

Referencing module texts

1. Introduction

When you're writing an assignment, or any other written work which will be seen by others, you are expected to acknowledge the sources you've used.

If you haven't already done so, you may like complete the activity [Introduction to referencing](#) before starting this one.

Learning outcomes

By the end of this activity, you should be able to:

- reference module texts within your writing
- create a full reference for a reference list, that presents the correct module text information in the right format.

2. Referencing styles

Referencing styles are guides that help you create your references.

They assist by showing you:

- the information to include in your reference
- how your reference should be formatted.

You do not read a referencing style from beginning to end. Instead you focus on the parts that show you how to reference the type of resource you have read. This activity will focus on how you create a reference to a module text.

Which referencing style?

There are lots of different referencing styles. As an OU student your module website will contain the referencing style you need to use.

This activity will provide example references using the OU Harvard referencing style.

Being digital Copyright © 2020 The Open University

3. In-text citations

When you refer to, or quote, someone else's work within the content of your own written work, you must provide some information on the source. This is called an **'in-text citation'**.

An in-text citation isn't a full reference. You are only required to provide enough detail to direct people to the full details in the reference list.

The basic information you need for an in-text citation is:

- the names(s) of the author(s)
- the Block
- the year the text was published

If you are quoting directly from a module text, you will also need to include the page number on which the quote appears.

The way you word your sentence will determine where your in-text citation should be placed, and the format you should use. Look carefully through the examples on the next page.

Additional information

In this activity we have included a referencing framework for in-text citations that includes information on the module **Block**. Some courses or modules may use referencing styles that do not require this information, so check your referencing guidelines or ask your tutor.

4. Creating an in-text citation

Each of the following cases provide some examples of where to include the citations within your written work, and how to format them.

In each case, full details must be provided in your reference list.

Citing a module text with no stated author(s)

Your module texts may not have any stated authors. They may have been published under the name of the institution or organisation. Use this in place of the author(s).

Example 1

Similar findings (**The Open University, Block 2, 2013**) support the original claim.

Being digital Copyright © 2020 The Open University

Example 2

Further work by **The Open University (Block 2, 2013)** supports this claim.

Full details must be provided in your reference list.

Citing a module text by one author

Example 1

Further work (**Jones, Block 2, 2013**) supports this claim.

Example 2

Further work by **Jones (Block 2, 2013)** supports this claim.

Full details must be provided in your reference list.

Citing a module text by two authors

Example 1

Further work (**Winter and Green, Block 3, 2013**) outlines a number of approaches.

Example 2

The examples provided by **Winter and Green (Block 3, 2010)** support this model.

Full details must be provided in your reference list.

Citing a module text by three or more authors

To reference a module text written by three or more authors, you only need to list the first author, followed by et al., which means 'and others'.

Example 1

Further research (**Latham et al., Block 1, 2013**) supports this claim.

Example 2

The work of **Latham et al. (Block 1, 2013)** supports this claim.

Being digital Copyright © 2020 The Open University

Full details must be provided in your reference list.

Citing a quote within a sentence

When including a direct quote within a sentence you have written, you should include the **publication date**, **block number** and **page number** in brackets, either in the lead-in to the quote, or at the end of the sentence.

If a module text does not have an author, use the name of the university or institution in place of the author.

Example 1

The Open University (2013, Block 2, p. 23) indicates that 'several landmark studies have been made in this area'.

Example 2

The Open University indicates that 'several landmark studies have been made in this area' **(2013, Block 2, p. 23)**.

Full details must be provided in your reference list.

Citing before a blockquote

If you mention the author's name before a blockquote, put the publication date, block number and page number in brackets directly after the author's name.

If a module text does not have an author, use the name of the university or institution in place of the author.

Example

The Open University (2013, Block 2, p. 26) provides some advice on interviewing people for case studies:

You should ensure that your questions are focused, so do not cover more than one issue in one question. Keep your questions open to encourage a more detailed response. Don't ask questions that can be answered by a 'Yes' or 'No', as this will result in you having to ask another question.

If you are using a blockquote in your work, you need to remember to indent it.

Being digital Copyright © 2020 The Open University

Full details must be provided in your reference list.

Citing after a blockquote

If you include a blockquote, without mentioning the author within the sentence before, put the author's name (or institution), publication date, block number and page number in brackets on a new line.

If a module text does not have an author, use the name of the university or institution as the author.

Example

You should ensure that your questions are focused, so do not cover more than one issue in one question. Keep your questions open to encourage a more detailed response. Don't ask questions that can be answered by a 'Yes' or 'No', as this will result in you having to ask another question.

(The Open University, 2010, Block 2, p. 26)

If you are using a blockquote in your work, you need to remember to indent it.

Full details must be provided in your reference list.

5. Elements of a full reference

In-text citations are brief, often they only contain an author name and publication date. For every in-text citation you have included within your work, there should be a detailed reference in your reference list. These references contain enough detail to allow anyone reading your work to find the items you have referenced.

What to include in a reference

The key pieces of information you need to include for print module texts are:

- the author's surname and initials, or the name of the institution
- the year the text was published
- module code, block number and block title. In some cases you may be asked to provide unit or section number and title as well.
- place of publication
- the publisher.

6. Online module materials

In-text

If you are providing an in-text reference to an online module text, you will need to provide the year of module start, instead of the year of publication. For example: Author (year of module start), or (Author, year of module start).

Full reference

Your full reference requires **year of module start** and **online details**. You will need to provide the following information:

- **Author and initials (or the name of the institution)**, followed by the **year of module start** (in brackets)
- **Section number and title** (within single quotation marks, followed by a comma)
- **The module code, block number and title** (in italics).
- Write **[Online]** after this to indicate you are referencing online material (followed by a full stop). Then write **Available at**, and follow this with the URL of the web page. Within brackets, write **Accessed**, and then the date you last accessed the web page.

Example

The Open University (2019) '1.2.2 Language, Protest and Power', Y031 Block 2 Speaking Out [Online]. Available at <https://learn2.open.ac.uk/mod/oucontent/view.php?id=192081&ion=2.2> (Accessed 3 February 2019).

7. Quiz

Have a go at the following quiz to test your understanding of how to reference module texts, both as in-text citations and within reference lists.

Question 1 of 3

The following options show three in-text citations for a module text. Assume that block details are required and choose the citation which is written correctly.

1. The Open University (2013) found that texting has 'impaired the way we communicate verbally' in social situations.

2. The Open University (2013, p. 26) found that texting has 'impaired the way we communicate verbally' in social situations.

3. The Open University (2013, Block 2, p. 26) found that texting has 'impaired the way we communicate verbally' in social situations.

Answer to Question 1

1. This is incorrect. The citation needs to include the block number and page number. This information should appear within the brackets, after the date.

2. In some circumstances, this answer would be correct. However, on some modules, student are required to include the block details. In this case, the block number is missing. This should be provided within the brackets, after the year of publication.

3. Well done. This is the correct citation because the publication date, block number and page number have been included in brackets in the lead-in to the quote. You could also have chosen to include this information at the end of the sentence. In some circumstances, you may not be required to include block information.

Question 2 of 3

The following options show three in-text citations for a work with three authors. Which one is correct?

1. Jones et al. (2012, Block 3) identified three main strategies for the effective management of this type of situation.

2. Jones, Allcott and Price (2012, Block 3) identified three main strategies for the effective management of this type of situation.

3. Jones et al. identified three main strategies for the effective management of this type of situation.

Answer to Question 2

1. This is the correct option because, if there are three authors, you would only include the name of the first author, followed by **et al.**, and then the date and block in brackets.

2. This option is incorrect because only the name of the first author is required, followed by **et al.**, to indicate three or more authors.

Being digital Copyright © 2020 The Open University

3. This option is incorrect because it is missing the year of publication and block number, which should appear in brackets after the author details.

Question 3 of 3

The following options show three formats for referencing online module material. Choose the option that shows the right information in the right order.

1. Author/Organisation, 'Unit number and title', Module code, block number and title, and chapter or section title [Online]. Available at and URL of the website (Year of study) (Accessed and the date you last accessed the site).

2. Author/Organisation, (Year of study) 'Unit number and title', Module code, block number and title, and chapter or section title [Online]. Available at and URL of the website (Accessed and the date you last accessed the site).

3. Author/Organisation, (Year of study) 'Unit number and title', Module code, block number and title, and chapter or section title. Available at and URL of the website (Accessed and the date you last accessed the site).

Answer to Question 3

1. This option is incorrect because the year of study is in the wrong place. The date should follow the author's surname and initial(s).

2. This is the correct option. It provides the right details, in the correct order.

3. This option is incorrect, because it is missing the [Online] indicator. This should appear after the module code, block number and title and chapter/section title details.

Summary

We have covered:

- What to include in an in-text citation
- What to include in a full reference
- How to reference module texts online and in print

There are many different referencing styles. Your module or course will provide you with details of which one you should be using, along with the relevant guidelines for

Being digital Copyright © 2020 The Open University

that style. If you are unsure, you will find the information in your study or assessment guide. And remember referencing styles are there to help you.

Next Steps

This activity has focused on referencing module texts. Being digital also covers:

[Referencing books](#)

[Referencing ejournals](#)

[Referencing websites](#)