

Referencing

What is referencing?

People use the term ‘referencing’ to refer to two important but different aspects of academic writing. The first is the way we include the ideas of others in our writing, through paraphrasing or by using direct quotes. The second is the ways that we **acknowledge** these ideas. This tells the reader who originally wrote about these ideas and concepts. It is this second kind of referencing that we focus on in this document.

Why and how do we reference?

Acknowledgement through referencing is an essential feature of academic communication. It is how you indicate the original sources of the ideas, concepts, and theories that you include in your academic writing and presenting. As part of this acknowledgement you need to do two things in your writing. Firstly, you need to reference all the paraphrases and direct quotes in the body of your writing (either via ‘in-text’ or ‘author-date’ referencing systems or by using footnotes). Secondly, you need to include a *listing* of all authors and materials that you have referred to in your writing. This reference list appears at the end of your work.

Referencing demonstrates that your academic work is reliable, because it shows that your findings are supported by the ideas of others and are not entirely your own views. Referencing provides context to your work, helps others to find your original sources of information, and provides evidence of your ability to locate and make connections between different ideas and theories. One of the consequences of not adequately referencing is that your writing might be considered to have plagiarised the work of others. (See our handout on Maintaining integrity and avoiding plagiarism.)

Referencing styles

Each discipline area has its own preferred style of referencing and each style has its own way of formatting paraphrases, quotes and reference lists. However, you will find that all styles require you to make note of similar information such as: the author’s name; the title; and the place, date and publishing details. What will differ between referencing styles is the order in which these items are listed, the punctuation required, and whether the in-text references follow an author-date or numeric style.

Author-date styles, like APA or Harvard, include referencing information about quotes and paraphrases in brackets as part of your writing (VU, 2015). While numeric styles, such as Oxford or IEEE, use superscript¹ or square bracketed numerals [1] that refer the reader to referencing information at either the bottom of each page (as in our example) or at the end of the work.

You can find out which style is required for your subject area by consulting your unit guide or asking your tutor. Once you know which referencing style you are expected to use, you can visit the VU Library to find the appropriate style guide <http://www.vu.edu.au/library/referencing-copyright> Each style guide provides examples of the correct referencing formats for everything from books to journal articles to podcasts, lecture notes and visual material.

Developing your assignments

Begin by breaking down the question and developing a research plan.

- Define the key terms and list what you already know about the topic. Ask yourself how you know this information. Can you support your ideas with evidence? If you do not have academically reliable evidence to back up your ideas you will need to research these points.

¹ VU, *Referencing, Plagiarism and Integrity*, Melbourne, Victoria University, 2015

- Look again at the key terms. Are there any gaps in your knowledge of the topic? Use these terms to begin your search for more information. Remember to take notes.

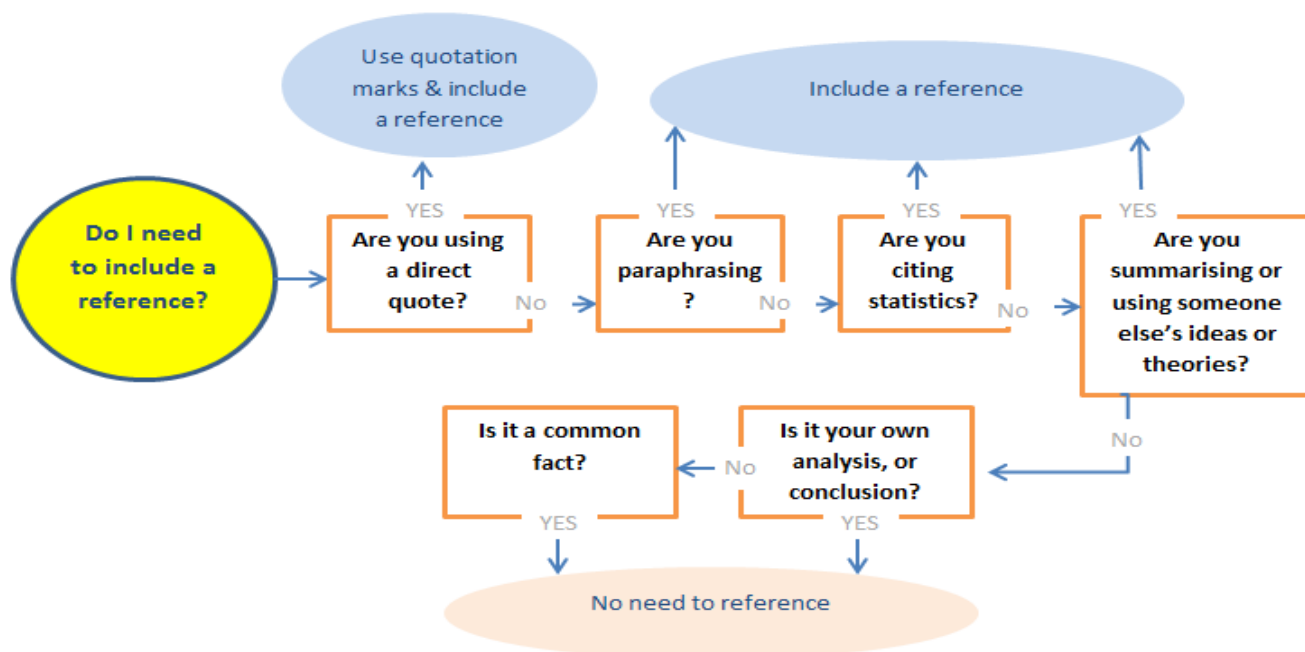
Keeping notes

Good note keeping is one of the best strategies you can use to help you effectively and efficiently reference the ideas you use from other sources. Make a habit of recording the reference details (author, date, title, publisher, place of publication, page numbers) for any notes you take during your research. If you copy a quote directly make sure you also note the exact page number. You might like to create a template like the one below to record your notes:

Subject: (name of unit/assignment)		Date:
Full reference details: (record in the style recommended for your subject) <i>Author /date /title /publisher /place of publication</i> <i>Page numbers</i>		
Quotes/key points: 1. "sdjhsdf hdsjhfjs hdjkh" p.49 2. Point a p.52		Why is this important? 1. Defines the term X 2. Shows the effect that X has on Y
How can I use this information? <i>Assignment 2 - use this quote as evidence for the importance of including X in any analysis...</i> <i>**Might need to find another example to back up idea</i>		

Keeping detailed notes of your readings will help you develop a more sophisticated response to your assignment questions, as well as save you a lot of time hunting for references and page numbers when your assignments are due.

Knowing what to reference



For more information refer to the handouts: Quoting; **Synthesising, Summarising, paraphrasing;** Maintaining integrity and avoiding plagiarism.