

What are the Most Common Referencing Styles?

Using the words or ideas of others is crucial to academic writing. It demonstrates a real concern on your part with the quality of the evidence you have used throughout your essay and it helps substantiate your conclusion. Citing or referencing your sources properly also enables the reader to check that you have used your sources appropriately and that the arguments you are drawing from the works of others are sound, and that you are doing justice to the original author's ideas and points of view. In addition, citing references helps anyone marking your work to see that you haven't plagiarised or taken ideas or words from another author without making this clear.

When it comes to referencing sources, there are three things that you have to provide:

- Within the text you need to provide an extract from the source. This can either be a word for word quotation or a paraphrase of the information they have provided you with
- Within the text, usually after the extract from the source, you need to provide some form of a marker which indicates that this information comes from another person – they aren't your words or ideas
- And finally, you need to provide details of the source. This usually appears as a footnote or as a list of references at the back of the essay

There are 4 common referencing styles:

- **The author/date style;** most commonly known in the UK and Australia as the Harvard style of referencing. With this style, the marker you would provide within the text is the author's name and then the date of the publication, i.e. Smith (1980) or (Smith, 1980)
- **The Superscript.** With this style, the marker you would provide within the text is a raised number, e.g.¹ You would then provide the details of the source in a footnote at the bottom of each page
- **Bracketed numbers;** also known as the numbered-note style. With this style, the marker you would provide within the text is a number in brackets, i.e. (12). The first citation you provide would be numbered as (1), the second as (2), and so on and so forth. The details of each source would then be listed in a list of references at the end of the essay
- **Vancouver-numeric style.** With this style, the marker you would provide within the text is the same as the bracketed number style, i.e. a number in brackets. However, unlike the bracketed number style, the same number may appear in the essay or dissertation more than once. As with the bracketed number style, you start with (1), then (2), and so on throughout the essay, BUT when you refer to a source that you

have previously referred to, you insert its original number. So, if for example you refer to source number 5 seven times, the insert (5) would appear seven times in your essay or dissertation.

Throughout the UK the Harvard style of referencing is most commonly adopted by Universities; however some Universities will let you choose your own style of referencing. It is always best to speak to each of your lecturers or teachers and ask them for clear rules of the referencing style they would like you to adopt.

To ensure that your academic work is correctly referenced, call the experts at Words Worth Reading Ltd for [proofreading and editing](#).