

Skills Guide

THE OCR GUIDE TO REFERENCING



This referencing guide has been produced by OCR to give you some helpful information about referencing. You can choose any method of referencing in your work that you think suitable. This guide is designed to give you some examples of methods that you could use. Other skills guides are available on the [OCR website](#).

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What is referencing?

Referencing is the process of acknowledging the work of other authors. When you have used the words and ideas of another author in an assignment, referencing is the process of acknowledging that use.

There are a number of different ways to reference. The examples in this guide are based on the Harvard system but you may use any appropriate method. The most important thing is that you use a method consistently in your work, as this makes it is easy for your reader to follow.



Why is referencing important ?

Referencing demonstrates your wider reading and research

By referencing other texts you show that you have read widely and researched your topic in detail. By engaging with, and assimilating, the ideas of professional authors, you are also likely to produce work that has more depth and complexity.

Referencing supports your ideas with reference to expert authors

You can use references to demonstrate your engagement with the ideas of others. Using references also lends your own work credibility, and quotations from professional authors can lend authority to your own ideas.

Referencing enables the reader to follow up your reference

If you let your reader know where to find out more, they can expand their own knowledge, clarify a point if necessary and come to an understanding of how you may have developed another author's original idea.

Referencing credits other authors' ideas and thinking

The ideas and thoughts of other authors can be seen as their 'intellectual property'. This intellectual property is not owned or purchased, but freely available to those who study. In the academic world we make intellectual progress by building on the ideas of others, but it is important to acknowledge their influence on our thinking and credit the thinking of others.

Referencing helps to avoid accusations of plagiarism

Plagiarism is the practice of taking someone else's work and passing it off as your own. It is a serious offence because it can breach copyright, but in the academic world it is also seen as theft of intellectual property and morally wrong. The consequences for students can be the failing of an assignment, a whole course or expulsion from a course. Serious offences, such as presenting a whole copied assignment as your own, are clearly plagiarism. However, using the ideas of others without acknowledgement can also be deemed as plagiarism, and this is why referencing is so important.



OCR's Referencing Skills Guide can be used in conjunction with our other skills guides, including Research Skills and Producing Documents, to help you to present your academic study in an appropriate and professional way.

Keeping a record

As you research and write your assignment, it is important to record the texts you refer to or quote from. Here are some useful tips to help you reference.

For books:

Make a note of the author's or editor's name(s), the publication date, the title of the book, the city the book was published in, the publisher's name, the pages you have quoted or paraphrased from.

For electronic sources:

Make a note of the author's or editor's name(s), the publication date and the date you accessed the electronic text, the website or email address and identify the form of the resource (WWW page, email, blog etc)

For articles from magazines and newspapers:

Make a note of the author's name(s), the year of publication, the title of the article, the title of the publication, the page number(s).

For computer-generated sources (such as an AI chatbot):

Note the date the content was generated and the AI bot used to generate it. You should also keep a copy of the computer-generated content for authentication purposes.



Basic referencing skills

These are examples of basic referencing skills. They may be suitable to use if you are working on a Level 2 or GCSE qualification.

It is important to show when you have used someone else's work or ideas. When you complete an assignment, you will be asked to sign a declaration to say that the assignment is all your own work. If you don't, you put the acceptance of your work at risk, along with the qualification you have worked towards.

When to reference

You need to reference when:

- you are quoting directly from another source
- you are paraphrasing ideas and work from another source

How to reference (within the text of your assessment)

Using direct quotations from another source

This is when you 'borrow' another author's words and use them in your own work. When you quote directly or 'borrow' the author's words, it is important that you quote accurately and use exactly the same words as the author. This includes exactly the same punctuation, capitalisation etc. Here is a hypothetical example:

Mary Jackson (2002) states that celebrity culture 'has a powerful effect on all our lives'.

The words 'has a powerful effect on all our lives' are exactly the same as in the original text. You can use the whole, or part of, a sentence, or even a single word from a text, but it must be copied exactly. This means that you have to fit your own words around the text you want to borrow, to make it make sense. You must never change the original text to suit you. Notice that the full stop at the end comes after the quotation mark.

Paraphrasing from another source

The date in brackets refers to the date of publication, which can be found on the first few pages of a book, along with the author's name and a copyright symbol ©.

Mary Jackson (2002) suggests that the cult of celebrity has significantly impacted on society.

You don't need to use quotation marks for this, as you have put the text into your own words, but to acknowledge the idea has come from another author, you still need to indicate clearly the name of the author and date of publication that you are referring to.

Another hypothetical example might be:

Mary Jackson (2002) suggests that the cult of celebrity is not a modern phenomenon.

This paraphrases or summarises the main idea behind a book, and again needs the author's name and book's publication date.

For **newspaper and magazine articles**, use the same system as above. If an author isn't indicated, format this way:

The Telegraph reported in its article 'Times are changing' (2011), that the number of prison sentences for fraud have increased.

From a **website**:

The BBC website (www.bbc.co.uk/news/health/ (accessed 13.3.13)) claims that 'Scientists have identified a group of brain cells which have the power to control appetite and could be a major cause of eating disorders such as obesity'.

From **AI generated** text:

[ChatGPT 3.5](#), 17/10/2024, claims that 'technology is evolving at a rate never previously seen'.

How to reference (producing a reference list)

You need to list all your references at the end of your assignment. Your references are the texts from which you have quoted or paraphrased in the main body of your assessment.

Remember:

- References should be on a separate page at the end, entitled 'References'
- List all forms of sources together (ie do not separate website sources from books, for example)
- List alphabetically by author's surname
- If the source's author is unknown, use the title of the source instead of the author

Order of information for each entry to be included:

- The author's or editor's surname and comma
- Their initial
- The year of publication, in brackets
- Title of text, in italics or quotation marks
- Place of publication
- Name of publisher
- The year, place and name of publisher can be found in the first few pages of the book, usually on the left hand side.

Example:

References

Akbar, J (2002) *The Rise of the Criminal*, London, Oxford Press

Smith, TD (1999) *Criminal Law and Justice: A New Era*, New York, Thomas Patton Ltd

Troy F, Smith D, De Vere LD (2012) *Everyday Physics*, Australia, Outback Publications

The Wyden English Dictionary (1999), London, Wyden Press



Your list of references should be attached to the end of your assignment when you submit it for assessment.

Advanced referencing skills

These are examples of advanced referencing skills. They may be suitable to use if you are working on a Level 3 or A Level qualification.

It is important to show when you have used someone else's work or ideas. Referencing is the process of acknowledging any ideas which are not your own. If you don't reference, you put the acceptance of your work at risk, along with the qualification you have worked towards.

There are a number of referencing systems and this guide will focus on the Harvard system. You may wish to check with your learning institution for their preferred systems.

When to reference

You need to reference when:

- you are quoting directly from another source
- you are paraphrasing ideas and work from another source

How to reference (within the text of your assessment)

Using direct quotations from another source

This is when you 'borrow' another author's words and use them in your own work. When you quote directly or 'borrow' the author's words, it is important that you quote accurately and use exactly the same words as the author. This includes exactly the same punctuation, capitalisation etc. Here is a hypothetical example:

Mary Jackson (2002: 4) states that celebrity culture 'has a powerful effect on all our lives'.

The words 'has a powerful effect on all our lives' are exactly the same as in the original text. You can use a whole sentence, or part of it, or even a single word from a text, but it must be copied exactly. This means that you have to fit your own words around the text you want to borrow, to make it make sense.

The date (2002) refers to the date of publication, which can be found on the first few pages of a book, along with the author's name and a copyright symbol ©. The colon and number 4 indicate the page reference where this quotation can be found.

Mary Jackson (2002: 22-33) suggests that the cult of celebrity has significantly impacted on society.

Paraphrasing from another source

You don't need to use quotation marks for this, as you have put the text into your own words. But to acknowledge the idea has come from another author, you still need to indicate clearly the name of the author and date of publication that you are referring to.

Another hypothetical example might be:

Mary Jackson (2002) suggests that the cult of celebrity is not a modern phenomenon.

This paraphrases or summarises the main idea behind a book, so there is no need to indicate a page reference.

You may also place the name of the author at the end of your sentence:

It has been suggested that the cult of celebrity has significantly impacted on society (Mary Jackson 2002: 22-33).

More than one author

Morrison and Smith (2008: 44) state that healthy eating is not the only factor in maintaining a good digestive system.

You can add another name if there are three authors. Any more than that, use the following format:

Simmons et al (2010: 121) claim that social class is an out-dated construct.

Et al stands for 'and others'.

If you don't know the author

A knowledge of chemistry is helpful when studying hair colour in hairdressing (Colour Watch 2013: 5).

For **newspaper and magazine articles**, use the same system as above. If an author isn't indicated, format this way:

The Telegraph reported in its article 'Times are changing' (2011: 13), that the number of prison sentences for fraud have increased.

From a **website**:

The BBC website (www.bbc.co.uk/news/health/ (accessed 13.3.13)) claims that 'Scientists have identified a group of brain cells which have the power to control appetite and could be a major cause of eating disorders such as obesity'.

From **AI generated text**:

ChatGPT 3.5 claims that 'technology is evolving at a rate never previously seen'.

For **electronic sources citation** is similar to books and periodicals, but without page numbers.

How to reference (producing a reference list)

You need to list all your references at the end of your assignment. Your references are the texts from which you have quoted or paraphrased in the main body of your assessment.

Remember:

- List all forms of sources together (ie do not separate website sources from books, for example)
- List alphabetically by author's or editor's surname
- If the source's author is unknown, use the title of the source instead of the author

Order of information for each entry to be included:

1. The author's or editor's surname and comma
2. Their initial
3. The year of publication, in brackets
4. Title of text, in italics or quotation marks
5. Place of publication
6. Name of publisher

The year, place and name of publisher can be found in the first few pages of the book, usually on the left hand side.



Example:

References

Akbar, J (2002) *The Rise of the Criminal*, London, Oxford Press
Smith, TD (1999) *Criminal Law and Justice: A New Era*, New York, Thomas Patton Ltd
Troy F, Smith D, De Vere LD (2012) *Everyday Physics*, Australia, Outback Publications
The Wyden English Dictionary (1999), London, Wyden Press

If you want to record a book with an editor:

Hussain, S (ed) (2009) *Disability and Work*, London, Hammersmith Press

If you want to record a chapter of an edited book, and the chapter has been written by someone different, record it like this:

Nimmo, J (1999) 'The workplace as enabling', in Hussain S (ed) *Disability and Work*, London, Hammersmith Press

Other electronic sources

Email:

Jackson, S (2010) Re: Health Issues, email to NMC (nmc@nmc.org.uk), 9 Jun [13 Jun 2010]

Discussion from forums/blogs:

Simpson, H (2012) Nov 21 'MMR Debate' Healthwise Forum [Online], 21 Nov, available email: healthwise@hw.ac.uk [21 Nov 2012]

The access date is in square brackets.

Your list of references should be attached to the end of your assignment when you submit it for assessment.

Bibliography

Some institutions like to have a bibliography as well as a reference page. A bibliography is a list of all the texts or resources you may have referred to, however briefly, during the course of your study.

You may have read some or all of a text, but not found it relevant or useful to refer to, but you can still include it in your bibliography, to show your wider reading. Record your bibliography in alphabetical order by the author's surname on its own page at the very end of your assignment, and after your referencing page.



Appendix 1: Teacher Guidance



By explicitly teaching students about plagiarism and giving them the tools to recognise and reference their reading, students are able to understand the value of intellectual property and where their learning and academic study rests within it.

It is important that you are aware of the requirements of individual awarding bodies.

Please refer to your qualification's specification for more information about referencing requirements. If your school or college has referencing guidelines, follow these and encourage your students to be consistent in their use across all their subjects.

Information and the ideas of others are easily discovered through the Internet, a stimulating and liberating resource when used correctly. This can lead to effective wider reading and a more critical approach, but there is a danger that students can copy and take ideas from texts without acknowledging them, along with using unreliable sources. Supervised or controlled assessment helps to tackle this problem, but you need to be vigilant.

Tips for teaching referencing skills

- Introduce the concept as early as possible in the course
- Seek the help of your librarian to introduce books and their cataloguing/conventions etc
- Get students to keep a reading diary, where they record author, title, publisher, place published and year of publication
- Discuss copyright and 'intellectual property' with students
- Monitor their use of referencing over time
- Model the process of referencing from a text studied by the class
- Ask students to find a piece of writing from a text and write a paragraph explaining how it might be useful for their assessment, then ask them to include a quotation and reference it correctly
- Use peer assessment to check for consistent referencing
- Recommend online referencing guides/tutorials

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