

3 Step Strategy for Referencing Accurately

Step 1: Determine what kind of reference you have

This is perhaps the trickiest part. Often students become confused with what kind of reference they actually have to begin with. Sometimes it is easy to work it out. Books have the word ed. and journals have volume and issue numbers for example. However, what happens if you are unsure about what kind of internet document or book you have just used?

The easiest thing to do here is to work out exactly what kind of information you do have available in order to give you more clues on what kind of internet document or book it may be. For example a book with more than 2 authors will need to be referenced differently to a book with only one author. Likewise, an internet document that has no date or author will be referenced differently to one that has a known source or is an online report etc.

Step 2: Copy an online example of the format or example for the identified text type onto a word document in your specific referencing style

Assume that I have determined that I need to reference a book APA style with more than 2 known authors. The example below uses the I-CITE online referencing tool, but you can copy and paste straight from a normal referencing guide onto a word document the format you need and it will work just as well. (Note: if you are having difficulty copying from a PDF guide, it may be easier to copy and paste from another online referencing guide/site that allows you to copy and paste for the same referencing style).

Notice that after selecting all of the appropriate reference descriptors (style, publication type, details), I am given both a format box and an example box for the identified text type?

I can copy the format OR the example for the reference and use the example as a reference tool if I become unsure or need to see what the end reference should actually look like.

If you are copying straight from a PDF or another document type, you have to just invest the extra effort to use the contents page to locate the type of reference you need, scroll down to it in the document and copy it directly onto a word document as usual.

I:CITE

Use the drop-down lists below to select the details of your reference.

Note: For keyboard users, pressing the "Enter(return)" key will trigger the currently focused select control.

It is important to first consult your unit learning guide, lecturer or tutor for the preferred citation style for each unit you undertake

1. Select Referencing Style

APA

2. Select Publication Type

Books

3. Select Referencing Details

Book, three to five authors

BOOK, THREE TO FIVE AUTHORS

REFERENCE LIST ENTRY

Add a reference list at the end of your essay citing all sources used in the body of your writing.

Format

Authors. (Year of publication). *Title of book*. Place of publication: Publisher.

Examples

Smith, A., Brown, B., & Chan, C. (2056). *New formations in international business*. Chicago, IL: Hoffman.

Step 3: Edit the format reference or the example reference and replace each section with specific details for the new reference

In this example, the format is not explicit enough, so I have copied and pasted the example section above instead directly onto a word document:

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Smith, A., Brown, B., & Chan, C. (2056). *New formations in international business*. Chicago, IL: Hoffman.

Now the book I need to reference is called 'Marketing Strategies for the New Century' written by Allan Wills, John Baker and Liz Tyler. It was published in Sydney by Crown Press in 2011.

All I need to do is carefully delete and replace each section of the reference example with the details I have, so my reference after adding the names of the authors and year the book was written looks like this:

Wills, A., Baker, J., & Tyler, L. (2011). *New formations in international business*. Chicago, IL: Hoffman.

After adding the title of the book, publisher and place, the reference now looks like this:

Wills, A., Baker, J., & Tyler, L. (2011). *Marketing Strategies for the New Century*. Sydney, NSW: Crown Press.

The advantage of using this technique over others is that I am less likely to make a mistake where small details such as commas or full-stops are concerned as I can edit and complete the new reference step by step. I am also less likely to overlook which part of my reference needs to be in italics, caps or shortened etc.

You can also similarly copy and paste in-text reference examples directly into your essays and reports to modify so that you do not make mistakes with small details, should you need to. It is best to modify the pasted examples as you are writing to avoid forgetting to edit them again later. Don't forget that sometimes you will come across references whose text type may be difficult to determine; in such circumstances don't be afraid to ask your tutor, lecturer or librarian for help to work out what kind of reference it may be!

Indeed, this invaluable tool has taken the mystery out of referencing for tertiary studies and should be exploited by time-wise students. Marks for referencing are too precious to throw away as they do add up over your entire subject and can sometimes be the difference between passing and failing a subject!

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