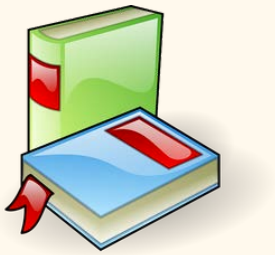
2026

HOW TO REFERENCE

LIBRARY & INFORMATION SERVICE

Accurate and consistent referencing is an important skill to learn.



WHAT IS REFERENCING?

Referencing, also known as citing, is providing a list of your information sources used within your research in order for others to identify and locate the items. There are two parts to referencing - citing within the text and the reference list at the end.

WHY REFERENCE?

 To support your research: It is used to support your own ideas i.e. to show that you can locate, evaluate and select information. It shows that you have read up on the topic and strengthens your argument by providing evidence to support your point of view.

 To acknowledge another's work & avoid plagiarism: Plagiarism is defined as passing others ideas off as your own. If you use ideas from another author through paraphrasing, summarising, quoting or copying, it is important to acknowledge them in your work.

 To allow other researchers to locate your sources: A reference list allows other researchers to locate your sources and trace the development of your work.

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REFERENCE MANAGEMENT

It is important to record all the details from your information source when you are including it in your work. e.g. the title; the author(s); the publication details (place and year); page number(s) and location of the source.

There are many reference management software tools available which allow you to manage your references electronically. Some are freely available such as Mendeley and Zotero or subscription-based such as RefWorks, Endnote, Reference Manager, etc, PubMed offers a free "My Bibliography" tool and has a useful 'Cite' button.

REFERENCING STYLES

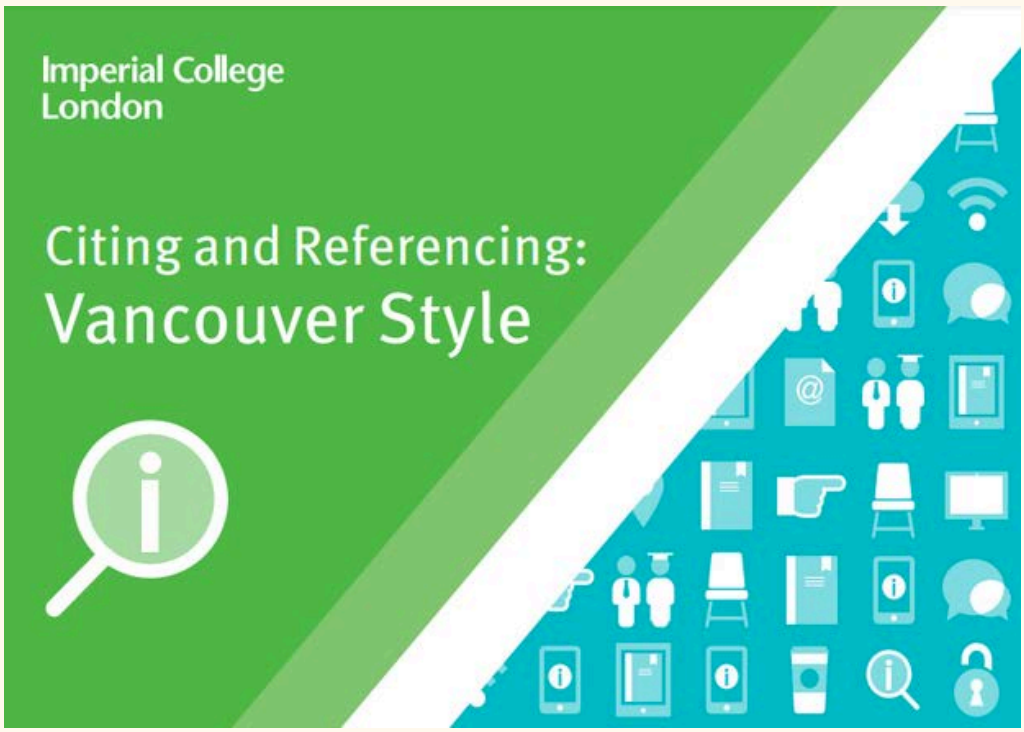
Referencing styles provide rules for referencing to ensure standardisation and consistency. There are many different styles of referencing and it is important to be consistent and stick to only one style.

The choice of style may be dictated by the publishers, universities, organisations, etc. For example the BMJ requires the use of the Vancouver style of referencing. These styles differ in the way sources are referred to in the text and also in the reference list at the end of the document. Referencing also varies according to the type of source i.e. books, journals, electronic, etc.

VANCOUVER STYLE

The Vancouver Style of Referencing is used most frequently in the medical sciences and is commonly used for submitting to Medical Journals. References are listed in numerical order as to how they appear in the body of the text.

It follows rules established by the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors. Patrias K, author; Wendling D, editor. *Citing Medicine: The NLM Style Guide for Authors, Editors, and Publishers* [Internet]. 2nd edition. Bethesda (MD): National Library of Medicine (US); 2007-.
Available from: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK7256/



This online guide from Imperial College London is essential reading
Citing & Referencing Guide: Vancouver Style
Available from: https://www.imperial.ac.uk/admin-services/library/learning-support/reference-management/vancouver-style/

Also Monash University have an online tutorial available:
Citing and Referencing
Available from: https://www.monash.edu/rlo/research-writing-assignments/referencing-and-academic-integrity/citing-and-referencing