

An introduction to referencing

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Referencing

- ▶ Whenever you refer to either the work or ideas of someone or are influenced by another's work, you must acknowledge this; similarly if you use a direct quotation from someone's work this should be referred to accurately
(from the old SHU Guide to Referencing¹).
- ▶ SHU Library offers advice on referencing in the APA version 7 style and:
 - ▶ your assessed work must comply with this;
 - ▶ this is linked to from the group work document.

¹Learning and Information Services. (2014). *Guide to Harvard Referencing and Citations*. Retrieved from <http://lcdastore.shu.ac.uk/RefGuideV7.pdf> [N.B. this reference is provided here because I have cited it, but the link is broken. Current SHU referencing help is via libguides.shu.ac.uk/referencing.]

Referencing

- ▶ However, this doesn't apply to 'common knowledge', however that is defined.
- ▶ The example given in the old SHU guide to referencing is "London is the capital city of the United Kingdom", but it says

What may be common knowledge in one nation, culture or academic discipline may not be in another. You should consider whether something is likely to be common knowledge to the audience of your work. If you are unsure whether something is common knowledge, check with your tutor.

What is common knowledge?

- ▶ As a general rule (to which exceptions apply), I'd say the well-established facts of a mathematician's life (dates, places, the titles and dates of work they publish, etc.) can be treated as common knowledge — unless these are contested by different sources — but citations may be needed for interpretation, discussion of the context and impact in which they worked, etc.

What is common knowledge?

- ▶ In maths, generally speaking, the statement of a theorem or result and its proof are treated as common knowledge and you may do the same — but there are exceptions, of course, for example
 - ▶ the precise statement of a result may be contested;
 - ▶ you may be discussing different translations of a piece of writing, in which case sources must be given.

What is common knowledge?

- ▶ If in doubt about whether to reference something, please ask.

Quoting or paraphrasing

- ▶ A quotation is a direct piece of text taken from the original source.
 - ▶ All quotes must be clearly indicated "... " or perhaps '...', or indentation if presenting a block quote, and their source given including page number if available.
 - ▶ Use short quotes of perhaps a few words up to 2-3 sentences.
 - ▶ Use quotes sparingly when the exact wording is needed to support what you are saying.
 - ▶ You are more likely to quote opinion than fact; for example a mathematician's birthplace is a fact, but the level of his/her impact might be something you quote from a reputable source (unless you are giving your own opinion having weighed up the evidence).

Quoting or paraphrasing

- ▶ To paraphrase is to put the information in your own words.
 - ▶ Do not use quote marks, but still give a source (which may or may not include a page number depending on what you are paraphrasing).
 - ▶ Be careful not to misrepresent what was written in the original.

Quoting or paraphrasing

- ▶ Essentially, you are writing something in your words supported by citations as needed.
- ▶ Quote if you want to precisely represent what someone else has said.
- ▶ Paraphrase in order to rephrase something to fit your style of writing, not just to reword for its own sake.
- ▶ Your work shouldn't just be a set of quotes from elsewhere.

An example

— original source

Latin. Lagrange was a major contributor to the first volumes of the *Mélanges de Turin* volume 1 of which appeared in 1759, volume 2 in 1762 and volume 3 in 1766.

The papers by Lagrange which appear in these transactions cover a variety of topics. He published his beautiful results on the calculus of variations, and a short work on the **calculus of probabilities**. In a work on the foundations of dynamics, Lagrange based his development on the principle of least action and on kinetic energy.

From the MacTutor History of Mathematics website.

No referencing

- ▶ If you simply copy and paste this content without attributing it:
Lagrange was a major contributor to the first volumes of the Mélanges de Turin volume 1 of which appeared in 1759, volume 2 in 1762 and volume 3 in 1766. The papers by Lagrange which appear in these transactions cover a variety of topics. He published his beautiful results on the calculus of variations, and a short work on the calculus of probabilities.
- ▶ This is plagiarism because you are passing off someone else's work as your own.

No referencing — rephrased

- ▶ If you simply write:

Lagrange was a major contributor to the Mélanges de Turin volumes 1–3 in 1759–1766 and his work included beautiful results on the calculus of variations.

- ▶ Even though you have rephrased the source, this is still plagiarism, passing off someone else's ideas or work as though they are your own.
- ▶ “Major” and “beautiful” are somewhat subjective — the opinion of the source.

Referencing — “I guess the web link will do”

- ▶ If you simply list the URL of the web page at the end of the document, this is not sufficient.

Lagrange was a major contributor to the Mélanges de Turin volumes 1–3 in 1759–1766 and his work included beautiful results on the calculus of variations.

`https://mathshistory.st-andrews.ac.uk/Biographies/Lagrange/`

- ▶ You haven't said anything about the source, including who wrote it and when.

Referencing

- ▶ Usually you must include the author, date and title in a reference. Depending on the type of source, you may also need to include details about the publisher of a book, the web address of an online article, etc.
- ▶ Check libguides.shu.ac.uk/referencing for full details.
- ▶ This is a useful source to consult as needed for unusual cases
 - ▶ what to do if there is no author;
 - ▶ what to do if there are two articles by the same author in the same year;
 - ▶ how to reference an English translation of a document;
 - ▶ etc. etc.
- ▶ Also advice on software that can help with referencing.

Referencing

- ▶ You will see variants on this as there are many versions of referencing.
- ▶ Generally, the important things are to follow the style of whatever publication you are writing for, or else to do something sensible and consistent.
- ▶ However, for your assessed work at SHU, you should follow the APA style unless told otherwise, so this is a good opportunity to get to grips with it.

Example references

- ▶ Journal article (author(s), year, article title, journal title, volume(issue), page numbers, DOI number or URL):
 - ▶ Rothman, T. (1982). Genius and Biographers: The Fictionalization of Evariste Galois. *The American Mathematical Monthly* 89(2), 84–106.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/2320923>
- ▶ Book (author(s), year, title, edition (if not first), publisher):
 - ▶ Neumann, P.M. (2011). *The mathematical writings of Évariste Galois*. European Mathematical Society.

Finding the details to reference the MacTutor quote about Lagrange

- ▶ What do we need to know?
- ▶ APA asks, for web pages, for author(s), year (full date if appropriate, e.g. blog post), title of page, title of website and URL.
- ▶ There are some niggles, see libguides.shu.ac.uk/referencing for full details.

Finding the details to reference the MacTutor quote about Lagrange

Cross-references ([show](#))

Written by J J O'Connor and E F Robertson
Last Update January 1999

DJF/JOC/EFR
[Copyright information](#)

School of Mathematics and Statistics
University of St Andrews, Scotland



If you have comments, or spot errors, we are always pleased to [hear from you](#).

- ▶ Authors: J J O'Connor and E F Robertson.
- ▶ Year: 1999.

Finding the details to reference the MacTutor quote about Lagrange



► Title of page: 'Joseph-Louis Lagrange'².

²I'd take this over 'MacTutor' (on the page) or 'Joseph-Louis Lagrange (1736 - 1813) - Biography' (in the web browser title bar). Use whatever seems sensible, with a preference for what is written on the page.

Putting it together

Lagrange was a major contributor to the Mélanges de Turin volumes 1–3 in 1759–1766 and his work included beautiful results on the calculus of variations.

References

Robertson, E.F and O'Connor, J.J. (1999). *Joseph-Louis Lagrange*. MacTutor History of Mathematics Archive. Retrieved from <https://mathshistory.st-andrews.ac.uk/Biographies/Lagrange/>

► Still, this is not quite enough.

The need to cite

- ▶ We haven't told the reader which part is from Robertson and O'Connor.
- ▶ What if there are several references, how can we tell which parts are from which reference?
- ▶ Or, indeed, which parts are your own work, your opinion, etc.?

Citing references

- ▶ You cite a work by giving the author's surname (or more complicated if the author isn't a person — see the guide to referencing) and date.
- ▶ Either of these is fine, depending on your preference and the structure of what you are writing:
 - ▶ O'Connor & Robertson (1999) say that Lagrange was a “major contributor” to the *Mélanges de Turin* volumes 1–3 in 1759–1766 and his work included “beautiful” results.
 - ▶ Lagrange was a “major contributor” to the *Mélanges de Turin* volumes 1–3 in 1759–1766 and his work included “beautiful” results (O'Connor & Robertson, 1999).