



# Acknowledging Sources in Academic Writing

(Author-Date System, based on American Psychological Association, APA)

## Introduction

At university a large percentage of your written work is based on the ideas of other writers. Therefore, it is important to let the reader of your writing know where you found your ideas. Whenever you have taken something from another author, (that is, you have taken an author's theory, opinion, idea, example, conclusion, or findings), you must say *where* the original can be found. In other words, you must *acknowledge* and *cite* your sources. This is important whether or not you use the author's own words.

## WHY should you acknowledge your sources?

- to show that you have read and understood the research published in your area of study
- to lend authority to what you are writing
- to strengthen your argument
- to support your own ideas
- to provide details or background to what you are writing
- to provide interest.



## WHEN should you acknowledge your sources?

Whenever you use a source of information:

- as your inspiration
- as the source of a theory, argument or point of view
- for specific information such as statistics, examples or case studies
- for direct quotations (using the author's exact words)
- to paraphrase or summarise an author's work

## HOW do you choose your sources?

When you are taking something from another source, you are taking it out of its original context and putting it into a new context – your own assignment. You must make sure it fits properly into this new context.

This means:

- it must be relevant to your argument
- it must join neatly with what comes before and after
- it must make logical and grammatical sense.

## HOW do you acknowledge your sources?

1. In-text Referencing
2. Reference List

### 1. In-text References in Author-Date Style (APA)

Many forms of referencing are acceptable. Ask your lecturers which form of referencing they prefer. Most lecturers at the University of Canberra prefer the American Psychological Association's (APA's) version of the *Author/Date* system, which is outlined below. Whichever system you use, you must follow it consistently; don't mix footnotes with Author-Date, for instance.

In-text references in the Author-Date system should contain only the following information, in this order:

- 1) the surname of the author/s
- 2) the year of publication of the text
- 3) the page number/s of the text (usually for direct quotations, particular ideas and concepts).

**For example:** Peterson (2005, p. 31) states that ...

A recent research study (Jones & Jackson, 2004, p. 27) reveals ...

You need to provide an in-text reference if you:

- a. use a long direct quotation (three lines or more),
- b. use a short direct quotation (two lines or less)
- c. use an indirect quotation by either paraphrasing or summarising

#### a. Long Direct Quotations

A direct quotation consists of the actual words used by an author, in the same order as the original text. In other words, it is a direct copy (quotation) of 40 or more words which is separated from the rest of the text as a freestanding block and does not require quotation marks. Indent it 5 spaces from the left hand margin and use the same font size as the text with double-line spacing. Give page number(s) as well as author and date.



**For example:**

Language is subject to change, just as everything else in the world is. As Aitchison (1981, p.16) puts it:

Language, then, like everything else, gradually transforms itself over the centuries. There is nothing surprising in this. In a world

where humans grow old, tadpoles change to frogs, and milk turns into cheese, it would be strange if language alone remained unaltered. In spite of this, large numbers of intelligent people condemn and resent language change, regarding alterations as due to unnecessary sloppiness, laziness or ignorance.

In other words, people should not get upset or angry because language use varies from generation to generation, because this is a natural process that cannot be stopped.

*Note how in the above paragraph the writer has not only used a direct quotation, but also has made a summary of the passage in his/her own words after it.*

### **b. Short Direct Quotations**

A short direct quotation is inserted directly into the text without separating it from the rest of the paragraph. Use opening and closing quotation marks, and give the page number.

#### **For example:**

Many people are worried about how language changes over generations, and get very upset when language is used differently from when they were young. However, Aitchison (1981, p.16) points out that language is subject to change, and changes in language are not necessarily caused by “unnecessary sloppiness, laziness or ignorance”. This indicate that people should not be anxious about language change as it is a natural process, not something caused by ignorance.

Here the writer has chosen a few words from the passage that are relevant to the topic of the paragraph. Notice again how the writer then adds a comment to explain more fully what is meant by the quotation, and how it relates to the topic of the paragraph.

### **c. Indirect Quotations (paraphrasing and summarising)**

#### **Paraphrasing**

When you paraphrase, you write an author’s idea in your own words, although you can use some of the author’s own words as well. This is preferable to direct quotes, as the reference fits more neatly into your own style of writing. It also shows that you really do understand what the author is saying. It is important to acknowledge the author with name and date.

### For example:

Chaucer's English is different from Shakespeare's, and Shakespeare's is different from our own. An important question is, how and why does language change? One theory is given by Aitchison (1981), who indicates that language is gradually transformed over the centuries, and there is nothing surprising about it.

### Summarising

A summary gives an outline of the main points of a passage, chapter or book.

### For example:

Chaucer's English is different from Shakespeare's, and Shakespeare's is different from our own. Some people view these differences as degrading the English language. However, Aitchison (1981), whose seminal study looked closely at the psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic processes of language change over many centuries, argues that changes in all aspects of language are natural and inevitable.

*Note that page numbers are usually not required with indirect quotations. Ask your lecturers whether they require page numbers with paraphrasing or summarising.*

### Making changes to

You may want to make quotation. This is possible the meaning), but you

- If you omit parts of the the beginning, middle ellipsis consists of three dots ...
- If you want to insert your own words, or different words, into a quotation to make the meaning clearer to the reader, put them in square brackets [ ].
- If you want to emphasise something in a quotation which is particularly relevant to your essay, put the emphasised words in *italics*, and state that the emphasis is your own.



### direct quotations

minor changes to a direct (as long as you don't change must follow the rules.

quotation, whether from or end, use an *ellipsis*. An

### For example:

Language changes are natural and inevitable. As Aitchison (1981, p.16) points out, language:

gradually transforms itself over the centuries ... In a world where [everything changes], *it would be strange if language alone remained unaltered*. In spite of this, large numbers of intelligent people condemn and resent language change ... (my emphasis).

## 2. The Reference List

The Reference List is a list of all sources used in your assignment. It is different from a bibliography which includes all the sources you consulted including some not cited in your assignment. At the University of Canberra most lecturers require a reference list

You should give a list of all the sources you have referred to in your work. Your reference list must provide full and accurate details, as it is the means by which the reader can follow up your sources. There are some standard conventions that you must follow, and some stylistic conventions that are more flexible.

### Conventions which you should follow in a Reference List for APA:

- A cited reference list must consist of author(s), date of publication, title details, and publisher details (in that order).
- A reference list must be in alphabetical order of surname.
- Titles of books and journals must be in italics.
- Titles of journals must be in title case (the first letter of every important word should be a capital).
- Titles of books, articles or chapter headings must be in sentence case (only the first word or proper nouns should have a capital).
- Book titles must include edition (other than first) and any other details given on the title page (eg series, translator, original title).
- Journal titles must include the volume, number, and page numbers of the article.
- Punctuation must be consistent.
- Provide city and state for US publications.
- Provide city, state and country for non-US publications. Following is a list that does not require state location details: Amsterdam, Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Jerusalem, London, Los Angeles, Milan, Moscow, New York Paris, Philadelphia, Rome, San Francisco, Stockholm, Tokyo and Vienna.
- Referencing journals and periodicals

The volume number of a work will follow the title as an italicised number:

Author, T. H. (Year). Title. *Name of Journal*, 7, pp. 11-26.

Issue numbers, only when each issue begins on page 1, will follow the volume number in parenthesis:

Author, T. H. (Year). Title. *Name of Journal*, 7(2), pp. 2-27.

If the journal does not have a volume number, provide the week, month, or season with the year.

Author, T. H. (Year, June). Title. *Name of Journal*, 7, pp. 11-26.

A set of guidelines for use in referencing a variety of sources follows. If you cannot find the reference that gives the exact details of your text, you may find further bibliographical details on the UC library catalogue or other library catalogues such as the National Library of Australia.

Books	In-text referencing	Reference list
One author	Wilson (2001, p.6) discusses the importance of "...". <b>OR</b> ... as found in the case study (Wilson, 2001)	Wilson, K. (2001). <i>Reinventing medicine</i> . San Francisco: Harper Collins.
Three authors to five (first entry all the authors surnames and then use et al. for subsequent entries)	A recent study (Duffy, Deakin, Narkiewicz & Wilson, 2001, p.20) concludes that "... " <b>OR</b> Duffy, Deakin, Narkiewicz and Wilson (2001) emphasises the point that ... <b>Subsequent citation:</b> (Duffy et al., 2001, p. 20) or Duffy et al. (2001)	Duffy, A., Deakin, V., Narkiewicz, E., & Wilson, K. (2001) <i>Guide to writing in biomedical sciences</i> . Canberra: University of Canberra.
Second, or later edition	Peters (2001, p. 6) argues that "...".	Peters, T. (2001). <i>The elements of counselling</i> (2nd ed.) Brisbane, QLD, Australia: Macmillan
No author's name appears (but there is a sponsoring body, newspaper, or title)  Cite the sponsoring organisation, the newspaper, or the title	A recent study ( Australian Taxation Office, 2005) has concluded ... <b>OR</b> A study by Western Australian Mining ( <i>Perth Daily</i> , 17 November 2005, p. 20) reveals "...".	Australian Taxation Office (2005). <i>The rising index</i> . Canberra, ACT, Australia: Australian Government Publishing Service.  <i>Perth Daily</i> . (2005, November 17). Mining interests persevere. p. 20.
Referring to an author (primary reference) read about in another publication (secondary reference)	Lilly (1980, cited in Maxwell, 1999, p. 25) states that "...". <b>OR</b> Lilly's 1980 study (cited in Maxwell, 1999, p.25) found that ...	Maxwell, F. (1999). <i>Phonology</i> . San Francisco: Brooks Cole.  <i>Here Maxwell has cited Lilly in Phonology on page 25, so Maxwell is the secondary reference and Lilly the primary.</i>

<b>Journals</b>	<b>In-text referencing</b>	<b>Reference list</b>
One or more authors	Kramer and Bloggs (2002) stipulate in their latest article ...	Kramer, E., & Bloggs, T. (2002) On quality in Art and Art Therapy. <i>American Journal of Art Therapy</i> , 40(4). pp. 218-231.
Lecture notes (unpublished)	It is predicted that community development has elements that enhance leadership (Klein, 2005).	Klein, S. (2005) <i>Community participation</i> . Lecture notes distributed in the course CD 1206-Associated Leadership, at University of Canberra, ACT, Australia on December 12, 2005.
Government publication	A recent government survey ( Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, [DFAT], 2005) reported that ...  <i>Subsequent entries use only the acronym.</i>	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. (2005). <i>Education without boarders</i> . (CAT. No. 1314.9.) Canberra, ACT, Australia: Author.
Government Report (common title/acronym must also be added)	A government report (Australian Greenhouse Office in Department of the Environment & Heritage, [AGO in DEH], 2005) found that ...  <i>Subsequent entries use only the acronym.</i>	Australian Greenhouse Office in the Department of the Environment and Heritage. (2005). <i>Tracking to the Kyoto target</i> . Canberra, ACT, Australia: Australian Government Publishing Service.
<b>Electronic sources</b>	<b>In-text referencing</b>	<b>Reference list</b>
Document on the World Wide Web (dated and author or sponsor given)	Sofer (1996) states that ...  <b>OR</b> Art therapists are part of a global community (Sofer, 1996)	Sofer, D. (1996). <i>Art therapy on the web</i> . Retrieved December 7, 2005, from <a href="http://www.sofer.com/art-therapy/intro.html">http://www.sofer.com/art-therapy/intro.html</a>  <i>Note that web addresses are not underlined</i>
Document on the World Wide Web (author or sponsor given but not dated)	Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE, n.d.) has recommended three major regional action plans to maintain water reserves.  <i>Subsequent entries use only the acronym.</i>	Department of Sustainability and Environment (n.d.) <i>Regional Action Plans</i> . Retrieved December 2, 2005, from <a href="http://www.dse.vic.gov.au/DSE/wcmn202.nsf/LinkView">http://www.dse.vic.gov.au/DSE/wcmn202.nsf/LinkView</a>

Online journal	Hundy and Cameron (2004), discuss the risk factors associated with infectious disease in their recent article ...	Hundy, R. & Cameron, S. (2004). Risk factors for sporadic human infection. <i>Journal of Communicable Diseases Australia</i> 28(1). Retrieved December 2, 2005, from <a href="http://pandora.nla.gov.au/pan/10754/20040610/www.cda.gov.au/pubs/cdi/cdicur.htm">http://pandora.nla.gov.au/pan/10754/20040610/www.cda.gov.au/pubs/cdi/cdicur.htm</a>
Journal article on electronic database	Joyce (2005), suggests that ...	Joyce, P. (2005) Teaching and learning principles for technology-rich classrooms. <i>Teacher</i> ; pp. 52-55. Retrieved June 16, 2005 from WebINFORMIT database.
<b>Specialised sources</b>	<b>In-text referencing</b>	<b>Reference list</b>
Daily newspaper article	Preston (2005) stated that ...	Preston, T. (2005, September 29). Upsurge in the economy. <i>Canberra Times</i> , p. 29.
Video recording	Visual creativity in <i>Three Coins</i> (Jones & Dam, 1970) allows the viewer ...	Jones, S. (Producer) & Dam, F. (Director). (1970). <i>Three Coins</i> . [Video recording]. Rome: Toshiba Classical Film and Video.
Movie	The evidence (Jackson & Pyke, 2003) that belief in a world ...	Jackson, P. (Director), & Pyke, S. (Producer). (2003) <i>The Lord of the Rings</i> . [Motion picture] Auckland, New Zealand: Imagine Films.

Additional information can be obtained from the American Psychological Association Website: <http://www.apastyle.org/elecsource.html>