

# Being digital

## Introduction to referencing

### 1: Introduction

When you write a piece of work (report, essay or assignment) you are likely to refer to sources of information that you have come across during your studies or research. These might be course materials, books, ejournals or websites, to name a few. You will be expected to include quotes and references from these sources to provide evidence for your arguments.

In order to enable others to locate these sources, and to acknowledge the original authors, you will be required to provide reference details using specific referencing styles.

This activity forms part of a series on referencing, and will help you to understand:

- what referencing is, and why it's important
- more about the sources that need referencing.

## 2: What is referencing, and why is it important?

**Referencing** is a way of acknowledging the sources you have used, or referred to, in your work by:

- providing information on other people's ideas, theories or works
- repeating or paraphrasing their work
- quoting their work.

**Referencing styles** are frameworks designed to help you to cite and reference correctly. They offer standard formats to ensure that you include all the information your readers will need to find the work you are referring to.

There is no secret to referencing, and there is no need to feel anxious about it. If you are studying, your institution or faculty will most likely provide you with guidance on which referencing style to use, and how to reference. You are likely to find this information in the guidance provided for your module.

Quite often libraries will provide advice and guidance on referencing, and may offer additional online tutorials to help you.

If you do have concerns about referencing, you can contact your tutor for advice.

## 3: Referencing styles

Referencing styles are made up of two components:

- an in-text citation
- a reference list

### **In-text citation**

**In-text citations** indicate that you are talking about, referring to or paraphrasing someone else's work. They are also required when you directly quote another person's original words.

An in-text citation will include minimal details; usually the name of the author and date the work was published.

In-text citations are typically included in brackets within the content of your own work, and provide enough information for your readers to find the full reference in your reference list.

## **Reference list**

A reference list is a complete list of full references related to the sources you have used in your work.

A reference list would typically be included at the end of your work.

Each reference within the list provides full details of the sources you have used, written in the format required for the referencing style you are using.

## **4: Why is referencing important?**

The benefits of referencing are not restricted to one person.

Although clear referencing will help you, as the author, it will also benefit your readers, and the original authors of works you are referring to.

### **Your readers**

The primary reason for referencing is to acknowledge the work of others, and to enable your readers to find the material you have mentioned in your work. Your readers may want to follow up some of the research you have mentioned. Your references could help them to improve their own understanding of the subject.

### **Original authors**

The authors who have written the material you have mentioned will also want to be acknowledged. Imagine if someone used something you had written in your assignment. You would want them to acknowledge that the work was done by you, and not pass it off as their own work.

### **You**

The references you include in your work show that you have researched your subject area, and help to provide evidence that can strengthen the arguments you make.

Passing someone else's work off as your own is referred to as 'plagiarism'. If you acknowledge your sources correctly, you will avoid this.

## **5: What sources would I need to reference?**

The list below shows some of the different sources that would require a reference, if you referred to them in your own work.

- books
- module texts
- journals
- ejournals
- websites
- forums
- blogs
- wikis
- tutorials
- video and audio
- pictures and photos

If you refer to or quote any work created by another person, you will need to provide a citation within the text and include the full details in a reference list.

## 6: Formats for reference lists

Earlier in this activity, we mentioned that there are standard formats for including the full details of the sources you have mentioned in your work. Depending on your source, you may need to include a selection of the following details:

- Author
- Year of publication
- Title of article or chapter
- Title of the publication
- Issue and volume numbers
- Place of publication
- Publisher
- Edition
- Page numbers
- [Online] indication and URL
- Date you accessed the material

The checklist in **Appendix 1** (page 7) provides a reminder of which details you will need to include in a full reference, for a selection of sources.

## 7: Summary

### Hints and tips

- Find out which referencing style you should be using. You're likely to find this in the guidance provided for your module. For example, the information might be in your study guide or assessment guide. If you're unsure, ask your tutor.
- If you're concerned about referencing, contact your tutor for advice.
- Don't get too anxious about referencing, and don't be afraid to ask for help.
- Explore what guidance is offered by your library (institution or organisation).

Above all, remember that the point of referencing is to provide enough clear information to allow your readers to follow up on the sources you have used. Referencing is a strict requirement for academic work. However, the referencing skills you learn can also be very beneficial in a work environment.

To find out more about the basics of referencing different sources, work through the referencing activities provided on the **Being digital** website.

### Referencing activities on Being digital

[Referencing books](#)

[Referencing module texts](#)

[Referencing ejournals](#)

[Referencing websites](#)

## Reference

### Being digital activity

[An introduction to referencing](#)

## Appendix 1: Referencing checklist

	<b>Books</b>	<b>eJournals</b>	<b>Module texts</b>	<b>Websites</b>
<b>Author's surname and initials / institution or organisation</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Year of publication</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	<i>If available</i>
<b>Title of article/chapter</b>	<i>If the book is an anthology</i>	Yes	<i>Chapter or section title, if online</i>	<i>Title of website</i>
<b>Unit number and title, module code, block number, block title</b>			Yes	
<b>(Eds) to indicate editors of an anthology or collection</b>	<i>If the book is an anthology or collection</i>			
<b>Title of publication</b>	Yes	Yes		
<b>Edition</b>	<i>If there is an edition number</i>			
<b>Issue and volume numbers</b>		Yes		
<b>Place of publication</b>	Yes		Yes	
<b>Publisher</b>	Yes		Yes	
<b>Page numbers</b>	<i>If this is an anthology</i>	<i>If available</i>	<i>If required</i>	
<b>[Online] indication and URL</b>	<i>If this is an ebook</i>	Yes	<i>If online</i>	Yes
<b>Date accessed</b>	<i>If this is an ebook</i>	Yes	<i>If online</i>	Yes