

**LIVERPOOL HOPE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE**

**How to use references  
and avoid plagiarism**

**A Writing Centre  
workshop**

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## Introduction

Welcome to this workshop, in which we will examine ways of making effective use of references, as well as ensuring that you know what plagiarism is and how to avoid it. Within this handout you will find several exercises, which you may complete and return to the Writing Centre for feedback if you wish.

We hope you find this workshop useful. It is one of a range of services provided for you by the Writing Centre. Please do not hesitate to get in touch if you would like to know more about what the Writing Centre offers.

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## Structure

This workshop is divided into two parts:

### Part One

This section concentrates on how to make effective use of other people's material in your own writing. This is one of the key skills of academic writing, and if you learn to do it well then it should greatly enhance your academic success.

### Part Two

This section deals with the technicalities of how to cite sources correctly. We have used the Harvard system throughout: please make sure you know which referencing system(s) your subject(s) use.

**Please note:** this workshop covers the general principles of referencing. It cannot cover the variations that inevitably occur between one subject area and another. Most subjects do produce their own guidance on how they expect you to reference. Please refer to this guidance if possible, and if in doubt always check with the person who is going to mark your work.

## Part One

### Exercise 1 – why do we reference?

Take a few moments to consider the following questions. Briefly note your answers.

Why do we refer to other people's work when we write at University level?

Why is it so important to cite sources correctly?

What is plagiarism?

## **So why *do* we refer so often to other people's work when we write at University level?**

As we discussed in the first workshop, 'Introduction to Academic Writing', one of the key features of academic writing is that it uses evidence to back-up its argument. Unless you are a famous Professor, you cannot state your personal opinion and leave it at that. Everything you say must be justified by reference to another academic or researcher in your field. The ability to weave sources, references and other people's ideas (properly cited!) into your writing is one of the most important aspects of academic writing.

## **And why is it so important to cite sources correctly?**

Referencing may seem tedious, but the idea of it is to enable anyone reading your work, anywhere in the world, to go and look at the same source that you have used. This enables readers to see if they agree with your interpretation of something, and to understand how you have reached your conclusions. The academic world has a global store of knowledge to which anyone undertaking study or research can contribute. So that the store of knowledge keeps growing it is important to document all the other pieces of information that you have used in the production of your own academic work. Newton said he was 'standing on the shoulders of giants': great discoveries and inventions build on the work of others. Showing how you have reached your conclusions will enable others to use your work, and build upon it.

## **What is plagiarism?**

In short, plagiarism is when you use other people's ideas, words or research without acknowledging it. It is a type of intellectual theft and is treated very seriously by the academic community. The term has its roots in the Latin word *plagiarius*, which means 'plunderer'. This in turn comes from the Latin word *plagium*, which means 'kidnapping'. So you can see that this is not a nice thing to do! On the next two pages you can see Liverpool Hope's policy on plagiarism.

## **What is the College's policy on Academic Dishonesty, including Cheating and Plagiarism?**

We take these issues very seriously and impose severe penalties. From your point of view as a student, academic dishonesty means cheating in examinations or engaging in plagiarism.

### **What counts as cheating in an examination?**

Examples might include:

- taking in crib sheets of some kind;
- programming formulae/data/information into calculators outside the frame of reference allowed by the subject concerned;
- exchanging or looking over answers with a neighbour (copying);
- getting another student to take the examination (impersonation);
- trying to find out the contents of the examination in advance.

### **What is plagiarism?**

Plagiarism involves presenting someone else's work as your own. The College expects that any work you submit for formal assessment should be your own work and, where it incorporates material from other authors, the reference to these authors should be clear and unambiguous.

During your course, you will almost certainly be expected to work collaboratively with other students and you will also be expected to make wide reference in your assignments to the work of other scholars, published and unpublished. Therefore, in order to demonstrate that work is your own, it is essential that:

- quotations from published and unpublished sources are indicated and acknowledged clearly;
- sources of illustrations, photographs maps and statistics are acknowledged clearly;
- web-based materials are not downloaded directly into any assignment and, where such materials are included, that they are referenced fully like any other source material;
- materials/assignments, purchased or acquired from internet sites or commissioned from sources which write assignments for payment (paper mill sites), should not be incorporated;
- paraphrasing of material from others must be referenced clearly;
- you do not incorporate materials that have been previously submitted at this or any other institution towards the completion of an award. However, if inclusion of previous work is warranted it must be referenced fully;
- unless you are instructed to produce a group assignment, you must produce work which is uniquely your own;
- where you do work as part of a group, the submission sheet should include a list of all students who have contributed to this work.

## **What will happen if you do cheat in an examination or plagiarise?**

If you are found guilty of any form of academic dishonesty [including cheating in examinations and plagiarism], this may result in the failure of the module concerned; in some cases, it might result in your failure to graduate.

**Note:** do not be alarmed by the above policy. Plagiarism is easily avoided if you follow a some simple guidelines about how to reference properly. This is what we will explore on the next few pages.

## Exercise 2 – identifying plagiarism

Let us imagine that you are a tutor marking student essays! The subject of the essay is the nutritional value of chocolate. When you receive the essays, you find that many students have made use of the same quotation. You know (from your extensive subject knowledge) that the full quotation reads thus:

The results of the experiment indicated that the polyphenols present in dark chocolate had a protective effect on the arteries and thereby reduced the incidence of heart disease.

The bibliographic information is as follows:

Twix, RG, Mars, DL& Snickers, BJ 2003, 'The effects of dark chocolate on cardiac health', *Nutrition Monthly*, vol.5, no.10, pp. 29-36.

The following pieces of text (a – e) appear in the student essays. Look at the way in which each extract uses the quotation and see if you can decide which ones should be described as plagiarism. Circle your answer for each example.

a) Chocolate has an important part to play in a nutritious diet because it reduces the risk of heart disease.

Fairly used                      plagiarised

b) According to the results of an experiment carried out by Twix, Mars and Snickers (2003), chocolate has an important part to play in a nutritious diet because it seems to have a protective effect on the arteries, and therefore reduces the risk of heart disease.

Fairly used                      plagiarised



c) Chocolate has an important part to play in a nutritious diet because it seems to reduce the risk of heart disease (Twix, Mars & Snickers 2003).

Fairly used                      plagiarised

d) Chocolate is a very valuable addition to the average Western diet because the results of the experiment indicated that the polyphenols present in dark chocolate had a protective effect on the arteries and thereby reduced the incidence of heart disease. This is especially important for those who indulge in a 'junkfood' diet etc etc

Fairly used                      plagiarised

e) When an experiment designed to measure the effects of chocolate on arterial health was carried out, it was found that polyphenols did indeed have a protective influence. This is interesting because . . . .

Fairly used                      plagiarised

f) Some researchers have made very strong claims about the effectiveness of chocolate in preventing heart disease:

The results of the experiment indicated that the polyphenols present in dark chocolate had a protective effect on the arteries and thereby reduced the incidence of heart disease. (Twix, Mars & Snickers 2003, p.29)

However, not all experiments have produced similar results etc etc

Fairly used                      Plagiarised

## Answers

a) This is probably plagiarism. It is certainly not good scholarship.

### Explanation

In the case of our example above, the effects of chocolate on cardiac health are not universally accepted, nor have enough people written about them, to warrant a general statement that is not specifically referenced. If in doubt, always quote an acknowledged expert to back you up.

If something is common knowledge in your subject area, or has been written about by many different researchers, then you are permitted to describe the idea in general terms, without using a reference. For example:

Postmodernism is a school of thought that rejects the practices of modernism.

The burning of fossil fuels contributes to atmospheric pollution.

Ted Hughes' book *Birthday Letters* is a portrait of his marriage to Sylvia Plath.

However, it will always strengthen your argument if you can refer to a specific source, no matter how universally accepted your assertion is. This shows that you have bothered to get the facts correct, rather than repeating generalisations. A good reference can transform a 'throwaway' remark into a meaningful statement.

b) This material is fairly used.

### Explanation

The original quotation has been paraphrased, but it still needs to be referenced because we are using the researchers' ideas, even if we are not using their exact words. When using the Harvard System, the name(s) of the author(s) and the date must be included in the main body of your essay. However, all other bibliographic details will go in your reference list at the end

of your essay. Note that here the author's names have been incorporated into the text (my emphasis):

b) According to the results of an experiment carried out by **Twix, Mars and Snickers** (2003), chocolate has an important part to play in a nutritious diet because it seems to have a protective effect on the arteries, and therefore reduces the risk of heart disease.

However, you do not have to do this. You could put their names in the bracket before the date (my emphasis):

b) According to the results of an experiment (**Twix, Mars & Snickers** 2003), chocolate has an important part to play in a nutritious diet because it seems to have a protective effect on the arteries, and therefore reduces the risk of heart disease.

Either way is acceptable. It really depends upon whether you want to emphasise the researchers' names or the information they have discovered. You only need to add the page number if you are referring in detail to an idea that appears on a particular page. In this case, we have referred generally to the experiment, so a page number is not required.

c) Fairly used

### **Explanation**

The original quotation has been summarised, but it still needs to be referenced because we are using the researchers' ideas, even if we are not using their exact words.

d) This is plagiarism

### **Explanation**

This is blatant plagiarism! The material has been 'lifted' word for word without any acknowledgement at all. People rarely get away with doing this because

no matter how obscure the source, somebody will notice eventually. Most subjects have very close-knit academic communities and most tutors read very widely around their subjects.

e) This is plagiarism.

### **Explanation**

The original words have been paraphrased, but the ideas within them still belong to the researchers. In addition, failure to reference this experiment results in a weak argument. Anybody reading this essay would want to know which experiment and when. They may want to refer to the experiment themselves to see if they agree with the writer's interpretation of it.

f) This is fairly used.

### **Explanation**

The text has been quoted directly and properly cited. Note that it has been woven into the writer's argument, rather than just being 'dumped' in the middle of it. The quoted text has been indented and is single-spaced. This is one way of marking it out as a direct quotation. Indented text does not need to be in 'speech marks'. Note that the author, the year and the page reference follow immediately in brackets. A page reference is always necessary when you use a direct quotation.

As a rule of thumb, any direct quotation longer than three lines needs to be indented. Anything shorter than this can be included in the main text, for example:

Some research has shown that 'the polyphenols present in dark chocolate had a protective effect on the arteries'. (Twix, Mars & Snickers 2003)

## Ways of using other people's material

What we have covered in the previous exercise may seem rather complicated. However, there are three basic ways of using other people's material in your own work. These are:

1. **Summary**

2. **Paraphrase**

3. **Quote**

For the purposes of this exercise we have used the following piece of imaginary text:

Writing essays is a complete waste of time. Students have to read immense quantities of dull books and then write at least five pages of complete rubbish about them. Multiple-choice would be a much better method of assessment because at least students can guess if they have not done the work.

The bibliographic details as follows:

Stuff, R & Nonsense, J 2003, *Down with Essays*, Rubbish Press, Liverpool.

Let us imagine that you want to use the above piece of text in your essay. There are three main ways in which you could do this.

Firstly, a **summary** of the text would be as follows:

Stuff and Nonsense (2003) assert that multiple-choice examinations are a superior method of assessment because they allow students the opportunity to guess.

This is not plagiarism because you start your summary with the authors' names, and you have included the date on which their work was published. This makes a clear distinction between your own ideas, and those of other people.

**Note:** if you are summarising a general idea, you do not usually need to include a specific page reference.

Secondly, a **paraphrase** of the text would be as follows:

Stuff and Nonsense (2003, p.13) argue that writing essays is not a productive use of time. This is due to the number and content of the books that must be read, and the length of the essay that must follow this reading. A superior method of assessment would be multiple-choice examinations because these allow students the opportunity to guess.

A paraphrase is much longer than a summary. It follows the structure of the original quotation, and is usually as long as, or longer than the original. Again, you avoid plagiarism by marking the beginning of your paraphrase with the authors' names, and including the date and page reference.

**Note:** a specific page reference is usually required with a paraphrase, as you are referring to a specific piece of text.

Thirdly, you would use a **direct quotation** as follows:

Although the academic essay continues to be one of the main assessment methods for students in Higher Education, it could be argued that other assessment methods are often more appropriate, and ought to be used more frequently. Stuff and Nonsense (2003) have this to say on the matter:

Writing essays is a complete waste of time. Students have to read immense quantities of dull books and then write at least five pages of complete rubbish about them. Multiple-choice would be a much better method of assessment because at least students can guess if they have not done the work. (p.13)

While many would regard this as an extreme point of view, the initiation of a debate on assessment methods in Higher Education is to be welcomed etc etc

You would then put the bibliographic details of the Stuff and Nonsense book in your reference list as follows:

Stuff, R & Nonsense, J 2003, *Down with Essays*, Rubbish Press, Liverpool.

Note that here, because the names of the authors and the date have been incorporated into the text, only the page number is required in brackets directly after the quotation. If you do not wish to include the authors' names and the date in your text, you can put them in the brackets in front of the page number. For example (my emphasis):

It has been argued that:

Writing essays is a complete waste of time. Students have to read immense quantities of dull books and then write at least five pages of complete rubbish about them. Multiple-choice would be a much better method of assessment because at least students can guess if they have not done the work. (**Stuff & Nonsense 2003**, p.13)

A direct quotation always needs the author(s) name(s), the date and the page number. The author(s) name(s) and the date can go in the main text or in the bracket, depending upon your own preference. Usually the page number goes in brackets directly after the quotation, preceded by the author and the date if this information has not been included in the main text.

Note again that the quotation has been woven into the argument, rather than being 'dumped' in the middle of the page.

## **When to use which technique**

Many people are wary of summarising and paraphrasing because they are unsure about what is and isn't plagiarism. If you reference your sources properly it is not cheating, rather a concise and flexible way of weaving other people's ideas into your argument. These techniques tend to be under-used in student essays, and yet they help the argument to flow, and can be beneficial to your learning, because by putting these ideas into your own words, you are showing that you understand them.

Summarising in particular allows you to demonstrate the range and depth of your knowledge without using up half your word-count by dropping in great chunks of other people's writing. (Please don't try to fill your word count by using excessive direct quotation – tutors tend to get cross when people do this. They want to know what *you* think.)

Direct quotation can be useful, and very powerful if you choose a strong quotation, but it tends to be over-used, and can make an essay disjointed. If you use it too much, your own voice is in danger of disappearing completely. As a general rule, choose direct quotations carefully and keep them as short as possible. If something is worth quoting in full, you should be able to generate at least a paragraph of discussion and analysis from it.

#### **Summary:**

- Shorter than the original quotation.
- Good for referring to a general idea.
- Include the author(s)' name(s) and date.
- Date is always in brackets.
- Author(s)' name(s) can be incorporated into your text or included in brackets in front of the date.
- Page number optional – depends on how general your reference is.

#### **Paraphrase:**

- As long as or longer than the original quotation.
- Good for showing that you understand an idea or theory, as you have put it into your own words.
- Include the author(s)' name(s), the date and page number.
- Date and page number always in brackets.
- Author(s) name(s) can be incorporated into your text or included in brackets in front of the date and page number.

#### **Direct quotation:**

- Choose your material carefully.
- Good for making a strong point but often over-used.
- Always include name, date and page number.
- The page number is always in brackets directly after the quotation.



- Name and date can be in the text or in the brackets in front of the page number.
- Indent and single space direct quotations over 3 lines. Do not use speech-marks for indented text.

### Exercise 3 – using references in your own writing

Now you try. Imagine you are writing an essay about the importance of grammar in modern life. You have found a quotation backing up your argument that grammar is very important.

Summarise, paraphrase and quote directly this original source:

More than at any time in history, you are judged on your communication skills, whether in speech or in writing. The successful development of your personal life, your relationships and your career is now more and more dependent upon the way in which you express your thoughts, your insights, knowledge and desires into language. How well you accomplish this is just as dependent upon your understanding of grammar. In so many ways you are only as good as your grammar. (King 2000, pp.12-13)

#### Bibliographic details

King, G 2000, *Good Grammar*, HarperCollins, Glasgow.

#### 1. Summarise the above

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#### 2. Paraphrase the above

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## Part two – technicalities

The Harvard system of referencing is also referred to as the 'author date' system. This is because you put the author and the date of the work to which you are referring in the main body of your text whenever you refer to a source. The full bibliographic details only need to be cited once, in your reference list at the end of your essay.

Most books are referenced in the following way:

### In your text:

(Name date, page number)

### For example:

According to some research, chocolate has a protective effect on the heart.  
(Twix 2003, p.29)

Or

According to Twix (2003, p.29) chocolate has a protective effect on the heart.

### In your reference list:

Name, Initial Date, *Title*, Publisher, Place of publication

### For example:

Twix, RG 2003, *Chocolate as cure*, Rubbish Press, Liverpool

**What if there is more than one author?**

Multiple authors are referenced as follows:

**In your text:**

(Name & Name date, page number – if required)

**For example:**

Some have argued that essays are a flawed method of assessment. (Stuff & Nonsense, 2003)

Or

Stuff and Nonsense (2003) have argued that essays are a flawed method of assessment.

**In your reference list:**

Name, Initial & Name, Initial Date, *Title*, Publisher, Place of publication

**For example:**

Stuff, R & Nonsense, J 2003, *Down with Essays*, Rubbish Press, Liverpool

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### **What if there are more than three authors?**

If there are more than three authors, you only need to include the first name and indicate that there are other authors by using the term 'et al.'

#### **In your text:**

(Name et al. date)

#### **For example:**

A recent experiment (Snickers et al. 2003) showed that . . .

#### **In your reference list:**

Name Initial et al. date, *Title*, Publisher, Place of publication

#### **For example:**

Snickers, BJ et al. 2003, *Chocolate as cure*, Rubbish Press, Liverpool

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**What if it is a chapter in an edited book?**

**In your text:**

(Name date, page number)

**For example:**

According to some research, chocolate has a protective effect on the heart.

(Twix 2003, p.29)

Or

According to Twix (2003, p.29) chocolate has a protective effect on the heart.

**In your reference list:**

Name, Initial Date, 'Chapter title' in *Book title* ed. Initial. Name, Publisher,  
Place, page numbers

**For example:**

Mars, DL 2003, 'Eat more chocolate' in *Sweets are good for you* ed. P. Bore,  
Rubbish Press, Liverpool, pp. 12 – 30

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**What if my source is quoted in a book by someone else?**

**In your text:**

Name (cited in Name date, page number)

**For example:**

Stuff (cited in Nonsense 2003, p35) contends that . . .

**In your reference list:**

Put the details of the book in which you found the quotation, not the book from which the original quotation came because *you* have not read this!

Name, Initial Date, *Title*, Publisher, Place of publication

**For example:**

Nonsense, R 2003, *The essay as torture*, Rubbish Press, Liverpool

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## How do I reference a journal?

### In your text:

(Name(s), date, page numbers if necessary)

### For example:

A recent experiment has shown that chocolate may have a protective effect on cardiac health. (Twix, Mars & Snickers 2003)

### In your reference list:

Name, Initial, Name Initial & Name Initial Date, 'Title of article', *Name of Journal*, volume, issue number, page numbers

### For example:

Twix, RG, Mars, DL& Snickers, BJ 2003, 'The effects of dark chocolate on cardiac health', *Nutrition Monthly*, vol.5, no.10, pp. 29-36.

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## How do I reference a website?

The 'powers that be' have not yet agreed a definitive way of referencing websites. For now, the following method should be acceptable to most subject areas:

### In your text:

(Author, date)

### For example:

Essays are not held in high esteem by some researchers. (Stuff 2003)

### In your reference list:

Author, Initial Date, *Title of page or article*, details of organisation if available, viewed day month year, <URL>

### For example:

Stuff J, 2003, *We hate essays*, Assessment Method Research Group, University of Nowhere, viewed 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2003, <<http://amrg.nowhere.edu.uk/essays>>

### **What if no date of publication is given?**

Use the initials 'n.d.' which stand for 'no date', for example:

Nonsense (n.d.) contends that essays are a flawed assessment method.

### **What if the person I am quoting has made a spelling mistake or said something inaccurate?**

Use the word 'sic' which is Latin for 'thus' to show that you are aware of the error. For example: 'essays is [sic] a waste of time'. (Stuff 2003)

### **What if I need to amend the quotation so that it makes sense?**

Use square brackets [ ] to indicate your own additions. For example: 'they are a waste of time' (Stuff 2003)

becomes

'they [essays] are a waste of time' (Stuff 2003)

### **What if I want to use part of a quotation that is too long to include in its entirety?**

Use . . . to show that you have omitted part of it. For example:

More than at any time in history, you are judged on your communication skills, whether in speech or in writing. The successful development of your personal life, your relationships and your career is now more and more dependent upon the way in which you express your thoughts, your insights, knowledge and desires into language. How well you accomplish this is just as dependent upon your understanding of grammar. In so many ways you are only as good as your grammar. (King 2000, pp.12-13)

becomes

More than at any time in history . . . you are only as good as your grammar. (King 2000, pp.12-13)

For further information on referencing and bibliographies, see 'Cite them right' at [www.unn.ac.uk/central/isd/cite](http://www.unn.ac.uk/central/isd/cite)

See also

[www.edgehill.ac.uk/tld/student/7steps/harvard.htm](http://www.edgehill.ac.uk/tld/student/7steps/harvard.htm)

You will notice that almost every source you look at contains slight variations. This shows just how confusing referencing can be! In the end, the exact style of referencing that you adopt will be determined by personal preference and what your subject asks you to do.

Two final pieces of advice:

1. However you reference, be consistent. Nothing will annoy tutors more than someone who 'chops and changes' their referencing style throughout a piece of work.
2. Please ask your subject area for guidance. Many do produce their own written guidelines. Please follow them in preference to what is contained in this handout. If in doubt, **please check with the person who will be marking your work.**

We hope you have found this session useful – if you would like further advice or guidance, you can make an appointment to see the Writing Centre Co-ordinator by e-mailing [writingcentre@hope.ac.uk](mailto:writingcentre@hope.ac.uk) or telephoning 0151 291 2048.