

# Effective Citing and Referencing

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## *Introduction*

In the International Academic community we produce different types of documents and other forms of work, some of which rely on resources by other people. Following good academic practice, it is expected that we appropriately acknowledge any ideas, words, or work of other people.

This means that, when creating an authentic piece of work, we are expected to:

- undertake research on what is already known
- analyse the research in the context of the work to be produced
- compare and/or contrast existing knowledge against our own findings/thoughts/opinions
- synthesize and present the document in an appropriate way for the expected audience
- acknowledge all contributing sources appropriately.

The ways in which we can acknowledge contributing sources appropriately may vary according to the type of work we produce. Sources are acknowledged differently in a press release or magazine article, in a piece of fiction, in artwork or a musical performance, a slide presentation, film clip or radio broadcast. The important, honest thing for us to do in these and other types of work is to acknowledge our sources and influences in some way. In academic writing, and in any work presented for assessment, not only is it necessary to acknowledge our sources appropriately, but it is regarded as important that the acknowledgments be made using a consistent style. The use of a style guide helps us to ensure this consistency.

When we use other people's words, work and ideas to support our own ideas, or to demonstrate divergent opinion, it is essential that we indicate whose words and work we are using. Any reader would benefit from seeing just how the other person's work contributes to ours.

If we fail to show that we are using someone else's words, work or ideas by not indicating that they originated with someone else, then we mislead the reader. If we give the impression that these words or ideas are our own when they are not, this is not good scholarship and, deliberate or unintentional, may be deemed as academic misconduct

## *Why cite*

Proper citation is a key element in academic scholarship and intellectual exchange. When we cite we:

- show respect for the work of others
- help a reader to distinguish our work from the work of others who have contributed to our work
- give the reader the opportunity to check the validity of our use of other people's work
- give the reader the opportunity to follow up our references, out of interest
- show and receive proper credit for our research process

- demonstrate that we are able to use reliable sources and critically assess them to support our work
- establish the credibility and authority of our knowledge and ideas
- demonstrate that we are able to draw our own conclusions
- share the blame (if we get it wrong)

### *What to cite*

As creators/authors, we are expected to acknowledge any materials or ideas that are not ours and that have been used in any way, such as quotation, paraphrase or summary. The term “materials” means written, oral or electronic products, and may include the following.

- Text • Visual • Audio • Graphic • Artistic • Lectures • Interviews • Conversations • Letters • Broadcasts • Maps

Basic and common knowledge within a field or subject does not need to be acknowledged. However, if we are in doubt if the source material is common knowledge or not, we should cite.

### *When to cite*

When we acknowledge the use of materials or ideas that are not ours, the reader must be able to clearly distinguish between our own words, illustrations, findings and ideas and the words and work of other creators.

Style guides give us advice for documenting our sources in written work, but they are less helpful with other formats and mediums. Nevertheless, we can be honest and we can be helpful to our audience(s)—for assessment purposes, this is an expectation.

In written work, we should cite in the text where we have used an external source. The inclusion of a reference in a bibliography (works cited/list of references) at the end of the paper is not enough. However, for pieces of “creative” written work such as writing in the style of an author or genre, for which in-text citation is not usually expected, creative ways of acknowledging the use of other people’s work may be permissible. A bibliography or list of references is also expected.

In other forms of work (music, video, artistic pieces), we are expected to acknowledge use of external sources appropriately. In presentations we can provide our audience with a hand-out of our references, or list our sources on the final slide(s).

During an oral presentation, we can acknowledge the sources we are using by the use of phrases, for example, “As Gandhi put it ...” or “According to ...”. We can show a direct quotation by saying “Quote ... Unquote” or by signalling with “rabbit’s ears” or “air quotes”. In a presentation supported by posters or slides, we can include short or full references on the slides; if short references are made on the slides, then we should again provide a full list of references on a handout or on the final slide(s).

We can include references or acknowledgments of other people’s work in the final credits of a film. A piece of music can be accompanied by programme notes indicating influences and direct sources. Art on display can be labelled or captioned.

## *How to cite*

When we cite, we should make clear what it is that we are citing. It must be clear to the reader just what it is that we owe to someone else, and whether we have quoted exactly or have used our own words and understanding of the original material.

- The reader must be able to distinguish clearly between our words/work and the words/work of others. – Quotations—the exact words as used by others—are indicated either by quotation marks or by displaying (indenting) the quotation. – Paraphrase and summary of others' work should similarly be distinguishable from our own words and ideas.
- Use of a style guide ensures that our citations and references are recorded consistently.
- Choice of introductory or parenthetical citation is often a matter of readability, emphasis and authority. As noted in the definitions below, the citation in the text links to a full reference that will enable the reader to trace the exact material used.

The three main types of in-text citation are as follows.

### 1. Author

In-text citation is done by an introductory and/or parenthetical citation providing:

- the last name of the author, and
- page number(s) from which the quotation or paraphrase is taken, if applicable.

### 2. Author–date

In-text citation is done by an introductory and/or parenthetical citation providing:

- the last name of the author, and
- the year of publication from which the quotation or paraphrase is taken, and the page number, if applicable.

### 3. Numbered footnote

In-text citation is done by:

- superscript note numbers that come after the referenced passage, and after the final punctuation mark, if used, and
- corresponding footnotes placed at the bottom of their page of reference containing all reference details from which the quotation or paraphrase is taken; when using a source for a second or subsequent time, a shorter footnote reference is sufficient.

## *Definitions*

### **Documentation**

Documentation is the stylized process of indicating sources in the text (citation) and giving full details (references) to enable another reader to locate the sources.

## Style guide

A style guide is a published manual that gives guidance on citation and references to help ensure that our documentation is expressed consistently, and that we include all the elements needed for our sources to be identified.

Some style guides offer more than one set of choices or sub-styles; if we use a particular sub-style, we must be sure to use the same sub-style throughout our work. As well as advice on citations and referencing, many published style guides give advice on spelling, abbreviations, punctuation, and so on. Many also give guidance on research and on the general writing process

Style guides in common use in the academic world include the following.

- ❖ MLA (Modern Language Association)
- ❖ APA (American Psychological Association)
- ❖ Harvard
- ❖ Chicago/Turabian
- ❖ CSE (Council of Science Editors)
- ❖ ISO 690 (International Organization for Standardization)

## Citation

A citation is an indication (signal) in the text that this (material) is not ours; we have “borrowed” it (as a direct quote, paraphrase or summary) from someone or somewhere else.

The citation in the text can be: • in the form of an introductory phrase, or • at the end of the statement, or • indicated by a superscript or bracketed number that leads to a similarly numbered footnote or endnote.

Every citation should be given a full reference that enables the reader to locate the exact source used.

## Reference

A reference gives full details of the source cited in the work; the parts or elements of the reference should be noted in a consistent order. Use of a recognized style guide will help ensure consistency, and will also ensure that all required elements are included.

Every reference should be given a citation in the text. If we have looked at a source but not mentioned or cited it in the text, then we do not include it as a reference.

## Bibliography/references/works cited

Most style guides require a list of references at the end of the work. This is usually a list, in alphabetical order, of the authors (last name first), whose words and works have been cited in the work. The title of this section varies from one style guide to another. Each entry in the list of references includes the full information (or as much of it as can be found), expressed in a consistent fashion, which will allow an interested reader to track down exactly where you found the material you have used and cited.