

Study Skills

BASIC REFERENCING TIPS AND GOLDEN RULES

Whichever referencing system you use, there are some golden rules which you should follow:

- Be consistent – use only the guidelines provided by your department and stick to them for all your work, unless your lecturers tell you otherwise.
- Follow the detail in your guidelines absolutely, for example for punctuation, capitals, italics and underlining. If you do not do this, you may lose marks. Referencing is all about attention to detail!
- If the source of information you are referencing does not fit any of the examples in your guidelines (and many do not!), include enough information for your reader to find and check that source, in a format as near to the appropriate example as possible.
- Your three watchwords should be:

HONESTY SCHOLARSHIP CONSISTENCY

WHY and WHEN TO REFERENCE - BASIC PRINCIPLES

WHAT IS REFERENCING?

Referencing is acknowledging the sources of information (originated by another person) that you have used to help you write your essay, report or other piece of work. In your work, you should use the existing knowledge of others to back up and provide evidence for your arguments. The sources of information you use may include such material as books, journal articles (paper or electronic), newspapers, government publications, videos, Dvds, websites, computer programs and so on.

WHY MUST I REFERENCE MY SOURCES OF INFORMATION?

There are several reasons why you must reference your work. In no particular order, these are:
As a courtesy to the originator of the material.

- To provide evidence of the depth and breadth of your reading and research (or lack of it!).
- To enable your reader to find and read in more detail, a source of information to which you refer in your work.
- To allow your lecturer/marker to check that what you claim is true; or to understand why you have made a particular mistake, and teach you how to avoid it in future.
- To enable you to find the source of information if you need to use it again.
- To avoid plagiarism.

WHEN MUST I USE A REFERENCE IN MY WORK?

You **MUST** use a reference whenever you:

Quote directly from a source

- Paraphrase (put into your own words), someone else's ideas. This is an alternative to using a direct quotation.
- Use statistics or other pieces of specific information, which are drawn from a source you have read.