**Edge Hill University**

Teaching and Learning at the

biology department

Student GUIDE TO REFERENCING

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# Why This guide?

• Understanding scientific referencing principles for life sciences.

• Referencing rules for UG and PGR students at the biology department

# What are references?

References are material that you have read and cited in order to support your work, usually this is written work, but it can also take the form of posters and oral presentations. They are used to acknowledge that part of your work is based on the work and material of others, this can be in the form of directly reported findings or concepts and ideas.

Failure to acknowledge your sources in this manner may be regarded as plagiarism, which is a form of academic misconduct and can result in sanctions imposed by a disciplinary panel (which become more serious for repeat offences). Assessments will often award marks for good referencing (it will vary by assessment but can be as much as 10% of the assessment marks). Therefore, it is important to learn to reference well.

## References have two parts: In-text citations and the reference list.

In-text citations are included within the body of your work and are effectively a short signpost to direct readers to the correct full reference in your **reference list**.

**Reference lists** give all the details of every source you have cited in your work so that the reader can find the original source and review it themselves.

You can think of referencing as being like the credits of a film, where everyone who worked on the film is acknowledged. The in-text citations are the first part of the credits when each of the main actors (lead authors) get their name on a screen by themselves, and the reference list is the rest of the credits where everyone involved (the other authors) gets their three seconds of fame.

## Reference list or bibliography?

A reference list is all the sources that you have cited in your work, a bibliography is all the sources you have cited plus other your have read but not cited. In science we do not use bibliographies and your reference list should contain only those sources that you have cited. This section of your work should be labelled as either “Reference List” or “References”, *never “Bibliography*”.

# How to Reference

References are displayed in so called referencing styles. Each publication or journal has their own unique referencing style. For example, the “British Journal of Dermatology” or the journal “Nature Genetics” employ two very distinct referencing styles.

The Department referencing style is based on the **Harvard[[1]](#footnote-1) referencing style**. This means that:

* The in-text citations contain the author(s) surname and date, separated by a comma.
* The reference list should not be numbered but instead arranged alphabetically.

Remember, consistency is critical, make a choice and stick to it. It is recommended you use a professional referencing tool (for example with Endnote®, Refworks®). For more information and support, see below.

## In-Text Citations

* These are usually placed after a point is made in the text, but they can also be used to refer to work directly (see examples below).
* In all cases only surnames are used, never include first names or initials and any punctuation for the end of the sentence goes outside the bracket.
* If an author’s surname contains a prefix word such as “von” or “de”, this should be included within the in-text citation since it is part of the surname (e.g. van Swaay et al. rather than Swaay et al.).
* If citing a book (but not a chapter in an edited book) give a page number (or range) for where that information can be found after the date, if there are no page numbers (for example because it is an ebook) then give the chapter. For example: (Ford, 1945, p. 57) or (Darwin, 1872, Chapter 4)

### **Example 1:** A Reference with One author

Give the author’s surname and the year of the publication:

(Surname, YEAR) or Surname (YEAR)

*Example:*

“…has occurred within the last century following changes in grazing regimes (Warren, 1994).”

*Or*

“Ford (1945) however identified only two subspecies…”

### **Example 2**: A reference with Two authors

Give both authors’ surnames and the year. The choice to use either “and” or “&” between names is a matter of personal preference but should be consistent throughout a piece of work:

(Surname and Surname, YEAR) or Surname and Surname (YEAR)

*Example:*

“…and to generally minimise kinship within the population (Ralls & Ballou, 2006).” *Or*

“However, Thomas & Lewington (1991) identify…”

### **Example 3**: A reference with Three or more authors

Give only the first author’s name followed by et al. and then the year. The full stop must be included as al. is an abbreviation of alia. Italics are traditional as the phrase is of Latin origin (as in the second example above), but this is becoming optional, and the key is consistency of format within the work.

(Surname et al., YEAR) or Surname et al. (YEAR)

*Example:*

“…founders of the captive breeding program were carriers for the allele (Ralls et al., 2000).”

*Or*

“…across its full range was by Korb *et al.* (2016) which used a combination of molecular techniques…”

### **Example 4:** A Reference published by An organisation

Sometimes a source lacks an identifiable human author but is published by a reputable organisation or governmental body (e.g. the World Health Organisation or Natural England), and it is therefore appropriate to list organisation itself as the author. In this case the organisation name takes the place of the author’s surname. Acronyms can be used where it is a common and widely known acronym, at least within the context of the work, and particularly where the organisation has been referred to by the full name within the text. If you have any doubt, use the full organisation name rather than the acronym.

(Organization, YEAR) or Organization (YEAR)

*Example:*

“…are the impact of weather patterns (Butterfly Conservation, 2019).”

*Or*

“The World Health Organization (2020) indicate that…”

### **Example 5**: A statement supported by Multiple sources

Sometimes a point will be supported by multiple sources. These should be cited within the same set of brackets, with each individual citation separated by a semicolon ( ; ). Citations should be in with chronological or alphabetical order, but consistency is important. The formatting of individual citations should follow the guidance above

(Surname, YEAR; Surname, YEAR)

*Example:*

“…ecology of the species prior to its decline (Drew, 2005; Littlewood et al., 2012; Courchamp et al., 2015).”

.

## Reference list

The Reference List is where the reader can find sufficient information about a source to be able to locate and read it for themselves. The information within each reference varies by the type of source been used. However, it is important to remember that et al. is never used in a reference list, all authors must be named, even if there are twenty or more!

This section is broken down by type of source. For each source type, details of what information must be included are given along with the proper order and any formatting information. An example of a properly formatted reference in that style is provided and further information is also given as appropriate.

### A few general rules:

* In all cases where an organisation is the author it takes the place of the author(s)’s names within the reference. *Although authors are given as “Surname, Initial(s)”, there is no need to alter the word order of an organisation’s name.*
* Do not capitalise every word in a title, even if the original source does*. Do not SCREAM at your audience.*
* Scientific names must be formatted correctly; the Genus must start with a capital letter and both genus and species must be in *italics*. If the section is in italics (for example the title of a book) then the scientific name should not be in italics.
* Gene names must be in italics. Human gene names are all capitalised, but gene names of other species are not. For example, it is *JUP* for the human gene name, but *Jup* for the mouse ortholog gene. Protein names are not in in italics. Check protein names. Often protein names differ from gene names. For instance, the gene *JUP* encodes the protein plakoglobin.
* DOI (Digital Object Identifier) should be provided where available. If it is not available leave this out (for older references this might not be available).
* Do not provide an URL except for webpages you cannot reference otherwise (e.g. supplier webpages or patient organisations).

### **A journal article.**

This is the format to use for all journal articles, even if read on a website. If it is a pure eJournal (no print version has ever existed) then the Journal may number pages differently, e.g. as e24109 or just 1-7, indicating the number of pages in the article. If this is the case, give this within the reference.

Surname, Initial(s)., Surname, Initial(s)., YEAR. Article title. *Journal name*. Volume(issue), pp. PAGE NUMBERS. doi:

*Example:*

Vickery, J. A., Tallowin, J. R., Feber, R. E., Asteraki, E. J., Atkinson, P. W., Fuller, R. J., & Brown, V. K., 2001. The management of lowland neutral grasslands in Britain: effects of agricultural practices on birds and their food resources. *Journal of Applied Ecology*, 38(3), pp. 647–664. doi:10.1046/j.1365-2664.2001.00626.x

### **A printed book**

If no edition is given then it is assumed to be the first edition. A book should only appear once in the reference list, even when you have cited multiple different parts within your work.

Surname, Initial(s). YEAR. *Title*, edition (if not the first), Publisher: Place of Publication.

*Examples:*

Thomas, J., & Lewington, R., 1991. *The Butterflies of Britain & Ireland*, Dorling Kindersley Limited: London

Allendorf, F. W., Luikart, G., & Aitken, S. N., 2013. *Conservation and the genetics of populations,* 2nd Ed., John Wiley & Sons: Chinchester.

### **An ebook**

In some cases some information may not be available (such as above where the place of publication is unknown), in these cases as much information as possible should be included. If you have accessed the ebook via a reader such as Kindle or Adobe Digital Editions then [ebook] should be replaced with that version information, e.g. Kindle version or Adobe Digital Editions version (note that there are no square brackets in this case). DOIs should be used in place of the URL when available (some ebooks via Kindle or Adobe will have this).

Surname, Initial(s). YEAR. *Title*, edition (if not the first), [ebook], Publisher: Place of Publication. Available at: URL [Accessed on DATE]

*Example:*

Darwin, C., 1872. *On the origin of species by means of natural selection or the preservation of favoured races in the struggle for life.* 6th Ed. [ebook]. Project Gutenberg. Available at: https://www.gutenberg.org/files/2009/2009-h/2009-h.htm [Accessed on 7 May 2021].

### **A chapter in an edited book**

Where there are two or more editors Ed. is replaced with Eds., as in the example above.

A chapter in an edited book is one where each chapter is written by a different author or group of authors, the writing of the book is overseen by an editor or team of editors. Usually, the names of the authors who wrote the chapter appear under the title at the start of the chapter and the names of the editors are those on the cover of the book.

Each chapter of an edited book must be cited separately, this applies even when the chapter author and editor are the same person. For example, if the editor of the book also wrote chapter 1, you must use the chapter in an edited book format for referencing it.

ChapterSurname, Initial(s), YEAR. Chapter title. In EditorSurname Initial(s). (Ed.), *Book title.* Published: Place of publication. Page range of chapter

*Example:*

Wayne, R. K. (1996). Conservation genetics in the Canidae. In Avise, J. C. & Humrick, J. L. (Eds.), *Conservation genetics: case histories from nature*. Chapman and Hall: New York, pp. 75–118.

### **A website**

It is generally recommended that you do not use websites, however in certain situations it may be appropriate to reference organisational (first example) or governmental website (second example). You should never reference personal websites/blogs or similar sources unless required by an Assessment Brief.

If you find a news article containing information you wish to use, trace it back to the primary source, then read and cite the source. If you cannot trace a primary source, then it is possible that is unreliable information and you should not use it.

When writing the “Accessed on date”, write out the month as a word in order to avoid confusion as to if you are Day/Month or Month/Day format.

Surname, Initial(s). YEAR. *Webpage title*. [online] Available at: URL [Accessed on: DATE] *Examples:*

van Swaay, C., Wynhoff, I., Verovnik, R., Wiemers, M., López Munguira, M., Maes, D., Sasic, M., Verstrael, T., Warren, M. & Settele, J., 2010. *Euphydryas aurinia. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.* [online]. Available at: www.iucnredlist.org/species/174182/7024283 [Accessed 29 March 2019]

JNCC & Defra 2012. *UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework. July 2012*. [online] Available at: http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-6189. [Accessed on 14th October]

# Use of Referencing software

The Department encourages students who wish to use software to manage their references to do so, though it does not require that they do so. The University provides access to Endnote for all members of the biology department and training on the use of this is provided to students from year 1[[2]](#footnote-2) .

To install Endnote, go to this page: <http://eshare.edgehill.ac.uk/15249/>and login. Then open the same page in a new tab and scroll to the bottom to find the download links. Ensure you download the Getting Started Guide and the Product Key as well as the program itself and close all MS Office programs before you begin installing Endnote. YouTube is an excellent source of videos to help in the installation and use of Endnote and there will be formal training provided in class for all students.

An alternative to the referencing software Endnote is RefWorks. You can find further information and support [HERE](https://eshare.edgehill.ac.uk/5486/15/RefWorks%20User%20Guide%20Accessible%20Version%20November%202021.pdf).

# Uniskills Referencing Toolkit & Support

For further support on how to reference and additional self-paced learning please visit **EHU’s UniSkills** webpages [HERE](https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/departments/support/ls/uni-skills/referencing/). Check our knowledge on good scientific practices and **academic integrity**. Always ensure you are not at risk to plagiarise others or your own work when composing your written assignments. A referencing toolkit allows you to check your knowledge about referencing and academic integrity, please see [HERE](https://eshare.edgehill.ac.uk/16375/8/story.html).

# FAQ

In the FAQs below all example references are shown in **blue & bold** to clearly distinguish between the flow text and the examples.

## My source does not have a date?

This is a possible indication that it may be an unreliable source and should not be used. However, in some circumstance is may still be appropriate to use, in these rare cases the year in both in intext citation and the reference list is replaced with *n.d. for “no date”,* for example: **(Met Office, n.d.)**

Met Office. n.d.. *Castlederg UK climate averages - Met Office.* [online]. Available at: <https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/research/climate/maps-and-data/uk-climateaverages/gcdx5x4e7>

[Accessed on 03 July 2019]

This example was used as it was a source for climatic data that was not available from any other source, it is a respectable governmental body but the webpage that was used did not contain any indication of the date it was last edited.

## My source does not have an author?

If there is no identifiable author or affiliated organisation it is very unlikely that the source is a reputable one and therefore it should not be used.

## What do I do if I have two sources by the same author in the same year?

You should add a letter following the year both the in-text citation and the reference list, for example:

**(New, 1997a)**

**(New, 1997b)**

In the reference list this is then show as:

New, T. R., 1997a. Are Lepidoptera an effective “umbrella group” for biodiversity conservation? *Journal of Insect Conservation*, 1(1), pp. 5–12. Doi: 10.1023/A:1018433406701

New, T. R., 1997b. *Butterfly Conservation,* 2nd ed. Oxford University Press: Oxford.

## How do I cite software programs and/or packages?

Most if not all software tools and programmes have been described in peer-reviewed publications. If unsure where, check the “about this tool/software” or help tab/page of the relevant tool or software. Cite the publication as you would for a journal article. If there isn’t a publication yet, then cite the location the program/package can be downloaded from as a website, include version number as appropriate.

In R, the function citation() (with nothing in the brackets) will give citation information for the program, note that in this case it is a good idea to include the version number (found at the top of the Console when you open the program). Putting the name of package within the brackets, i.e. citation(“PACKAGE”), will provide basic citation information for the named package but it will need to be formatted correctly.

For online tools and software packages the same as described above applies. It is not enough to just share a link to the tool/software.

# Information only available in the module Assessment brief

This is a generalised introduction to referencing for all biology UG students. It is NOT an assessment brief. In preparation for any of your coursework, you are required to consult your module-specific assessment brief, your module handbook, and any relevant rubric.

## Module specific referencing information

1. Check your module assessment documents for the minimum numbers of independent references you are required to cite in your coursework.
2. Check also, if only **primary, peer-reviewed references** are allowed or if other references will also be permitted or are even required. Peer-reviewed references are scientific publications which have been checked by experts from the field (“papers”). You can find these high-quality publications by searching [Pubmed](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/), [Scopus](https://www.scopus.com/) or [Google Scholar](https://scholar.google.com/). Often, **secondary literature references** are also allowed to be cited: Academic teaching books, quality newspapers, and trust-worthy webpages (NCBI, NHS, WHO, Defra, UK government).
3. Cite only references in English or in any additional language you can read.
4. Check the assessment document for the reference style requirements. Most modules at level 4 will require you to follow the Harvard referencing style, which has been described in this document. From level 5 onwards, you might have more options on your referencing style choices: Check the assessment brief. If no style information is given in your module assessment brief, you can choose any referencing style you prefer. You MUST stick to one style throughout this piece of assessment, and you cannot change specific settings for an internationally recognised referencing style. For example, if you elect to use the “Nature Genetics” referencing style, you cannot change any of its settings (for example changing the order of authors or how names of authors are displayed). The simplest way to switch between different referencing styles is by using a referencing software, for example Endnote, where various referencing styles are available embedded in this tool.

# Finding scientific literature

This paragraph highlights a few but essential web-based search engines you might find useful for when looking for scientific literature. I urge you to use professional search platform when conducting scientific literature search. ***Do not “google them”.***

## Pubmed by NCBI

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/>

Get yourself an account with NCBI /Pubmed or use your existing Google or Microsoft account to save/store all your literature searches. You can come back to your saved references at any later point: Very useful indeed.

* Pubmed is the largest search engine for peer-reviewed (medical/biological/biomedical) publications. No conference papers (= posters) are listed here.
* The important features in Pubmed are: You can collect large numbers of reference in short time (add them to your “collection” or the “clipboard”) and send them to your citation manager.
* When sending references to the citation manger one produces a file which can then be uploaded to the Referencing Software (e.g. Endnote or RefWorks), it contains all the information to produce a proper reference (output) when citing each reference.

## Scopus

Scopus is a **commercial search engine** for which EHU has a licence. You can reach Scopus via the link below. Login with your EHU login details:

<https://edgehill.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www.scopus.com>

Scopus is a fantastic search engine, and it will provide you with a wealth of results when searching for key words. It can be (at the beginning) rather confusing, as Scopus includes all publications, not just peer-reviewed (high ranking) but all sorts of publications, including conferences papers and other stuff. Nevertheless, once you got used to handle this database - great! Get yourself an user account with Scopus to save your searches and settings (it’s fee and quickly done).

Here are some tutorials:

* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-VE3ADZvoUY>
* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qCu-obYMFsE>
* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vDYSIPAkKbo>

## Google Scholar

[https://scholar.google.com/](https://scholar.google.com/schhp?hl=en&as_sdt=0,5)

Google Scholar is not the same as Google. Nevertheless, I do not encourage you to use this search engine, as it has clearly some significant disadvantages: Although more or less all publications, including conference papers and abstracts, dissertations and PhD theses are listed in this database, it uses a highly competitive algorithms to present publications (the more cited, the more likely you will find this publication). This means, if an older paper is not anymore cited ever so often, but is still very relevant to your particular research (e.g. it is the first paper describing this disease, for instance), you won’t find it in this database. *This can lead to biased results for you (and the researchers who have originally conducted their great research).*

1. When you advance with your studies you might learn more about other referencing styles and, depending on your module choices, you will be permitted to employ an alternative referencing style when preparing a written assessment. Always check the assessment briefs and seek counsel from your module lead, if in doubt. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. You will be introduced to the referencing software Endnote in your year 1 module “Biology in Practice”. A refresher on how to use Endnote will then be provided in year 2 (Research Methods module) and again in year 3 (Research Project module). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)