

# Referencing: Why, when and how



# Basic principles of referencing

*This booklet is part of a series on academic writing. "Referencing: Why, when and how" explains the basic principles of referencing.*

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## 1. Why should you reference?

All academic writing draws to some extent on the ideas and findings of other researchers and writers. In your assignments, you will frequently need to refer to the opinions and findings of others in order to support the points you make. Whenever you do so, it is essential to include information about the original source in order to:

**Acknowledge that you have used the words or ideas** of another writer.

If you do not acknowledge the source of your information, you are **plagiarising**, i.e. claiming credit for someone else's words or ideas.

Show that a statement or argument you have made is **supported by evidence** and allow readers to **assess the validity** of that evidence.

In other words, you are showing the readers that you have read widely in order to develop your argument or ideas, and that you have strong evidence to back up those ideas.

Allow readers to **locate the source** if they want more information.

It is important, therefore, that full and accurate details of each source are given.

# Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the use of someone else's words or ideas *as your own*. You are plagiarising if, for instance, you quote someone's exact words without using quotation marks and including the source of the quote, or if you re-write another writer's ideas into your own words without acknowledging the source of those ideas. It is important to remember that plagiarism is not simply using another writer's words; it is *using another writer's words without acknowledging the source*.

Plagiarism is regarded as a very serious offence in academic institutions since it is considered a form of theft.

Plagiarism may involve deliberate cheating, such as copying someone else's assignment or submitting a previously marked assignment. Often, though, students plagiarise accidentally rather than intentionally. You can reduce the risk of unintentionally plagiarising by following a few key steps:

1. Be meticulous in your note-making:

- Keep careful records of the bibliographic details of the sources you consult. If you forget to write down those details while you are taking notes, you might have difficulty finding the source again when it comes time to write your essay, or you might run out of time to do so.
- Clearly identify, in your notes, information you have quoted and information you have paraphrased. A quote is a passage you have copied exactly from the original source; a paraphrase is a passage that includes ideas from the source that you have written in your own words, sentence structure and style. When you copy the exact words from someone else's writing, always put quotation marks (“ ”) around the words in your notes. Later, when you are writing your assignment, the quotation marks will remind you that those words are not yours.

2. Improve your paraphrasing skills:

- Paraphrasing requires you to make substantial changes; it is not sufficient simply to change the occasional word. (If you would like to find out more about paraphrasing, the SLC has a number of relevant handouts.)

3. Make sure you understand the mechanics of referencing.

## 2. When should you reference?

You should provide the source (ie. provide a *reference, or citation*) when you:

1. Quote someone else's words (written or spoken), ie. copy the words exactly.
2. Re-word (paraphrase) or refer to someone else's ideas or findings (written or spoken).
3. Use factual data (eg. facts, statistics, information from graphs) from other sources.
4. Reprint a diagram, chart or other illustration.
5. Use someone else's way of organising or presenting information (e.g. a design format, a model).
6. Need to show the reader that you have evidence for a statement or argument you have made.

It is not usually necessary to provide a reference when you:

1. Use your own knowledge (such as, a personal anecdote, your own research findings). But you must make it clear to the reader that you are using your own experience, findings, etc.
2. Use general common knowledge in your own words. (For example, *ANZAC Day commemorates the landing of New Zealand and Australian troops on the shores of the Gallipoli Peninsula in 1915.*)
3. Use general knowledge in your subject area, in your own words. At first, it may be difficult for you to judge what is and is not general knowledge in the subject. If in doubt, you are better to "play safe" and provide a reference.

### 3. How should you reference?

#### 3.1 Basic Conventions for Referencing

There are several referencing systems used in academic writing. The way you are required to reference sources in a history assignment, for instance, is likely to be different from that required in an ecology assignment. However, all systems (a) show the readers which sources have contributed to, or support, a specific idea or point in your assignment, and (b) provide the readers with information about the source you have referred to, so that they can find the source themselves.

All systems provide this information through two basic components:

An **in-text citation**: In the body of the assignment, there is some information about each source used (or a reference number that directs the reader to a place in the text where that information can be found).

**List of References**: At the end of the essay or report, there is a complete list of the sources used, with all the details that will allow the reader to locate each source (i.e. the author, the title, and details about when, where and how the source was published). This is called the **References** or **Works Cited** if it includes only the sources you have cited (used, or directly referred to) in the assignment, or the **Bibliography** if it also includes sources which you consulted but did not directly cite.

#### 3.2 Systems of Referencing

The way in which the basic information (i.e. the author, the title, and the publication details) is presented in the body of the text and at the end of the text differs from one referencing system to another.

There are two broad types of referencing system (outlined in Figure 1):

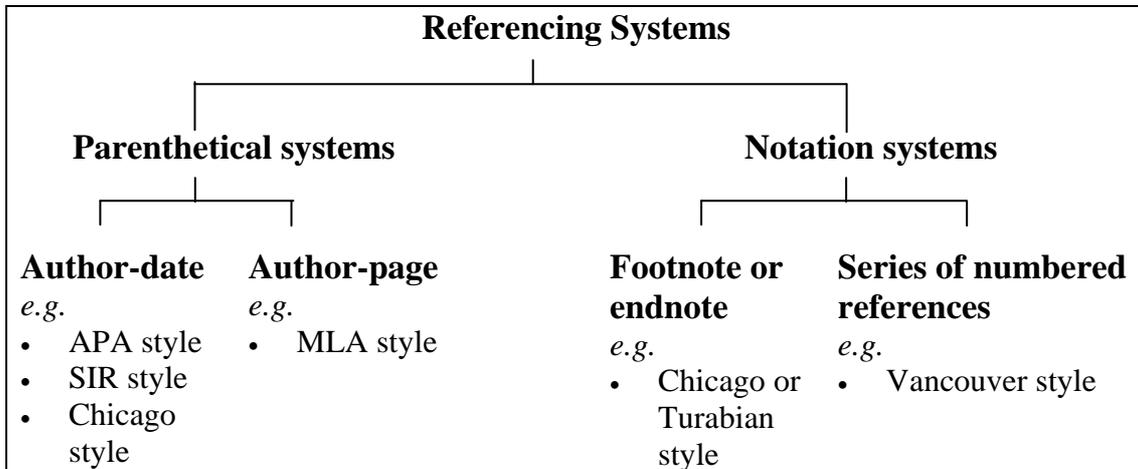
##### 1. **Parenthetical** systems

When a source is referred to, some abbreviated information about the author is included in the body of the text in parentheses (brackets). In the Sciences and Social Sciences, this information usually includes the author and the date of publication (hence the common name “**author-date**” system). Another variation of the parenthetical system, commonly used in the Humanities, includes only the author’s name and page number in the body of the text. Full bibliographic details of every source cited are given in the References list at the end of the text.

##### 2. **Notation** systems

When a source is referred to, a superscript number (e.g. <sup>1</sup>) is placed in the text. This number refers the reader to a footnote or endnote that provides further information (usually, full bibliographic details) about the source. This system is traditionally used in the Arts and Humanities, and sometimes in Social Sciences. In another notation system, each source is assigned a unique number that is used whenever that source is

referred to in the text. This system is commonly used in the biomedical disciplines (for example, the Vancouver style). In notation systems it is not always necessary to provide a separate References list at the end of the text since full bibliographic details of every source cited are given in the footnotes or endnotes.



**Figure 1. Types of referencing systems**

These different systems have evolved in response to the priorities and needs of different disciplines. A discipline that places a high value on the recency of evidence, for instance, is likely to use a system that includes the publication date in the body of the text so that the reader can immediately assess the source’s validity. On the other hand, a discipline that places a high value on creating an uninterrupted flowing text is likely to prefer a notation system to avoid the “disruption” of in-text references.

### 3.3. Systems and Styles: Which One to Use?

To make matters even more complicated, within each system there are a number of variations. These variations are called **styles**, and the differences between them are usually minor. (Often styles vary only in punctuation.) Examples of how you would reference using four common styles are given in Figure 2.

Finding your way through the maze of different systems and styles may seem daunting at first, but no-one expects you to learn all the minor points of referencing “by heart”. (Even the most experienced academic writers will have a well-thumbed Style Guide on their bookshelves to which they refer frequently.) As a student, you are expected:

- to understand the basic principles of referencing
- to know which system and style your division prefers and to follow exactly the guidelines for that style.

***Regardless of the style you use, the key is to be accurate and consistent.***

## Figure 2. Examples of the use of different referencing systems

Here are some examples of how you would reference a source using different referencing systems. The information referred to came from page 282 of Keith Macky & Gene Johnson’s book “The Strategic Management of Human Resources in New Zealand” (published in Sydney by McGraw Hill in 2000).

| Referencing system                                                | Parenthetical                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                              | Notation                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Referencing style                                                 | APA                                                                                                                                                                                          | SIR Publishing                                                                                                                                                               | Chicago (notes)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Vancouver                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| In the body of the text                                           | First impressions can have a strong impact on the types of questions asked in an interview (Macky & Johnson, 2000, p. 282).                                                                  | First impressions can have a strong impact on the types of questions asked in an interview (Macky & Johnson 2000, p. 282).                                                   | First impressions can have a strong impact on the types of questions asked in an interview. <sup>1</sup>                                                                                                                                             | First impressions can have a strong impact on the types of questions asked in an interview. (1)                                                                                                     |
| In the footnote (bottom of the page) or endnote (end of the text) | (No footnote or endnote needed)                                                                                                                                                              | (No footnote or endnote needed)                                                                                                                                              | 1. Keith Macky and Gene Johnson, <i>The Strategic Management of Human Resources in New Zealand</i> (Sydney: McGraw Hill, 2000), 282.                                                                                                                 | (No footnote needed; each source has a unique number that links it to the Reference list entry.)                                                                                                    |
| In the References List at the end of the text                     | Macky, K., & Johnson, G. (2000). <i>The strategic management of human resources in New Zealand</i> . Sydney: McGraw Hill.<br><br>(Sources listed alphabetically according to author’s name.) | Macky K, Johnson G 2000. The strategic management of human resources in New Zealand. Sydney, McGraw Hill.<br><br>(Sources listed alphabetically according to author’s name.) | Macky Keith and Gene Johnson. <i>The Strategic Management of Human Resources in New Zealand</i> . Sydney: McGraw Hill, 2000.<br><br>(A References list may not be required; if it is, sources are listed alphabetically according to author’s name.) | 1. Macky K, Johnson G. The strategic management of human resources in New Zealand. Sydney: McGraw Hill; 2000.<br><br>(Sources numbered and listed in order they are first referred to in the text.) |

## 4. Useful style guides

### 1. Parenthetical system

#### *APA style*

*The style required by the Human Sciences and Commerce Divisions*

- American Psychological Association. (2001). *Publication manual for the American Psychological Association* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. (LU Library ref: RefZ253 Pub 2001)
- American Psychological Association. (2007). *APA style guide to electronic references*. Washington, DC: Author. [LU Library ref Ref: Z253 APA 2007]
- Student Learning Centre, Lincoln University. (2005). *Referencing: A basic guide to APA style*. Unpublished. Available at <http://slc.lincoln.ac.nz>
- Student Learning Centre, University of Auckland. (2005). *Referen@ite*. Available at <http://www.cite.auckland.ac.nz>

#### *Chicago Style*

*An author-date style used in social sciences as an alternative to footnote system*

- *The Chicago Manual of Style*. (15<sup>th</sup> ed.). (2003). Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (LU Library ref. RefZ253 Chi 14<sup>th</sup> Ed.)
- Student Learning Centre, University of Auckland. (2005). *Referen@ite*. Available at <http://www.cite.auckland.ac.nz>

#### *SIR style*

*Style commonly used in the physical sciences*

Royal Society of New Zealand. (2004, November). *References in Royal Society of New Zealand journals*. (Available at <http://slc.lincoln.ac.nz>)

### 2. Notation system

#### *Footnotes or endnotes*

*Style commonly used in history papers*

- *The Chicago Manual of Style*. (15<sup>th</sup> ed.). (2003). Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (LU Library ref. RefZ253 Chi 14<sup>th</sup> Ed.)
- Student Learning Centre, University of Auckland. (2005). *Referen@ite*. Available at <http://www.cite.auckland.ac.nz>

#### *Numbered references*

- University of Queensland Library. *References/Bibliography Vancouver style*. Available at <http://www.library.uq.edu.au/training/citation/vancouv.html>

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: **If you would like to know more about referencing,**  
: **ask the Student Learning Centre receptionist (in H130A) about our**  
: **resources and the workshops and one-to-one appointments we offer.**  
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