given a set of guidelines for referencing your work. These will be in your course or programme handbook, or in a separate booklet. There are several international systems of referencing – the Harvard (author date) system and the MLA (footnotes) system are two well known examples. Different departments use different systems, so you MUST follow the system your department recommends.

However, a word of warning - within departments, different lecturers can have different preferences about details such as order within references and punctuation, and their preferences may vary from those in the department's guidelines. If this is the case, you should discuss referencing with your lecturer and come to an agreement about how you do it. After all, your lecturers are the people who mark your work!

The golden rules of referencing

Whichever referencing system you use, there are some golden rules which you should follow:

- Be consistent – use only the guidelines provided by your department and stick to them for all your work, unless your lecturers tell you otherwise (see above).

- Follow the detail in your guidelines absolutely, for example punctuation, capitals, italics and underlining. If you do not do this, you may lose marks for your work. Referencing is all about attention to detail!
- If the source of information you are referencing does not fit any of the examples in your guidelines (and many do not!), include enough information for your reader to find and check that source, in a format as near the appropriate example as possible. For further guidance on these types of references, see “Frequently Asked Questions” (below).
- Gather all the details you need for your references whilst you have the sources of information in your possession. If you forget to do this and cannot find the sources of information again (they may be out on loan from the library, for example), you cannot legitimately use them in your essay. If you do so without referencing them, you could be accused of plagiarism.
- In the case of books, take the details you need for your reference from the title page and the back of the title page, not from the cover of the book.
- Keep the referencing details you have gathered in a safe place. You can use small index cards for this or an electronic database, so that you can sort your references into the order laid down in your guidelines – usually alphabetical by author’s surname.

Referencing in the text of your work

In the text of your work you are expected to reference your sources of information in an abbreviated (short) format, which signposts your reader to the full details of the sources in your list of references at the end of your work (see below). You do not use full references in the middle of your work because they are bulky and break up the flow of your writing. They would also count in your word count! A short reference should come after the quotation, paraphrase or piece of information in your text.

The format of these short references should be detailed in your guidelines. In the Harvard system, for example, you would put the author’s surname followed by the date of publication. This should all be in brackets after the quotation, paraphrase or piece of information, like this: (Bloggs, 2002). If you use a direct quotation, you must also show the page number, for example (Bloggs, 2002:12). **Please remember that this is just an example – the format of short references that is stipulated in your referencing guidelines may be different, and that is the one you must follow!**

In the MLA system, there would be a superscript number after the quotation, paraphrase or piece of information in your text, with the short reference in a footnote at the bottom of the page. Microsoft Word is very good at helping you to insert footnotes – there is an example at the bottom of this page¹. Click on Insert, Reference and Footnote, and off you go!

Referencing at the end of your work

The references at the end of your work are the full details of your sources of information, which are signposted from the short references in the text of your work. These full references enable your reader to find and check your sources of information if they wish to.

Your referencing guidelines should tell you which of the sources of information you have used must be referenced at the end of your work. There are two main variations of this, and one or both will be required by your department. The variations are:

- **A list of references** – this includes all the sources of information you have actually quoted from, paraphrased or referred to in your work.

¹ Bloggs, 2002.

- **A bibliography** – this includes all your references, plus all the other sources of information you have used to help you write your piece of work, but which you do not actually quote from, paraphrase or refer to in the text of your work. A bibliography shows better than a list of references how widely you have read around your subject.

One thing you should be aware of is that some departments use the terms “list of references” and “bibliography” interchangeably. The above definitions are technically correct but departments and individual lecturers do not always adhere to them, so again, you should check the recommendations in your referencing guidelines.

Both a list of references and a bibliography are normally arranged alphabetically by author’s surname, with all types of sources of information in one list. However, you should check the recommendations about this in your referencing guidelines, because practice can vary between departments.

Departmental referencing guidelines usually tell you how to reference the different types of information sources you may have used in your work, such as books, journal articles, websites and so on. The guidelines will tell you the “elements” which the reference must include, such as author, title and date of publication. They will also tell you the order and format these elements must be in for each type of information source. All sources are different, so attention to detail is crucial!

Here are a few examples of full references in the Harvard format, to give you an idea of what they look like. In particular, note the order of the elements of the references and the consistent use of capital letters, italics and punctuation. **Please remember that these are just examples – the format of full references that is stipulated in your departmental referencing guidelines may be different, and that is the one you should follow!**

A book

The elements of references are:

- the name of the author(s) – surname(s) followed by initials or full first name(s)
- the year of publication
- the complete title, including any subtitle(s)
- the place of publication
- the name of the publisher

COTTRELL, Stella. 2003. *Skills for success: the personal development planning handbook*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

A chapter in a book edited by an editor, and which consists of chapters written by several different authors

The elements of the reference are:

- the name of the author(s) of the chapter – surname(s) followed by initials or full first name(s)
- the year of publication of the book
- the complete title of the chapter, including any subtitle(s)
- the word “In” followed by a colon
- the name of the editor(s) of the book in which the chapter appears – surname(s) followed by initials or full first name(s) - followed by the word ed(s).
- the complete title of the book, including any subtitle(s)
- the place of publication
- the name of the publisher
- the inclusive page numbers of the chapter, within the book

LAW, D. 1986. Doctors and books. In: Baker, D., ed. *Student reading needs*. London: Library Association. pp.88-98.

A printed journal (periodical) article

The elements of the reference are:

- the name of the author(s) of the article – surname(s) followed by initials or full first name(s)
- the year of publication of the journal
- the complete title of the article, including any subtitle(s)
- the complete title of the journal, including any subtitle(s)
- the volume number of the journal
- the issue number of the journal (or date, month or season)
- the inclusive page numbers of the article, within the journal

ORSHANSKY, M. 1965. Counting the poor: another look at the poverty profile. *Social Security Bulletin*, 28 (January). pp.3-29.

A website

The elements of the reference are:

- the name of the author(s)
- the year of production, or when the website was last updated
- the complete title, including any subtitle(s)
- the type of medium, in square brackets like this [Online]
- the place of publication
- the name of the publisher or producer
- the word Available, followed by a colon
- the full address of the page of the website you have used, not just the address of the main website
- the date you accessed the website, in square brackets

SHIELDS, G. and WALTON, G. 2001. *Cite them right! How to organise bibliographical references* [Online]. Newcastle: University of Northumbria at Newcastle. Available: <http://www.unn.ac.uk/central/isd/cite/> [Accessed 25 February 2005].

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

These are the most common questions students have about referencing, which are not always answered in their referencing guidelines.

• What do I do if there is more than one author?

If there are **two or three authors**, name all of them (unless your referencing guidelines say otherwise). For example, in the Harvard system, the short reference in the text of your work would be (Smith, Jones and Bloggs, 2004). The full reference at the end of your work gives all surnames and initials:

SMITH, C., JONES, T. and BLOGGS, F. 1993. *Where did my surname come from?* Timbuktu: Genealogy Association.

If there are **more than three authors**, put the name of the first author, as given in the source of information, followed by the abbreviation "et al." (unless your referencing guidelines say otherwise). For example, in the Harvard system, the short reference in the text of your work would be (Wilson et al., 1999). The full reference at the end of your work would be: WILSON, P. et al. 1999. *The magic of grammar*. Hull: Longbore Press.

- **What about sources of information with no author?**

Make sure there really is no author - remember that in some cases an author may be an organisation or a government department. If there is no author, begin the reference with the title. Alternatively, with anonymous works it may sometimes be appropriate in the reference and in citation in the text to give the author as "Anon".

- **What about sources of information that have an editor, not an author?**

In the short reference in the text of your work, put the same as normal - (Hodgson, 2003). In the full reference at the end of your work, put "ed." or "editor" after the surname. For example, in the Harvard system: BAKER, D., ed. 1986. *Student reading needs*. London: Library Association.

If there is more than one editor, follow the question on what to do if there is more than one author, and use "eds." or "editors" as above.

- **What is the difference between an edition and a reprint?**

An **edition** (usually of a book) means that the book (or part of it) has been rewritten in some way and it is therefore different from the previous edition. In this case, the date in the short reference in the text of your work must be the date of the edition. For example, in the Harvard system it would be (Cottrell, 2003). In the full reference at the end of your work, put an edition statement and the date of that edition, so that it matches the date in your short reference. The format would therefore be: COTTRELL, Stella. 2003. *The study skills handbook*. 2nd ed. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

The edition and its date of publication will be stated on the reverse of the title page. Please note that if the edition is the first one, the above rules should be ignored. Only follow them for second editions onwards.

A **reprint** (again, usually of a book) means that the book has sold so well that more copies have been printed to satisfy demand. Unlike an edition, a reprint has not been altered in any way, so for referencing purposes you can ignore the dates of reprints on the reverse of the title page. Instead, use the date of publication of the first or subsequent edition in your references.

- **How do I reference a quotation by an author who has been cited in a book written by someone else?**

You need a double reference for this! You must always reference first, the original source - the author you are quoting. For example, in the Harvard system, if the quotation is by Barnett, the short reference in the text of your work would be (Barnett, 1996). In the full reference at the end of your work, you should firstly cite the book by Barnett from which the quotation comes. You should be able to find the elements of the reference you need in the bibliography of the book in which Barnett is cited. After this reference, you should put the word "in", followed by the full reference for the book in which Barnett is cited, for example: BARNETT, C. 2005. *Kitchen planning for beginners*. Hull: DIY Press, cited in BECKETT, B. *DIY in easy steps*. London: Ideal Home Publishers.

- **What do I do if the source of information has no date?**

Use the abbreviation "n.d." or the phrase "no date" instead of the date.

REFERENCES AND FURTHER SOURCES OF HELP

PENNIE, D. 2004. *References: how to collect and present them* [Online]. Hull: University of Hull Academic Services Libraries. Available: <http://www.hull.ac.uk/lib/infoskills/collect.html> [Accessed 07 October 2005].

Acknowledgement is accorded to David Pennie for permitting the use of his work during the preparation of this leaflet.

UNIVERSITY OF HULL. 2001. *Code of practice on the use of unfair means by candidates in pursuit of the award of any academic or professional qualification of the University of Hull* [Online]. Hull: University of Hull. Available: <http://www.student-admin.hull.ac.uk/downloads/code.doc> [Accessed 07 October 2005].

UNIVERSITY OF HULL. 2001. *Code of practice on the use of unfair means: your rights and what to do if an allegation is made against you under the Code* [Online]. Hull: University of Hull. Available: <http://www.student-admin.hull.ac.uk/downloads/Leaflet.doc> [Accessed 07 October 2005].

UNIVERSITY OF HULL STUDY ADVICE SERVICES. 2005. *Plagiarism* [Online]. Hull: University of Hull Study Advice Services. Available: <http://www.hull.ac.uk/studyadvice/resources/acadw/O1pdfs/plagiarm.pdf> [Accessed 07 October 2005].

All web addresses in this document were correct at the time of publication

The information in this leaflet can be made available in an alternative format on request from Sue Hodgson, telephone 01482 466199.

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