



Aston University

Library & Information Services

An introductory guide to citing references

Please note

Check your guidance provided by your lecturers or in your student handbook in case an alternative system is required

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Citing References

Why do we need to cite references?

- To acknowledge other writers' words and ideas
- To demonstrate the range of sources used and provide some authority to your conclusions
- To enable readers of your work to locate and verify your sources
- To avoid plagiarism

Plagiarism, as defined by the Aston University Regulations for the Discipline of Students (REG/02/386 p.20), is "a form of cheating in which a student uses, without acknowledgement, the intellectual work of other people and presents it as his or her own."

Your School or Department will probably issue some detailed guidance on what is expected of you when you present your assignments. You will need to refer to these or to your student handbook.

It is good practice to keep detailed and accurate notes of every source of information you consult in the course of writing your assignments, this includes references to all books, journal articles (electronic and print), reports, internet sites, databases and even email correspondence.

Doing so will save you a lot of time and effort in the long term and help you to keep track of what is your own work and where you have taken ideas from the work of others.

Help and further information

Further information about citing references is available from **ASTUTE: find quality information for your studies** hosted on WebCT.

You can get advice on how to incorporate references into your work and how to avoid plagiarism from the staff in the **Learning and Skills Centre**. The Centre also provides drop in workshops relating to other aspects of academic writing and study skills.

You can contact the Learning and Skills Centre by email **lsc@aston.ac.uk** or telephone **(0121) 204 3040** or visit the staff in person on the 1st floor of the Library.

There are also a number of useful websites aimed at developing your understanding of referencing and plagiarism.

- **LearnHigher**

The LearnHigher site at <http://www.learnhigher.org.uk/site/index.php> offers

a detailed guide and series of exercises. It also offers a useful FAQs section with answers to many questions relating to referencing and the option to send specific queries directly to the LearnHigher team.

- **Newcastle University**

This site offers a short interactive quiz aimed at developing your understanding of plagiarism. <http://cadmedfac01.ncl.ac.uk/plag/>

The Library has many books on referencing, study skills and academic writing. You can find many of these shelved at class number 029.6 on the 3rd floor.

Cite them right is a comprehensive guide to referencing and you can find copies for loan at 808.027 PEA

Pears, R and Shields, G (2005). Cite them right: the essential guide to referencing and plagiarism. Newcastle upon Tyne: Pear tree books

There are also reference copies of **Cite them right** at Enquiries on the ground floor of the Library or at Reception in the Learning and Skills Centre.

How to cite references

There are several systems for citing references. The most commonly used systems at Aston University are the **Harvard System**, which is followed in this booklet, and the **Numeric** or **Vancouver System**.

If you are a Psychology student, you will need to use the **APA (American Psychological Association) system**. Details of the APA system are provided by your department.

Footnotes/Endnotes system is commonly used in law for providing statute and case references.

If you need to reference legal information, please consult the OSCOLA site at <http://denning.law.ox.ac.uk/published/oscola.shtml>

Please check the guidance provided by your lecturers or in your handbook in case an alternative system is required. The University has separate guidelines for the layout of references in theses.

Referencing is not difficult if you follow the guidelines. The most important thing is to be consistent and follow just one system.

How to refer from your own work to the source you are using

Anything you have taken from another person's work, whether directly quoted, summarised or paraphrased must be cited, that includes all information from printed and electronic sources e.g. Internet sites. For factual information like statistics, it is exceptionally important as it gives the context in which the data was collected.

In-text citation:

There are a number of ways to refer to a source in your assignment, whichever referencing system you use.

The following examples of how you might use references in your assignments come from:

Levin, P.(2004). Write Great Essays! Maidenhead: Open University Press (p89)

“Using other people’s writing as sources and acknowledging their contribution by ‘citing’ the source – i.e. supplying a reference to it – is central to academic writing. Citing your sources is not only a way of providing you with an important protection against being accused of plagiarism: it is also good academic practice. It shows a proper concern on your part with the quality of the evidence you have used and with substantiating your conclusion. In any worthwhile essay that you write, your reasoning will involve making use of what others before you have written.”

Harvard system

Using the Harvard system, you would use the following ways to incorporate references from other sources into your own work.

1. Summary

Citing sources prevents accusations of plagiarism, shows good practice and demonstrates critical reading skills (Levin, 2004).

2. Paraphrasing

According to Levin (2004) there are several key reasons for citing your sources. Firstly, it prevents accusations of plagiarism. Secondly, it is good practice. And, finally, it allows you to demonstrate your ability to select and use appropriate material to support your thinking and improve the quality of your assignment. On the other hand Smith (2006) argues that...

3. Using quotations

Good academic writing requires the use of relevant and valid sources to support your writing. Citing these sources helps the author avoid plagiarism and demonstrates their understanding and interpretation of appropriate material. As Levin has argued, ‘ In any worthwhile essay that you write, your reasoning will involve making use of what others before you have written’, (Levin, 2004. p89). In other words, citing sources allows...

The references are then presented in alphabetical order by the author’s surname. Sources by the same author are listed in order of publication date.

Levin, P.(2004). Write Great Essays! Maidenhead: Open University Press (p89)
Smith, G. (2006)...

Numeric system

Using the Numeric system, you would use the following ways to incorporate references from other sources into your own work.

1. Summary

Citing sources prevents accusations of plagiarism, shows good practice and demonstrates critical reading skills(1).

2. Paraphrasing

According to Levin(1) there are several key reasons for citing your sources. Firstly, it prevents accusations of plagiarism. Secondly, it is good practice. And, finally, it allows you to demonstrate your ability to select and use appropriate material to support your thinking and improve the quality of your assignment. On the other hand, Smith(2) argues that....

3. Using quotations

Good academic writing requires the use of relevant and valid sources to support your writing. Citing these sources helps the author avoid plagiarism and demonstrates their understanding and interpretation of appropriate material. As Levin has argued, “In any worthwhile essay that you write, your reasoning will involve making use of what others before you have written”(1). In other words, citing sources allows...

The references are then presented in numeric order, according to where they are referred to in your text.

1. Levin, P. (2004). Write Great Essays! Maidenhead: Open University Press.

2. Smith, G. (2006)....

Advantages of citation

Using different in-text citation forms does add a certain degree of variety to your assignment. It can also help you to emphasise the point you wish to make.

The first example summarises the key points identified by Levin and places the focus on the reasons for citing. In the second example the student places the focus on Levin and paraphrases the original. The third example also places the emphasis on the reasons for citing sources and uses a quotation from Levin to support the points made.

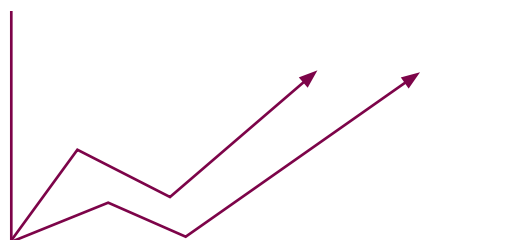
Whether you summarise, paraphrase or quote, it is important to comment on, evaluate and develop your argument. Simply using and citing the source material is not enough. You also need to show why you are referring to the source. Examples two and three illustrate ways in which these two paragraphs might be developed.

Diagrams, illustrations, statistics etc., when taken from a published work, should be referenced as though they were a quotation, including page number, where appropriate.

e.g.

Dempsey and Heery (1997) show that metadata use is gradually increasing (see Figure 1.1).

Figure 1.1 (based on a table in Dempsey & Heery (1997), p.10).



Make sure all tables, diagrams and graphs have adequate captions to say where the information came from.

How to list your references

This is also referred to as a bibliography and should be included at the end of your piece of work.

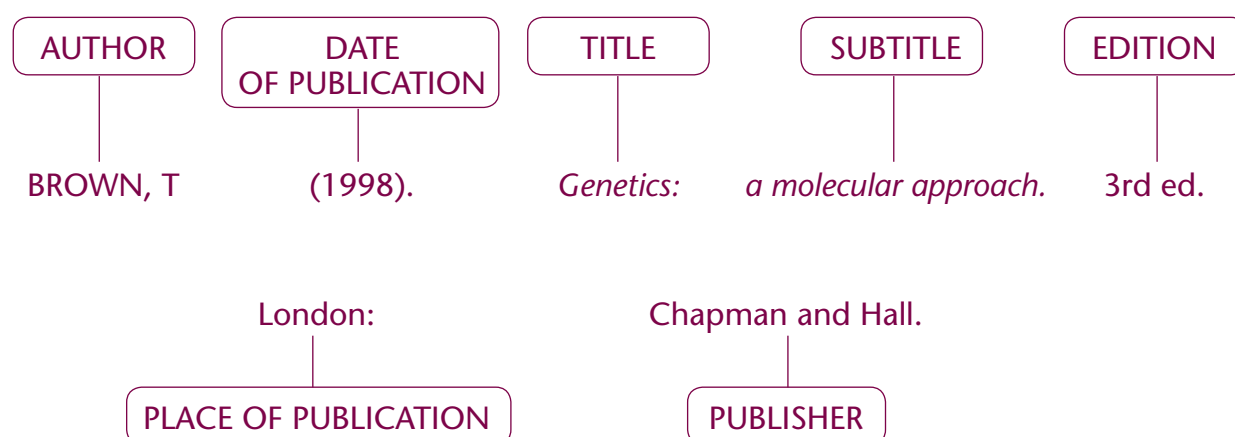
In both the Harvard or Numeric systems, the layout of the reference is the same in the bibliography.

Books (or reports)

The standard information in a book reference is -

Author or editor; Date; Book title and subtitle; Edition; Place of publication; Publisher

It is usually laid out in this way -



Sometimes a book is issued as part of a series. In that case, it is usual to include the series title, and the number of the book in that series.

Chapter in an edited book

Some books are a collection of chapters by various contributors. You cite them the same way as above, but the chapter is cited first, followed by the details of the book in which it appears -

WRIGHT, J K. (1996). A plea for the history of geography.

IN: AGNEW, J, et al. (eds.) *Human geography: an essential anthology.*
Oxford: Blackwell, 243-269.

Because Agnew and others are the editors of the whole book, you use the abbreviation (eds.) after the name(s).

If the book (or chapter) has two authors, you list both their names as they appear in the book.

BELL, D and CRIDDLE, B (1994). *The French Communist Party in the fifth Republic.*
Oxford: Clarendon Press.

If there are more than two authors, you use the abbreviation 'et al.'

BECKER, P.C., et al. (1999). *Erbium-doped fiber amplifiers: fundamentals and technology.* London: Academic Press.

Sometimes a book is written by a collection of people or an organisation, rather than named individuals. In such cases, you can treat the organisation as the author -

BRITISH PSYCHOLOGICAL SOCIETY (1990). *Teaching psychology: a handbook of resources.* Leicester: BPS.

When you cite something written by a government department, you should always put the name of the country before the name of the department, to avoid confusion with departments in other countries -

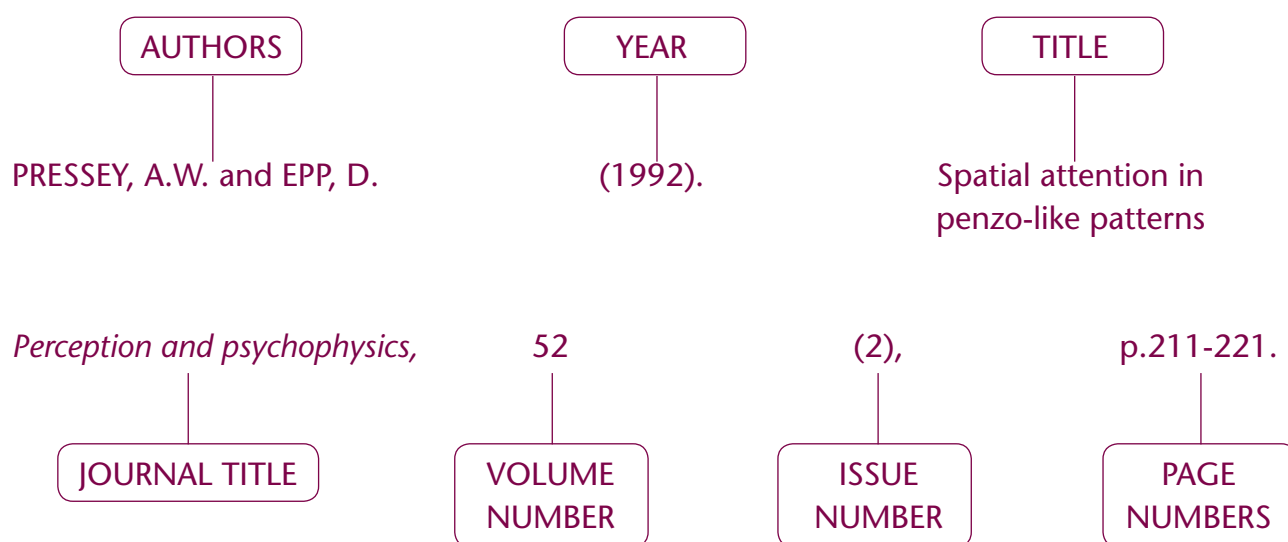
GREAT BRITAIN. Home Office. (1990). *Efficiency scrutiny of Government funding of the voluntary sector: profiting from partnership*. London: HMSO.

Journal articles

The standard information in a journal reference is -

Author; Year of publication; Title of article; Title of journal; Volume number; Issue number (usually in brackets); Page numbers

Journal references are usually laid out like this -

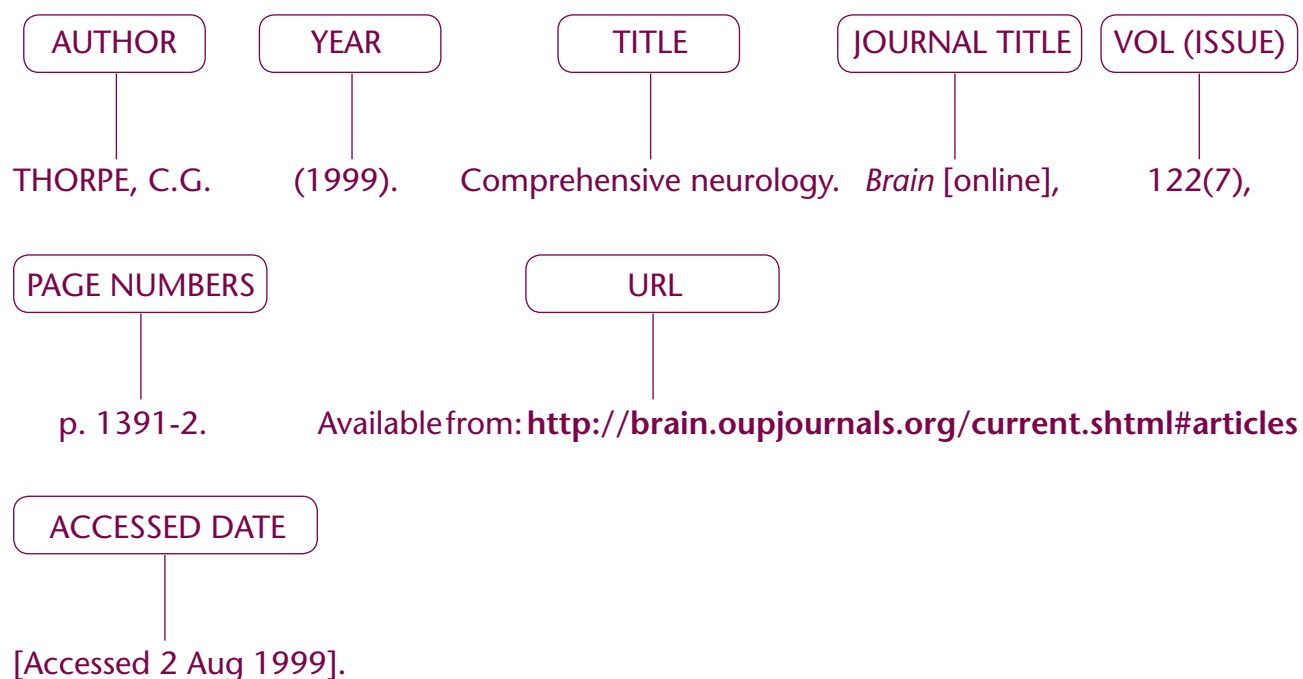


You can also ask at **Enquiries** for help.

Electronic journal articles

References to electronic journals are usually laid out like this -

Author, Year, Title, Title of journal [online], Volume, Issue, Page numbers (if known), URL, Accessed date.

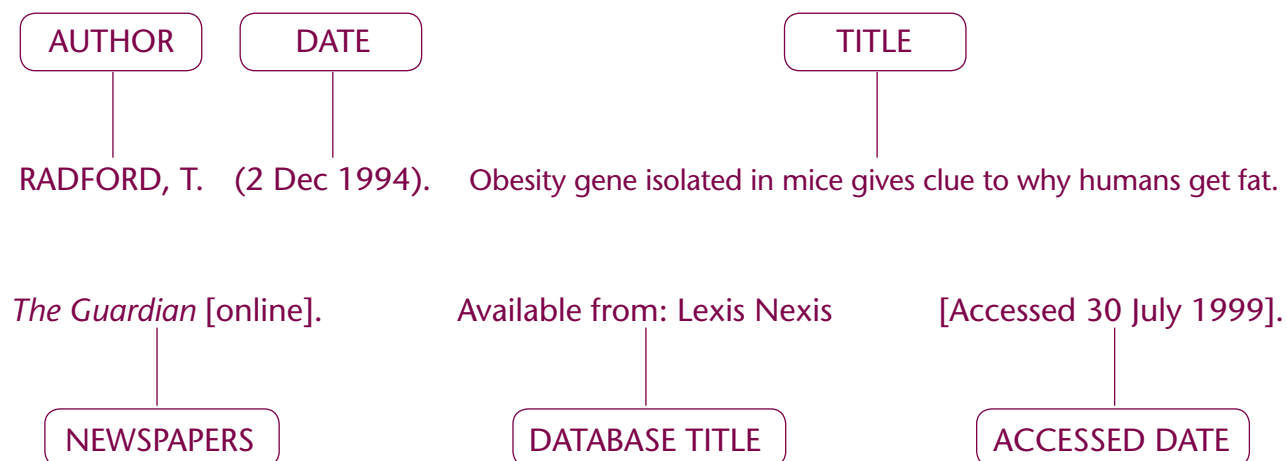


If an e-journal appears identically in both printed form and on the Web, your reference can refer to the printed version. For example, if you download a journal article as a PDF from a database such as ScienceDirect, your reference can follow the pattern for a print journal article.

Full-text databases - newspaper articles

References to full-text newspaper articles are usually laid out like this -

Author, Date, Title of article, Newspaper, [online], Database name, Accessed date.



Conferences and conference papers

The standard information in a conference reference is -

Conference title and number; Place held; Date of conference; Date of publication; Place of publication; Publisher.

Conference references are usually laid out like this -



To cite papers presented at a conference, give the details of the paper before the conference information, saying on which pages the paper appears -

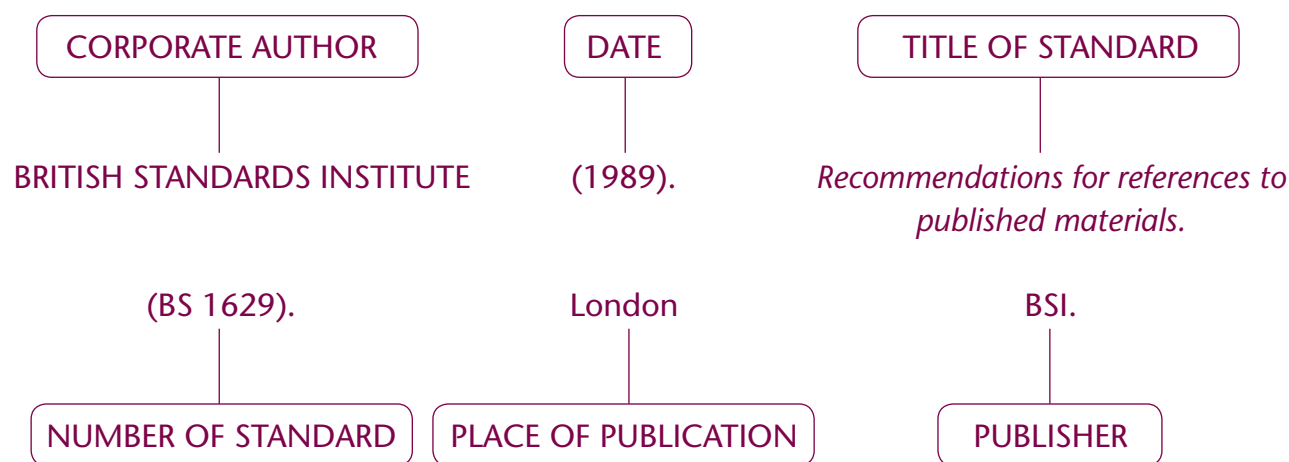
ANDREWS, P.R. and CROMPTON, J.S. (1990). Analysis of surface coating on aluminium.

IN: ALLEN, K (ed.), Conference on Adhesion and Adhesives. 27th. London, 21-22 March 1989. London: Elsevier Science, 40-48.

Include the name of the person who edited the proceedings, if relevant.

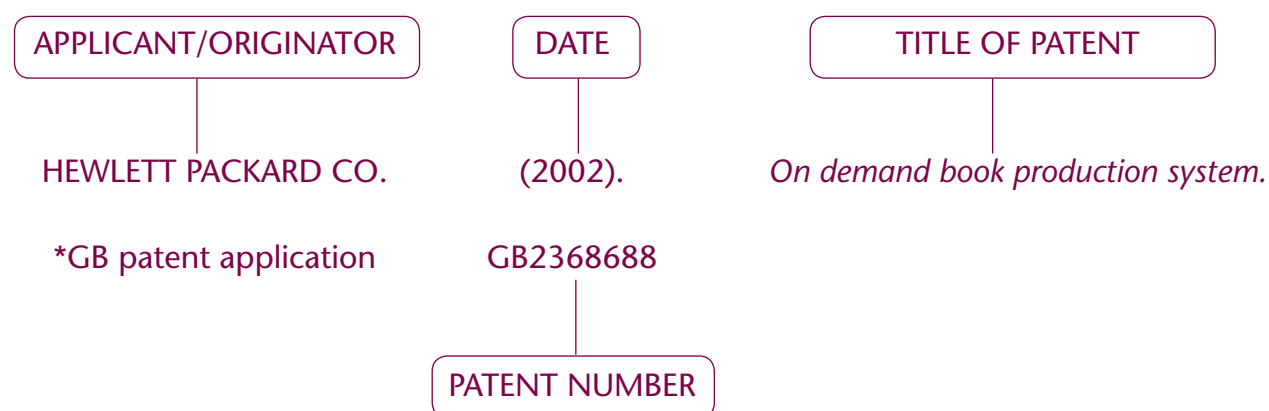
Standards

References to standards are usually laid out like this -



Patents

References to patents are usually laid out like this –

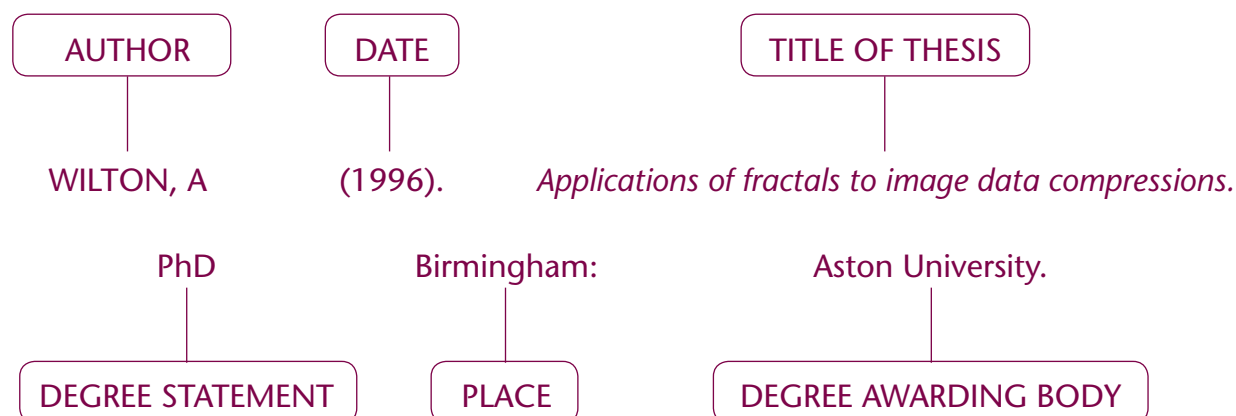


**Note: If the patent is US or European, it is useful to add in this fact e.g. US patent application or GB patent application.*

You may also include the Inventor(s) where they are given.

Theses

References to theses are usually laid out like this -



Unpublished material

Some printed materials are not produced by recognisable publishers, and may not be widely available.

LAWLOR, C. (1987). Childhood vaccinations. Health promotion leaflet, Chester Group Practice (unpublished.)

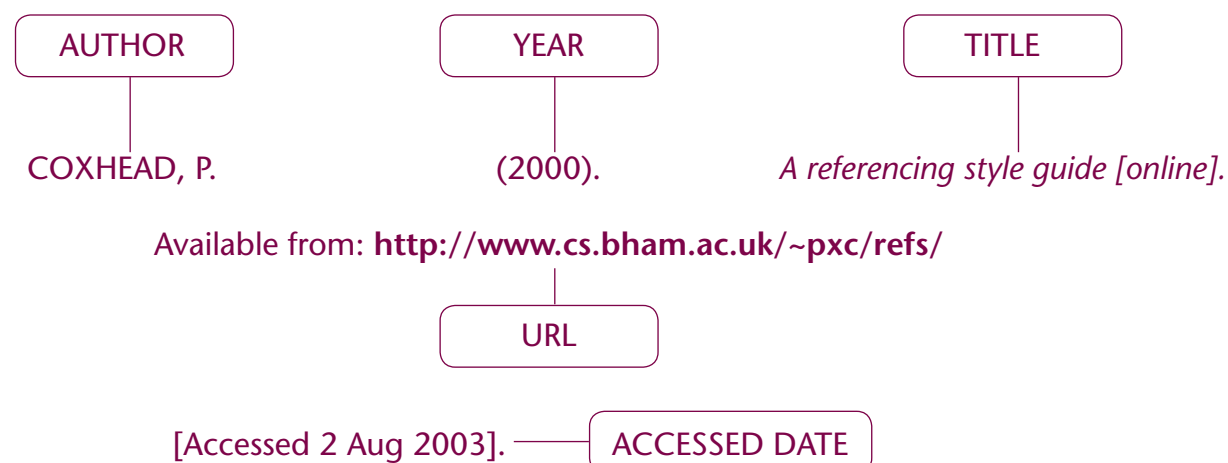
Not all of this information may be available, however it is important to cite as much as possible to enable it to be identified.

Internet sites

The standard information for an Internet site reference is -

Author or corporate author; Year; Title [online]; Edition; Place of publication; Publisher; URL; Accessed date.

Where there is a named author it is usually laid out in this way -



If there is no named author, or the author is an institution or company, the reference is usually laid out like this -



Sometimes with electronic sources, some of the standard information for the reference is not available, so you may have to leave out some of the sections. If you are unsure of the date of publication, use square brackets eg [1999] instead of (1999).

The accessed date is the date on which you viewed or downloaded the document.

Personal email

References to personal emails are usually laid out like this -

Sender, Sender's email address, Date, Subject, Recipient, Recipient's email address.

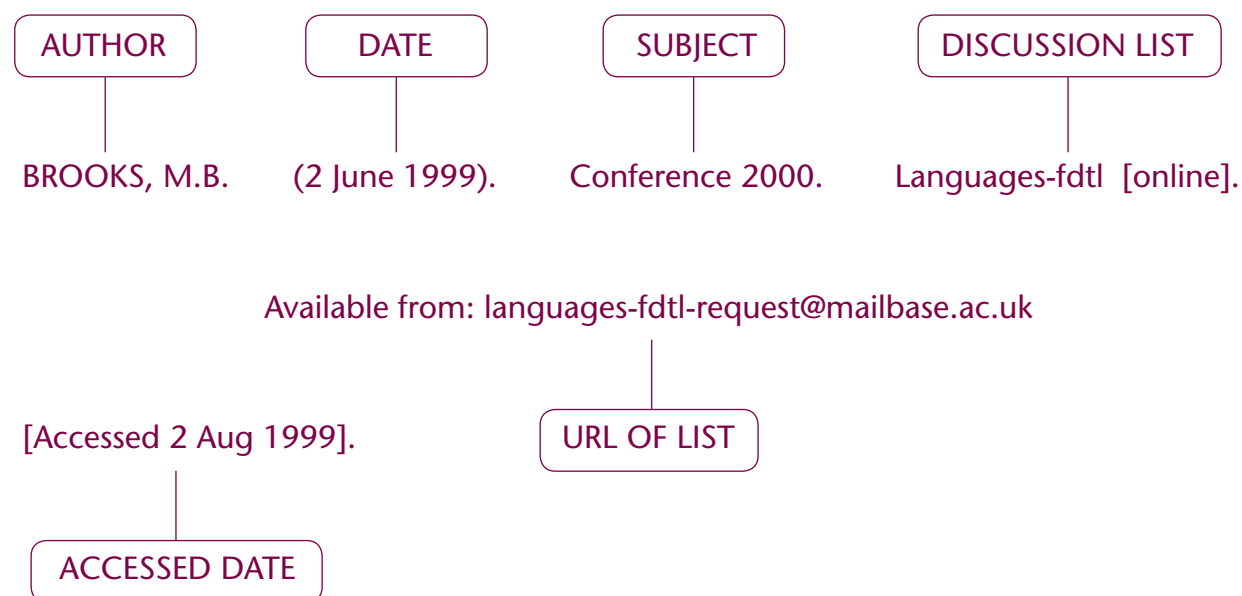


Remember you will need to obtain permission, if possible, from the sender of the email before citing it.

Discussion lists

References to discussion lists are usually laid out like this -

Author, Date, Subject, Discussion list [online], URL of list, Accessed date.





Aston University

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