Citing References and Compiling a Reference Section

Citing References in Your Text

It is essential to cite sources and references according to an approved style. There are two main styles used in scientific publishing:

1. Harvard citation style. This is the “author, year” style: wherever relevant in the text, insert the author’s name(s) and the date of publication in parentheses. Full bibliographic details are given at the end of the paper, in a References List (more on this, later).

2. Vancouver citation style. This is the “cite-by-numbered-list” approach. The first source cited in the text will be indicated by a superscript “1” at the end of the relevant sentence; citations will follow in numerical order, through the rest of the text. The bibliographic information (authors, year, source) corresponding to each number will be found either in Footnotes, or in a References List at the end of the paper.

Neither of these styles is “right” or “wrong”; which is used is a matter of editorial preference. The key is to use whatever style conforms to the editorial advice provided to authors.

For (probably) ALL of your work during your BSc: HARVARD style is required.

Citing References in Your Text (Harvard style)

Citations to print publications include the author’s last name and the date of publication. If a direct quotation is being cited (rare!), you should also include the page number of the quote.¹

When citing JOURNAL ARTICLES and BOOKS, use the following forms:

- For a SINGLE author: (Coast, 1996)
- For TWO authors: (Baggott and Graeme-Cook, 1997). Note that it is equally permissible to write this as: (Baggott & Graeme-Cook, 1997).
- For MORE THAN TWO authors (first author named, subsequent authors referred to by “et al.”): (Goldsworthy et al., 1995)
- For more than one source, list individual citations in year order: (Baggott and Graeme-Cook, 1997; Cunningham and Rayne, 1998)

¹ It is NOT common practice in scientific report writing to use direct quotations from sources. You should ALMOST NEVER do it. Instead, scientific writers will summarise or paraphrase the main message(s) of other scientists and cite the source of the information, as seen in the examples above.
The paragraph below (invented!) indicates how you might include citations to print sources within a body of text:

“The discovery of living dinosaurs can be considered a milestone in cancer research (Spielberg et al. 1995), especially as Snark et al. (1999) have confirmed the existence of these animals. As Bird (1997) warned, transfer of this DNA to domestic cattle has had disastrous consequences (Jekell & Hyde, 1998). Only regulation by an appropriate professional body would seem to be the way forward (HFEA, 1999).”

As seen above, references to print publications almost always include the author’s last name, the date of publication (and sometimes the page number of the reference). Often, for WEB SOURCES, some or all of these elements may be missing. References to such sources may include only an author’s last name or an organization name. If no name is available, use the URL. Also add the date of publication or of the last update, if available, and the date you accessed the source. Examples follow.

When citing web sites, use the following forms:

• As outlined by Green (2004) the current theory is ...
• Many examples of this were found (Department of Health, 2005) which led to ...
• Psychology students today are finding that more training is required (http://www.psychstudents.org.uk, 2003) before they can ....

The Reference List: Journal Articles and Books

When using the Harvard bibliographic style, publications referred to in the text of a paper/report must be listed in alphabetical sequence, by first author, at the end of the work.

The exact form in which the bibliographic details are written out differs according to editorial preferences. We recommend mimicking the forms shown in examples below, which follow the patterns used by the journal, Cell.

A meeting/symposium abstract

A single author journal article

An edited book

A chapter in an edited book

A multi-author journal article

A few further points:
- Scientific species and genus names must be italicised.
- Following the alphabetical sort, a second pass of sorting may be required—for example, where two different papers have exactly the same authors, listed in the same order. In such a case, you should order these papers chronologically, oldest first.

The Reference List: Web sites
You should incorporate any citations of web-based materials into the same reference list as your cited print-based publications.

To build your citation, try to find as many of these as possible from the web site:
- Author/Organisation
- Creation date and/or date last updated (try looking at the bottom of the web page)
- Title of page or whole web site
- URL (web address of page) e.g. http://www.bbk.ac.uk/lib/
- Also note the date you accessed it. Put this in square brackets e.g. [4th March 2005] \textbf{This is important as the content may have changed by the time another person looks at the web site}. 
Generic Example:

Author. Date. Title of web page (in italics) [online] Available from: www.url.ac.uk [accessed 03/03/06]

Example:


A Common Pitfall (stay out of this pit!)

In the “old days”, there were printed journals and that was that...there was no “online”. You went to the Library, picked up a printed magazine, and leafed through it. There were actual pages—how weird! Moreover, collections of these “magazines” were bundled as numbered “volumes”, sometimes with each “issue” having its own identifying number as well. Page numbers incremented consecutively, until a new issue or a new volume was started.

All of that (and much more) seems very quaint from here in the 21st century. Many of us never go to the Library at all: all publications of interest are digital and accessed online. Within publications, there are really no “pages” anymore, just screen-after-screen of text and images.

EVEN SO: a journal article “lives” in a virtual journal that is organised by temporal “volumes”, each “issue” of the virtual magazine has an identifier, and articles (usually) have numbered pages. KEY TO US: journal articles are cited “the old-fashioned way”, as if they are from a printed source. They are not cited by a URL.

So, if you got an article from the PNAS journal online site, you do NOT cite it using the URL from which you downloaded the PDF. You cite it “the old-fashioned way” with authors, year, title, volume, pages. No URL!! URL citations are for web-only sources, not for journals.