There are many acceptable styles for academic referencing. To choose the ideal style for any purpose you need to consider the subject area (epidemiology, social science, policy, law), the audience (medical, professional, academic, general public), the type of document you are writing (e.g., essay, treatise, report) and the requirements of publishers, if you are planning to publish your document.

To make this choice simpler for essays and dissertations, the School recommends that you choose one of two styles:

- author-date (often called ‘Harvard’) style
- ‘Vancouver’ style, as used in most medical journals

You will probably find the author-date style easier to use, especially if you are not using reference management software such as Endnote. You might choose Vancouver style if you are familiar with it, are planning to publish in health or medical journals or are using Endnote or a similar program. It doesn’t matter which style you choose, as long as you are consistent and accurate in using that style. You will not be penalised if you choose some other recognised style.

You should avoid using footnotes with either style; insert parenthetical comments in the text if necessary. End notes are acceptable.

Points to note

The tips below apply whichever system you use. So that you can check your references, keep photocopies of all articles you refer to, and at least the title page and imprint page (the back of the title page) of any books you use, as well as a copy of any page you quote from.

Articles

- Copy the title and authors of an article from the article itself, not from the contents page or cover of the journal (or from a Medline entry!). Copy spelling exactly, even if there are mistakes in the original. Retain US spelling and other variants.
- Omit authors' titles and degrees (though you may insert ‘Jr’ or ‘III’ to distinguish people with the same name).
- It is OK to change double quotation marks to single (or vice versa) if they occur within a title.
- If the article has a title and a subtitle set out on a separate line, separate them with a colon.
- Only the first word of the title and any proper nouns should have initial capitals. Do not capitalise the first word of the subtitle.
- Record the first and last page number. Make sure you have found all the pages—sometimes references or tables are printed separately from the body of the text.
- For journals and periodicals that are not internationally known, add the place of publication and the name of the publishing or sponsoring organisation. For magazines and newspapers, give the place of publication if this is not clear from the title.

Books

- For a book, copy the title and authors from the title page. Include the subtitle, if any; separate it from the title by inserting a colon. Ignore the cover and spine.
- If the title page does not give the name of the publisher and place and date of publication, look at the imprint page. If it is the first edition, give the date of first publication; ignore dates of reprints or ‘impressions’. A reprint is identical to the original, with the same layout, illustrations and notes (if any) and pagination. If the book you are citing is a second or later edition or a reprint with changes (e.g., ‘second impression with corrections, 1972’), give the details of that edition in the reference. For a recent edition of an old work it is helpful to add the date of the original (see examples below).
A book may have an author and an editor, and the editor may have written chunks of it, e.g. an introduction and commentary or notes on the chapters. Make clear in the text whose words or opinion you are citing, and give the names of both author and editor in the reference list.

- Omit superfluous words such as ‘Books’, ‘& Co. Ltd’, ‘Publishing Company’ from the name of the publisher. Use the name of the printer as the publisher only where no publisher or sponsoring organisation appears (usually only on old books), i.e. Department of Health, not D. West, Government Printer, New South Wales.

- Publishers have offices in many countries and may release a book simultaneously in more than one city. This can make determining the place of publication difficult. Do not list all the publisher's offices; give the first or main one listed on the title page or the imprint page. If it is unclear whether the book was actually published in (say) Oxford or Melbourne, the address of the printer may give you a clue. If it is explicitly stated, ‘published simultaneously in New York and London’, give both places in your reference.

- If the place of publication is not a major city or may be confused with somewhere else, add the state or country after the place, using standard abbreviations where appropriate. Give the city, not a suburb within it, as the place of publication (e.g. Brisbane, not St Lucia, for University of Queensland Press).

**AUTHOR-DATE STYLE**

In author-date style, references are identified when the work is mentioned in the text by the surname of the author(s) and the year of publication. References are listed at the end of the article in alphabetical order by author. This method is favoured in the social sciences. It is easy to use, but it can be distracting for the reader to come across strings of names and dates in the middle of the text. It is therefore not suitable for publications aimed at the general public. However, as the journal titles are given in full, the references are accessible by readers from a wide range of academic disciplines.

There is no one standard set of rules for setting out and punctuating references in author-date style. A suggested style for essays and treatises is given below; your referencing will be acceptable if you follow it consistently. Italics may be used for book and journal titles where indicated.

**References in the text**

Key your references to entries in the reference list at the end by mentioning the author(s) and the year of publication, either in brackets or as part of your sentence:

- Smith (1991) compared risk factors . . .
- In a recent study of risk factors (Smith 1991), . . .
- In 1991, Smith compared risk factors . . .
- If the discussion of the same paper continues, there is no need to repeat the date:
  - In a recent study of risk factors, Smith (1991) described similar effects. Smith also found . . .

If you quote exact words, or if you are referring to one part of a larger work such as a book, give the page number(s):

- A recent report says Portugal’s ‘low birthrate of 16 per 1000 inhabitants in 1980 was achieved despite only modest use of modern contraceptives’ (IFPP 1984: 71).
- As explained by Armitage and Berry (1987: 469), the implications of excess risk depend . . .

If there are more than two authors, it is sufficient to use the name of the first plus ‘et al’, unless that causes confusion between works by Smith, Bloggs and Kobayashi (1989) and by Smith, Thomas, Honda and Brown (1989). In such cases, give enough names to distinguish between the works: Smith, Bloggs et al. (1989) and Smith, Thomas et al. (1989). If the same author(s) published more than one work in a year, add letters to distinguish them, such as Irwig et al. (1992a) and Irwig et al. (1992b). If several references occur together, separate them with semicolons. For references by the same authors in different years, there is no need to repeat the authors’ names: Oakley 1979, 1980; Rothman 1982; Zola 1972.

**List of References/Bibliography**

**Journal articles**

*Standard journal article*


As an option, if a journal carries continuous pagination throughout a volume the month and issue number may be omitted:

Article with published erratum


Books and other monographs

Personal author(s)


Note that for this Australian, as for other English-speaking authors, the preposition is treated as part of the surname when the name is inverted for alphabetisation.

Editor(s), compiler as author


Author and editor


Translation


Organisation, group as author


Alternatively, to save space in the text references:


Organisation as author and publisher


Chapter in a book


Conference proceedings


Conference paper


Thesis, treatise etc.


Government reports and publications

Australian Bureau of Statistics


Commission reports


If you refer to this in the text as the Henderson Report, give a cross-reference in your reference list.


Other reports and papers


Parliamentary proceedings


Other published material

Australian Standard


Newspaper, magazine article


Leaflet


Undated leaflet


If you are aware of the approximate date of publication although it is not given on the leaflet, indicate this with a question mark:

FPFA (?1987). Condoms, the pill and all that jazz [leaflet]. Canberra: Family Planning Federation of Australia.

Other publications

For other nonstandard works without authors - legal cases, maps, recordings, films, computer programs, Bible references, dictionary entries - give the reference in parentheses in the text. If you have several such works you can give a separate list after the reference list. See a style manual for further guidance.

Electronic Material

A standard method of referencing has not yet been adopted for electronic materials. The following is thus a guide.

Computer file


Journal article in electronic format


Monograph in electronic format


www site


Unpublished material

In press


Abstract of unpublished paper

VANCOUVER STYLE

‘Vancouver style’ is a short name used to refer to the ‘Uniform requirements for manuscripts submitted to biomedical journals’ agreed on by the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE), who first met in Vancouver. The ICMJE document, which is updated every few years (see http://www.icmje.org for the latest version), gives many other requirements for the submission of articles to journals (number of copies, conditions concerning authorship etc.) but we will be concerned here only with the style they recommend for setting out references.

In this system, references are numbered in the order in which they are mentioned in the text and indicated in the text by small superscript (above the line) numerals, as shown below. (In some variants, the numerals are bracketed.)

Gout is the most common inflammatory arthritis in men.\(^1\)\(^2\) The overall burden from this disease remains substantial and is growing.\(^1\)

At the end of the article, references are listed in numerical order, in a very abbreviated style that aims to save space and keystrokes (i.e. typing effort). This means that if you change the text and add a reference or remove one you will need to renumber all the other references. The titles of journals are abbreviated according to an established style used by Index Medicus (online version at http://www.nlm.nih.gov/tsd/serials/lji.html). Because of this, references in Vancouver style are very hard for lay people or non-medical professionals to understand. This style is not suitable for publications intended for the general public. On the other hand, it is not too disturbing to the reader when there are large numbers of references, because the tiny numerals do not interrupt the flow of the sentences.

To avoid having to renumber references when you make revisions to your text, keep your reference list in alphabetical order while you are working on your essay or treatise. Use some kind of shorthand such as the authors’ names and date to key the articles to the place in the text where they are mentioned. When you have finalised your text, just before your final print-out, number the references consecutively in the order in which they are first mentioned in the text. Replace the names in the text with superscript numerals. For repeated (identical) references, reuse the original reference number. Unless the reference is relevant only to a small part of your sentence, locate the numeral at the end of the paragraph or sentence after any punctuation mark. If at the last minute or after your work has been marked you have to add or delete a reference, just add a number out of order or delete a number; this looks a bit odd but it is better than running the risk of messing up the numbering by trying to renumber most of the references. Alternatively, learn to use a referencing management program such as Endnote.

Although the ‘Uniform requirements’ set out a standard ‘Vancouver’ style, and any participating journal will agree to process an article set out in this style, not all those journals actually publish their references in exactly this style. For example, they may insert spaces between the date, volume and page numbers, or may use italics for journal and book titles. It is acceptable to make changes of this sort when using Vancouver style for an essay, but it is not advisable to start adapting the style in other ways such as changing the order of elements or giving journal titles in full - this would look as though you did not know what you were doing, and there is great risk that you will become inconsistent if you are not following the rules exactly.

For article and book titles, give initial capitals only to the first word and any proper nouns. If the journal is not in Index Medicus, abbreviate each word of the title according to the same conventions. Do not put full stops after abbreviations. Use arabic numerals for volume numbers, whatever the journal itself uses. Give first and last page numbers of the article, using as few digits as possible, e.g. 1-6, 10-1, 320-6, 6457-501.

List of References/Bibliography

Journal articles

Standard journal article

pagination throughout a volume the month and issue number may be omitted:


If the journal is not well known or has limited distribution, give the organisation and place of publication:


List all authors, but if the number exceeds six give six followed by `et al'.

**Organisation as author**


**No author given**


**Article in a foreign language**


You may add a translation of the title if you wish:


**Volume with supplement**


**Issue with supplement**


**Issue with part**


**Issue with no volume**


**No issue or volume**


**Type of article indicated as needed**


**Article containing retraction**


**Article retracted**


**Article containing comment**


**Article commented on**


**Article with published erratum**


**Books and other monographs**

**Personal author(s)**


**Editor(s), compiler as author**


**Author and editor**


**Translation**


**Organisation, group as author**


**Organisation as author and publisher**


**Chapter in a book**


**Conference proceedings**


**Conference paper**


**Thesis, treatise etc.**


**Government reports and publications**

Australian Bureau of Statistics


**Committee reports**


**Other reports and papers**


Parliamentary proceedings


Other published material

Australian Standard


Newspaper, magazine article


Researchers defend claim that children watch video 'nasties'. Sydney Morning Herald 1987 21 Mar; 7.

Leaflet


If you are aware of the date of publication although it is not given on the leaflet, put it in square brackets:

Condoms, the pill and all that jazz [leaflet]. Canberra: Family Planning Federation of Australia, [1987].

Audiovisual


Map

Scotland [topographic map]. Washington: National Geographic Society (US); 1981.

Book of the Bible


Dictionary and similar references


Electronic Material

Computer file


Journal article in electronic format


Monograph in electronic format


www site


Unpublished material

In press


Abstract of unpublished paper

RESOURCES

For guidance on material not covered here (such as legal cases) you may find the following books useful, although they use slightly different versions of author-date style:


There are also numerous online training modules and guides to help you learn to use your chosen style.

Juliet Richters, April 1994
Updated BL June 2001
Updated NA October 2004
Updated JL November 2008