

Resource 14: Tips for tidy referencing

The following tips help ensure you have a tidy and professional reference list:

Use only one system for referencing

As noted there are different ways to reference. Although Harvard is common, other styles are used (historical geographers will often use the footnoting system, for example). Pick one system and stick with it. Do not muddle up two different ways of referencing.

Use a consistent format for citations and references

If you look at books and journal articles you will notice that the citations and references look all the same. You should format your citations and references consistently too. In other words, for in-text citations, if you place a comma after the author name – for example (Clark, 2015) – make sure that comma is on every citation to follow. Likewise, in the reference list, if you use full stops, italics, underlines, or bold text, make sure you do so on each reference. For example, if we were to cite a journal article like this: Author, Initial (Year) ‘Title of Article’ *Journal Title* **Volume Number**: page number, then every journal article to follow should employ the *same* style. I mention this because it is now easy to cut and paste references from the internet (especially using Google Cite). These are rarely formatted to the same style and if inserted straight into your document, you will find you end up with a sloppy, unprofessional reference list.

Ensure your references are complete

As mentioned, it is now easy to cut and paste references from the internet (rather than have to type them out). Sometimes, however, these references will be incomplete. I am regularly circling incomplete references on student projects and essays which I mark, where a journal

title is abbreviated, or the place of publication is missing from a book reference. Again, this leads to a poorly constructed reference list. If you do cut and paste, go back to the reference and ensure it is complete. Don't trust that it will be. If in doubt, use the old-fashioned approach of writing the reference out for yourself.

Only put sources in the reference list which appear in the main text

When marked, staff will check your referencing for accuracy. When I do this, it tends to be because a student has cited something that I'd quite like to read and I am keen to find the full reference in the bibliography. It is frustrating when a reference is not in the list. On the other hand, students can sometimes try to make it appear that they have read more by inserting extra references into the bibliography. This is not a wise move. It will be noticed.

Accordingly, make sure your in-text citations and bibliography match.

Use page numbers when appropriate

It is worth remembering that for in-text citations where you have used a direct quote, you must refer to the page number of the text you have used (if one is available). The only time when this is not feasible is if you are using a source that has no page numbers, such as a website. In these cases, students can indicate that no number was available by writing 'no page'. It is also worth remembering when page numbers are required as part of full references in the bibliography. Journals are a good example, but a full page range is also needed where edited-book chapters have been cited. The omission of page numbers for such sources is surprisingly common.