

## References and bibliographies: Plagiarism and how to avoid it

**Plagiarism is the act of using other people's words as if they were your own.**

In order to make clear to readers the distinction between your words and the words of others, thus avoiding the charge of plagiarism, it is essential that you reference your work accurately.

### Quotes

These form an essential part of most academic writing, and it is important how you present them. They are a way of showing how much background work you've done for the particular assignment and should not be left out, underestimated, badly referenced, etc.

- Quotes of more than twenty or so words should be **indented** and **single spaced**. There is no need to put quotation marks round an indented quote.
- Twenty words or less can be incorporated in the body of your text, in which case they need quotation marks round them.
- Quotes should be short and easy to read. If you want to leave bits out, put ..... to show that you have. If you need to add a word or two to give it more sense, then put them in **square** brackets [ ].
- They should stand out from your text, but **verify** it, i.e. your quote should be there **to make or support a point**.
- They should add **difference**. They introduce new writing styles into your work.

**You must always reference them properly, otherwise you cannot use them.**

- in the text, just after the quote, give in brackets: author's last name, date of publication, and page number:

e.g. (Smith 1989 p13) or (Smith 1989:13)

- in the Reference or Bibliography section at the back of your piece of work, list all works you have quoted from, in alphabetical order of author's last name. See over for how to do it.

## References and Bibliography

These are two different things, and sometimes need different treatment.

### References

The References are that material which you have **directly referred to or quoted from** in your writing. They should always be listed, in alphabetical order of author's last name.

- **Books:** Author's last name, initial(s) or first name(s), (ed) if he/she is the editor rather than the author, date of publication, title of book, place of publication, name of publisher.

Barrass, R. (1982) Students Must Write, London, Methuen.

The title of the **book** should be underlined or italicised.

- **Articles:** Author's last name, initial(s) or first name(s), date of publication, title of article, title of journal, details of journal, date, month, volume, part, pages, etc.

Barrass, R. Students Must Write, Adults Learning, vol 6, September 1993, pp45-78.

The titles of the **journal** should be italicised or underlined.

- **More than one author:** If there is between one and three authors, cite them all as they appear on the book or article.

e.g. Coe, N. Rycroft, R. and Ernest, P.

If there are more than three, cite the first one and then put 'et al' (which means 'and others').

e.g. Coe, N. et al

- When you mention a source of information, **even when you don't quote from it**, e.g. a book, article, website or report, you must reference it correctly, with author's name and date in brackets at the end of the sentence.

e.g. (Allen 1989)

- If you have read four books which all say the same thing, you can refer to them collectively:

e.g. As many writers (Smith 1989, Jones 1990, Matthews 1990, Ihenacho 1992) [in date order] have said, the opposite is sometimes the case.

This shows that you have read the material, but aren't wasting vital words quoting from them all. These books then need proper referencing.

### **Electronic sources**

There is as yet no one clear convention on how to do this. You should give the web address and the date you visited it, along with any other information you have as to authorship, date, place, etc., as with paper-based information.

### **Bibliography**

The Bibliography is the list of material you may have read or referred to **for** your piece of work, but may not have used directly **in** your work. Some tutors are happy for you to list these in with the references; some want them separate; some don't want them at all. If in doubt, ask.

Again, list works in alphabetical order of author's last name. This, and the way you lay out your references, is academic convention and is called the **Harvard** method. It is the preferred method in higher education and should be followed unless you have been told to do it a different way **for a particular reason**.

**Don't ever leave the references/bibliography out.**

They are what distinguishes work at this level. They give it academic credibility. Even reports on practical issues should be supported by evidence of further reading. You are often asked to relate theory to practice. You **cannot** do this without reading, quoting, and referencing.

What you say may be perfectly OK, factual, clever, etc., but if you haven't cited any other sources it won't carry any weight. It will come over as an '**I think**' essay.

### **Conclusion**

It is always obvious when a student has lifted words from a text without referencing, as there is a change of writing style each time. If you do not reference your work correctly, it will come across as if you had 'stolen' words or ideas from other sources. This is plagiarism and can have serious consequences.