A quick guide to using references in your work

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1. What is referencing?

Referencing is a way of acknowledging all the information sources that you have used while researching your essay, report or article. They highlight those parts of your work that are based on the work, opinion and material of others. All academic work is part of a greater body of knowledge. Showing where your work fits into this is an important part of academic practice.

2. What should I reference?

You should reference any materials used to construct your text. Academic writing involves using sound evidence to support and strengthen your own arguments. You are trying to demonstrate how widely you have read but also that you have understood what you have read and can interpret it in relation to the argument you are making. Use your references to support your arguments, not to replace them.

3. How should references be presented in your work?

Referencing is a two-step process. First, citations are inserted in the main body of the text, and then a detailed reference list is presented at the end of the work.

3.1. The first step - inserting citations within the text

Citations are placed within the main body of the text, immediately after the sentence that you wish to acknowledge. There are two ways of making a citation, using either an author/date format (e.g. Harvard system) or a numbering system (e.g. Oxford system). Representative examples from published scientific articles are described.
viscosity increasing agents such as cellulose derivatives and polymers derived from acrylic acid (Foldvari, 1996; Skalko et al., 1998). Because of the good mucoadhesive properties of cellulose derivatives, these hydrogels can be a good vehicle for the incorporation of liposomes destined for vaginal delivery (Woolfson et al., 2002; Owen et al., 2000). Freeze-dried forms (rods, tablets, etc.) of these gels could further offer potential for stable and practical

where $\sigma$ is the shearing stress, $\gamma$ is the rate of shear, $k$ is the consistency, and $n$ is the pseudoplastic index (Andrews and Jones, 2006).

region which accounts for 70% of global burden of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) infection (1). Current HIV prevention behavioral messages on abstinence, faithfulness and condom promotion have had limited impact on HIV incidence rates in women, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, where young women bear the greatest HIV burden (2). The search for new technologies to prevent sexually transmitted HIV infection over the past three decades has had limited success. Only five of 37 randomized controlled trials, which tested 39 HIV prevention strategies, have demonstrated protection against sexual transmission of HIV infection (3). The successful trials tested medical male circumcision in South Africa (4), Kenya (5) and Uganda (6) (combined effectiveness in reducing HIV acquisition = 57%), sexually transmitted infection (STI) treatment in Tanzania (effectiveness in reducing HIV acquisition = 42%) (7) and a HIV vaccine combination in Thailand (effectiveness in reducing HIV acquisition = 31%) (8). Hence, HIV prevention technologies that women can use and control remain a pressing priority (9).
3.2. The second step - a detailed reference list

In scientific articles, the reference list is generally placed at the very end of the work. Clearly, the format of the reference list will depend on the citation system used within the main text.

For an author/date citation style, the reference list is presented in author surname alphabetical order. Several representative styles are presented below.
In this reference style, all authors are named, using a surname followed by initials. Next, the year of publication is presented, followed by the article title, and then the journal details (abbreviated journal name, volume, and page number range). Although there are many variations on this style, the same information is always presented. Each reference is formatted in exactly the same way - even down to the spaces and punctuation marks!

This is a slightly different take on the author/date reference format - the year of publication is presented in rounded brackets, and a colon is used to separate the volume number from the page number range.

For a numbered citation style, the reference list is presented in numerical order of first citation in the main text. Several representative styles are presented below.

All the required information is provided here (authors, article title, journal title, volume, page numbers), with the references numbers presented (rather unusually!) in square brackets. The journal style is to present author initials without a full stop between the letters ...

... while, in this example, full stops and spaces are used. It all comes down to the prescribed journal style! Here, the journal titles are even presented in italicized text. The important aspect is that they are all formatted accurately and consistently.
4. Some final thoughts ...

Which referencing style should I use?

The numbered referencing system is more widely used in science than the the author/date system. However, for student coursework, you can adopt any of the conventional referencing styles described in this document - the choice is yours. The important thing is that you apply the style accurately and consistently throughout your work.

Should I use direct quotations?

No, don't use direct quotations unless you happen to be quoting Einstein or Shakespeare (which is unlikely)! In academic culture, it is poor practice to use a lot of direct quotes from someone else's work. Your assignment should be mostly your own arguments in your own words, using evidence from your research to support or challenge them. When it is appropriate to use direct quotations, they should be sufficiently substantive and important as to warrant quoting. Always interpret the quotation and show how it relates to the argument you are making and the essay question.

How should I cite web pages?

Website references are becoming more common, especially as many organizations are moving their information material away from traditional, hard copy, print formats to online versions. However, the primary scientific reference sources are articles in peer-reviewed journals and academic books, and you should prioritize these sources over website references. If you need to cite a web reference, the following information should be included in the final reference list.

- Author(s), surname and initials – if known
- Year of publication, in brackets (look for an updated date at the foot of the page - if not present, use the year you accessed the page instead)
- Title, underlined or in italics
- URL: http://internet address/remote path
- Date visited, in square brackets

Here are some examples:

- Farmers Weekly Interactive. URL: http://www.fwi.co.uk [18 August 2009]

Of course, the exact style will vary according to the citation system you are using.
Where can I find abbreviated journal titles?

Many reference sections require use of abbreviated journal titles (e.g. J Control Release instead of Journal of Controlled Release). These have the advantage of reducing the overall printed page count in a book or journal edition. The link below provides a list of abbreviated titles for all journals. http://images.webofknowledge.com/WOK46/help/WOS/J_abrvjt.html

Can I use Wikipedia?

Yes, but with caution. The general consensus in academia is that you may use Wikipedia, but it’s best not to cite the articles directly. For further advice, please refer to the following Wikipedia article! http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Citing_Wikipedia

Are there software packages that can help me manage references?

Using referencing software (also known as bibliographic software) is a good idea when writing a thesis or long document in which you cite the work of others. It helps by organizing your references into an easily manageable database.

Used in conjunction with a word processing package (e.g. Microsoft Word), your referencing software can create a reference list formatted to your needs to be included in your document.

There are a number of referencing software package currently available - some are free, others require a subscription. Links to some of the most commonly used packages are detailed below. The following Wikipedia article provides a good comparison of the features of the various software: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comparison_of_reference_management_software

- Citeulike (free)
  http://www.citeulike.org
- Endnote
  http://endnote.com
- Mendeley (free)
  http://www.mendeley.com
- Papers
  http://www.mekentosj.com/papers/
- Reference Manager
  http://www.refman.com
- Refworks
  http://www.refworks.com
- Zotero (free)
  http://www.zotero.org