

Referencing – FAQ

What's an assertion?

An assertion is a statement of fact. Facts are what we base our decisions on. When you write essays you will present your facts, discuss what those facts mean and make decisions based upon them. The reader of your essay will make up their own mind whether they agree with you.

Why do I need to reference?

When you make assertions in an essay you must make clear to the reader the source of your knowledge.¹ If you know something from personal experience then say so clearly.

If you know something as a result of your research, the reader of your essay needs to be able to find the items that you found and to check your facts.² Referencing also gives credit when you build on the ideas of others.

What is a reference?

A reference is a statement of authorship, title and publication date of your sources. There may be other important details, such as date of viewing a website. The reference should identify the document from which you learned the facts which you are asserting, and will acknowledge the ideas of others.²

What should a reference achieve?

If you use a reference correctly the reader will be able to check your source to verify the accuracy of your facts. They will also be able to decide for themselves the trustworthiness and expertise of the source you are quoting.

What style of referencing will I use for books?

You will use the Harvard Referencing (Author, Date) method.³ In this method you will insert the author, the date of publication and the pages referenced in brackets in the text. Like this:

(Maguire *et al.*, 2011, pp15-16).

On the references page list the authors (family names first), year of publication, title of the work in *italics*, edition if not first edition, publisher. Like this:

Maguire, P., Williamson, J., 2011, *Really Important Findings*, 2nd ed, Penguin Press.

What style of referencing will I use for everything else?

You will use numbered endnotes referencing.⁴ Each referenced fact will have a superscripted number in the body of the text. At the end of the document, on a separate page, the details of the reference – with matching number – are presented. Your word processing software has a tool to make this task easier.

What should I include in the numbered endnotes reference?

- Newspaper: on the endnotes page list the full name of the author, the title of the article, name of the newspaper in *italics*, and the date of publication.
- Web page: on the endnotes page list the author of the document, the organisation or owner of the site, the title of the page in *italics*, the date of writing (if known), and date of your viewing. The full URL should also be given, but remove hyper-link formatting for printing. If there's a DOI try to include it.

- On-line document: on the endnotes page list the author of the document, the organisation or owner of the site, the title of the page in *italics*, the date of writing (if known), and date of your viewing and page numbers referenced.. The full URL should also be given, but remove hyper-link formatting for printing. If there's a DOI try to include it.

Does the reader have to agree?

If the reader is a FETAC examiner, then no. But whatever you decide in your conclusion must be logical and based on facts. Clear presentation of your argument is needed. Marks are awarded for logical presentation of your research.

When writing for others it is always best to try to convince them that your point of view is correct. For this to work you need to have a point of view in the first place – and there should be facts to persuade the reader. If you can't find those facts, go back and check your point of view.

What's the difference between a footnote and a reference?

Footnotes are explanatory notes at the bottom of the page, references – also known as endnotes – go on a separate page at the end of the document.

Why doesn't my software put endnotes on a separate page?

Insert your endnotes as you go through your essay and when complete manually put a hard page-break to separate the references page – and the heading 'References' at the top of that.

Include your full Harvard book references on that page, below the endnotes.

What is meant by 'essay'?

For essay you may substitute any written work which is part of an assignment or project. Your tutor will advise you.

Is this the only method for referencing?

Sadly, no. This is a 'simplified' referencing method that is easy to use and easy for the reader to understand. Third level colleges may use different referencing methods; and more than one method may be used in different departments in any given college.

You won't go too far wrong with this 'simplified' method, and can build upon it later if needed.

Some examples of referencing have been included in this document⁵ as guidelines.

Can I quote?

Yes. While copying the work of others is not encouraged, sometimes you will need to quote another author. For that portion of text use quotation marks and follow the quotation with the reference number. Any quoted text must have it's own reference number.

Can I put my reference number at the start of the text?

No. The reference number must go at the *end* of the referenced text.

Can I reference Wikipedia?

No. However, you may use Wikipedia to start the research 'overview' process. Check the references used by the wikipedia article. You may use those primary sources, if appropriate.

What formatting will I use for my essay?

You will use standard formatting for your essay and references.

References

- 1 MIT, mit.edu, *MIT Academic Integrity*, <http://web.mit.edu/academicintegrity/writing/academicwriting.html>, 2012-08-15, viewed 2012-10-01.
- 2 MIT, mit.edu, *MIT Academic Integrity – Why and What to Cite*, <http://web.mit.edu/academicintegrity/citing/whatandwhy.html>, 2012-08-15, viewed 2012-10-01
- 3 Various, Anglia Ruskin University, *Harvard System*, <http://libweb.anglia.ac.uk/referencing/harvard.htm>, Date unknown, Viewed 2012-10-12.
- 4 University of Queensland, eq.edu.au, *Footnotes/Bibliography Chicago 15th A Style How-to guide*, <http://www.library.uq.edu.au/training/citation/chicago15A.pdf>, Date unknown, Viewed 2012-09-30.
- 5 IS THE POTATO CROP PERMANENTLY DESTROYED, *Cork Examiner*, <http://adminstaff.vassar.edu/sttaylor/FAMINE/Examiner/Archives/Sept1846.html>, 1846-09-02, Viewed 2012-10-01.

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