

Guide to referencing using the Vancouver style

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Citing and Referencing

Citing and referencing is the system that enables you to give credit to individuals and/or organisations whose work you have used in your assignments. A referencing style, such as Vancouver, is a set of rules (including formatting, punctuation and abbreviations) which should be followed every time you write a citation and a reference, so that your reader can easily identify and trace your sources. Citing and referencing correctly will also ensure that you avoid the charge of plagiarism, which means using the work of others without acknowledging your source of information or inspiration. Plagiarism is treated very seriously, and plagiarised work may be disqualified.

At times, the terminology associated with citing and referencing can seem confusing, but the definitions of the main terms used are:

Citation: The process of recognising the contribution of a specific individual or organisation as the acknowledged source of a particular view, argument or decision within the text of your assignment. This is often referred to as the **in-text citation**.

In the Vancouver style you complete an in-text citation by inserting a number in round brackets at the point where you have used someone else's work; these numbers should follow in consecutive order throughout the text, starting with the number (1).

Referencing: A precise way of ensuring that someone or something that has been cited in the text can be identified. The list of references will normally appear at the end of your piece of work, and is called a **Reference List**.

In the Vancouver style, your reference list will be numbered in numerical order, from 1 onwards, where the numbers correspond with those assigned to your in-text citations.

The Vancouver style is the system of referencing commonly used in medical journals. This guide will give examples of how to cite within the text and how to write references using the Vancouver style.

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How to cite within the text

You should use numbers within brackets, for example (3), for in-text citations; the number in brackets links directly to the reference list at the end of the piece of work.

Only the number in brackets, for example (3), is given immediately after your citation in the text.

However, in the list of references at the end, you should include the number, for example 3., followed by the full details of the reference.

If you refer to the same source multiple times within your assignment you will always refer to it with the number it is assigned the first time that you cite it in your text. Therefore if you cite reference number (1) later in your text, you would cite it using the number (1) again.

Citing a single work:

In clinical practice, up to 2.5-L of fluid has been administered on one infusion (1). A number of studies have...

or:

Newman (3) has argued that....

Citing multiple works at the same time:

If citing more than one piece of work in the same place in your text then each piece needs to be given a number in the in-text citation, and must then be listed fully in your reference list. If the numbers are a consecutive range then link the first and last inclusive numbers with a hyphen, if not then separate each number with a comma.

For example, citing works 3, 4, 5, 6, and 9 would look like this:

Several studies (3-6, 9) have compared the effects of.....

Citing using a direct quote

Citing using a direct quote is not common practice in scientific writing, so while it is not incorrect it should be avoided where possible. Instead, try to report the findings that you want to reference in your own words and cite it according to the instructions given above.

If using a direct quote in the text is unavoidable then you must use quotation marks and give the page number(s), as well as a citation number in brackets. For example:

Skretkowicz (4) has stated that 'Florence Nightingale's *Notes on Nursing* is a masterpiece in the literature of nineteenth-century social reform' (p. 9).

Short quotations (up to 2 lines) can be included in the body of the text, as in the example above. Longer quotations should be indented in a separate paragraph, and a smaller typeface may be used. For example:

Barnett (11) has said that

'The nineteenth century witnessed a radical shift in the meaning of the body's boundary. Skin – in particular its colour and cleanliness – had always played a central role in the shaping of personal identity and social position, and in the previous century caricaturists had taken great pains to capture the pocked, abraded, coarsened hides of the Enlightenment's jaded pleasure-seekers. For middle-class families in the new industrial cities, however, the skin became a political and an ethical boundary, a tool of individuation and a marker of health, wealth and dignity' (p. 48).

If you are not using all of the quotation, this can be indicated using three dots:

Barnett (11) has said that '[t]he nineteenth century witnessed a radical shift in the meaning of the body's boundary ... the skin became a political and an ethical boundary, a tool of individuation and a marker of health, wealth and dignity' (p. 48).

Secondary referencing in the text

When citing the work of one author found in the work of another author you should acknowledge that you did not consult the original source by using the phrase 'cited by' in your text:

Bateman and Crant, cited by Tappen (8) noted that...

The phrase 'cited by' indicates that the reference to Bateman and Crant's study was found in the work by Tappen, and that you have not read Bateman and Crant's study. Thus, Bateman and Crant is a secondary reference. When using a secondary reference you only include the primary reference (which you have read) in your reference list, so in the example above this would be the work by Tappen.

Note: Secondary references should be used sparingly, and wherever possible you should only include references you have actually read. It is considered plagiarism to cite a work that you have not read.

How to reference at the end of the text

Full references will include different elements of information depending on the type of resource that has been used. Examples of the elements, order and punctuation for different types of resource are given in the next section of this guide. References should be listed at the end of your assignment in a numbered list, in **numerical order**, where the numbers correspond to those assigned to your in-text citations.

Therefore if your text is something like this:

In clinical practice, up to 2.5-L of fluid has been administered on one infusion (1). In some cases penicillin has been shown to be more effective (2), however Newman (3) has argued that non-fatty acids.....

Then your reference list will look like this:

1. Schen RJ, Singer-Edelstein M. Subcutaneous infusions in the elderly. *J Am Geriat Soc.* 1981; 29: 583-85.
2. Fleming A. *Penicillin its practical approach under the general editorship of Professor Sir Alexander Fleming.* 2nd ed. London: Butterworths; 1950.
3. Newman RE, Storlien LH, Bryden WL, Kirby AC, Downing JA. Dietary n-3 and n-6 fatty acids alter avian pituitary sensitivity. *Nutr Neurosci.* 2003; 6 (6): 343-50.

Note: - You do not put brackets round the numbers at the start of each entry in the reference list.
- Authors' forenames are normally abbreviated to initials, giving a maximum of two initials.
- Whenever possible details should be taken from the title page of a publication and not from the front cover, which may be different.

Referencing online resources

When referencing a resource that you have accessed online there are some additional pieces of information that you need to provide in order to indicate this to the reader. The key differences are:

- You will need to insert [Internet] at the end of the title, indicating you accessed the resource online
- You will need to insert [cited Year Month Day] after the year of publication, telling the reader exactly when you accessed the resource
- You will need to finish the reference with the statement 'Available from:' and the full URL where you accessed the resource, this tells the reader exactly where you accessed the resource

It is important to provide information on when and where you accessed an online resource because information published online can be moved and/or changed far more quickly than that in print publications. Vancouver uses the convention [cited Year Month Date] to indicate the date that you accessed the resource.

Specific examples of how to reference different types of online resource are given in the 'Referencing different types of material' section of this guide.

Referencing a source with several authors

For a source with 2-6 authors list all the authors in the order listed on the source separated by commas.

For example, a book with three authors:

Hull J, Forton J, Thomson AH. Paediatric respiratory medicine. 2nd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press; 2015.

If there are more than 6 authors, you may put the first three followed by a comma and 'et al.' meaning 'and others.'

For example, this journal title with 12 authors listed in full looks like this:

Burns J, Mason C, Mueller N, Ohlander J, Zock J, Drobnic F, Wolfarth B, Heinrich J, Omenaas E, Stensrud T, Nowak D, Radon K. Asthma prevalence in Olympic summer athletes and the general population: An analysis of three European countries. *Respir Med.* 2015; 109 (7): 813–820.

But the reference can be shortened to:

Burns J, Mason C, Mueller N, et al. Asthma prevalence in Olympic summer athletes and the general population: An analysis of three European countries. *Respir Med.* 2015; 109 (7): 813–820.

Referencing different types of material

Books

Book by a single author:

Author's Surname Initial. Title of book. Edition if later than 1st. Place of publication: Publisher Name; Year of publication.

Razaq S. Difficult cases in primary care: women's health. London: Radcliffe Publishing; 2012.

Book by two authors:

Author's Surname Initial, Author's Surname Initial. Title of book. Edition if later than 1st. Place of publication: Publisher Name; Year of publication.

Marcdante KJ, Kliegman RM. Nelson essentials of paediatrics. 7th ed. Philadelphia, PA: Elsevier Saunders; 2015.

Book by a corporate author (e.g. a government department or organisation):

Name of corporate author. Title of book. Place of publication: Publisher Name; Year of publication.

NHS Institute for Innovation and Improvement. Improvement leaders' guide: general improvement skills: improvement knowledge and skills. Coventry: NHS Institute for Innovation and Improvement; 2007.

Edited book (including reference material such as dictionaries, encyclopaedias, bibliographies and indexes):

Editors Surname Initial(s), editor. Title of book/dictionary/encyclopaedia etc. Edition if later than 1st. Place of publication: Publisher Name; Year of publication.

1. Lally F, Roffe C, editors. Geriatric medicine: an evidence-based approach. Oxford: Oxford University Press; 2014.

2. Trumble W, Brown L, editors. Shorter Oxford English dictionary. 5th ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press; 2004.

Chapter in an edited book:

Author's Surname Initial. Title of chapter. In: Editors Surname Initial, editor. Title of book. Edition if later than 1st. Place of publication: Publisher Name; year of publication. p. numbers.

Kalra L. Stroke units: research in practice. In: Lally F, Roffe C, editors. Geriatric medicine: an evidence-based approach. Oxford: Oxford University Press; 2014. p. 161-172.

E-book from a website:

Author's Surname Initial. Title of book [Internet]. Edition if later than 1st. Place of publication: Publisher Name; Year of publication [cited year month day]. Available from: URL.

Tse H, Lip GY, Coats AJ, editors. Oxford desk reference: cardiology [Internet]. Oxford: Oxford University Press; 2011 [cited 2015 Jun 15]. Available from: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/med/9780199568093.001.0001>.

E-book on CD / DVD / mobile device:

Author's Surname Initial. Title of book [CD-ROM/DVD or other relevant software or device information]. Edition if later than 1st. Place of publication: Publisher Name; Year of publication.

Dalley AF, Gould DJ. Dynamic human anatomy student version [CD-ROM]. Philadelphia, PA: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins; 2004.

Journal articles, e-journal articles, and the Cochrane Library

Note: Titles of journals should be abbreviated according to the standard format. These can be found at the National Library of Medicine's PubMed website, using the Journals database feature:

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/journals>

Article in a printed journal:

Author's Surname Initial. Title of journal article. Abbreviated journal title. Year; volume number (issue number if there is one): page numbers.

Cooper C, Sommerlad A, Lyketsos CG, Livingston G. Modifiable Predictors of Dementia in Mild Cognitive Impairment: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis. *Am J Psychiatry*. 2015; 172 (4): 323-334.

Article in an e-journal:

Author's Surname Initial. Title of article. Abbreviated journal title [Internet]. Year [cited year month day]; volume number (issue number if there is one): page numbers. Available from: URL, or other electronic address for the article (for example, a DOI).

Cooper C, Sommerlad A, Lyketsos CG, Livingston G. Modifiable Predictors of Dementia in Mild Cognitive Impairment: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis. *Am J Psychiatry* [Internet]. 2015 [cited 2015 Jun 23]; 172 (4): 323-334. Available from: <http://ajp.psychiatryonline.org/doi/full/10.1176/appi.ajp.2014.14070878>.

Many providers also give an article a unique identifier called a DOI (digital object identifier) which is a permanent, persistent link to the article and preferable to use since this link will never 'break'. If you can see a DOI for the article you are referencing, provide it instead of the URL at the end of the reference - the DOI should be preceded by <http://dx.doi.org/> in order for the link to work.

Cooper C, Sommerlad A, Lyketsos CG, Livingston G. Modifiable Predictors of Dementia in Mild Cognitive Impairment: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis. *Am J Psychiatry* [Internet]. 2015 [cited 2015 Jun 23]; 172 (4): 323-334. Available from: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1176/appi.ajp.2014.14070878>.

Review in the Cochrane Library:

The Cochrane Library indicates how their reviews should be cited, just click on the 'How to Cite' links provided in the database for instructions.

To obtain the example below I looked at an example record in the Cochrane Library. The 'How to Cite' instructions were:

Stroke Unit Trialists' Collaboration. Organised inpatient (stroke unit) care for stroke. Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews 2013, Issue 9. Art. No.: CD000197. DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD000197.pub3.

Newspapers

Article in a printed newspaper:

Author's Surname Initial. Title of article. Title of Newspaper. Year Month Day; Location in newspaper.

Clarkson M. Outreach studies in the community. The Guardian. 1998 Jun 16; Sect. A:3 (col.4).

Article in an online newspaper:

Author's Surname Initial. Title of article. Title of Newspaper [Internet]. Year Month Day [cited Year Month Day]. Available from: URL.

Boseley S. NHS cancer guide for GPs and patients could save 5,000 lives a year, says Nice. The Guardian [Internet]. 2015 Jun 23 [cited 2015 Jun 24]. Available from: <http://www.theguardian.com/society/2015/jun/23/nhs-cancer-guide-gps-patients-could-save-5000-lives-a-year-nice>.

Note: If no author name is given then begin the reference with the title of the article. *Do not use Anonymous or Anon.*

Government Documents

Government report (printed) or Command Papers (for example a white paper or a green paper):

Name of Government Department. Title of paper/report, Cm number – also called the Series number. Place of publication: Name of Publisher; Year of publication.

Department of Health. Healthy lives, healthy people: our strategy for public health in England, Cm7985. London: Stationery Office; 2010.

Note: If it is a report rather than a white or green paper then there will be no Cm number to use.

Government report (online):

Name of Government Department. Title of paper/report, Cm number [Internet]. Place of publication: Name of Publisher; Year of publication [cited Year Month Day]. Available from: URL.

Department of Health. Equity and excellence: Liberating the NHS, Cm7881 [Internet]. London: Stationery Office; 2010 [cited 2015 Jun 24]. Available from: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/213823/dh_117794.pdf.

Government circular (printed):

Name of Government Department. Title of report, circular number if relevant. Place of Publication: Publisher Name; Year of publication.

Department of Health. Public health ring-fenced grant conditions – 2015/16, LAC(DH)(2014)2. London: Department of Health; 2014.

Government circular (online):

Department of Health. Title of circular, circular number if relevant [Internet]. Place of Publication: Publisher Name; Year of publication [cited Year Month Day]. Available from: URL.

Department of Health. Social care – charging for care and support, LAC(DH)(2015)1 [Internet]. London: Department of Health; 2015 [cited 2015 Jun 24]. Available from: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/406247/LAC_2015_v2_a cc.pdf.

Acts of Parliament (printed):

Name of Country. Title of Act, Chapter. Place of Publication: Publisher Name; Year of Act.

Great Britain. Abortion Act 1967, Chapter 67. London: Stationery Office; 1967.

Acts of Parliament (online):

Name of Country. Title of Act, Chapter [Internet]. Place of Publication: Publisher Name; Year of Act [cited Year Month Day]. Available from: URL.

Great Britain. Human Tissue Act 2004, Chapter 30 [Internet]. London: Stationery Office; 2004 [cited 2004 Feb 15]. Available from: <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2004/20040030.htm>.

Conference proceedings and papers, and scientific or technical reports

Note: - Treat the proceedings of a conference like an edited book, adding relevant information about the conference.
- Treat a presentation/paper from the conference proceedings like a chapter in an edited book.

Whole Conference (printed as a publication):

Editor's Surname Initial, editor. Title of publication if there is one. Conference; date; location. Place of publication: Publisher Name; Year of publication.

Holland-Elliott K, editor. What about the workers? Proceedings of a symposium held at the Royal Society of Medicine; 2004 Mar 30; London, UK. London: Royal Society of Medicine Press; 2004.

Whole conference (online) – this would be similar to an e-book:

Editor's Surname Initial, editor. Title of publication if there is one [Internet]. Conference; date; location. Place of publication: Publisher Name; year of publication [cited Year Month Day]. Available from: URL.

Muller S, editor. Proceedings of the 21st International Conference on Head-Driven Phrase Structure Grammar; 2014 Aug 27–29; Buffalo, NY [Internet]. Stanford, CA: CSLI Publications; 2014 [cited 2015 Jun 24]. Available from: <http://web.stanford.edu/group/cslipublications/cslipublications/HPSG/2014/>.

Note: If there is no publication title put [Internet] after the conference location information instead.

Conference paper/presentation (printed in conference proceedings/conference publication):

Author's Surname Initial. Title of presentation/paper. In: Editor's Surname Initial, editor. Title of conference. Relevant information such as Conference; date; location. Place of publication: Publisher Name; Year of publication. p. page numbers.

Ehrler F, Walesa M, Sarrey E, Lovis C. Smartphones : Evidence-based User-Interface Design. In: Lehmann CU, Ammenwerth E, Nøhr C, editors. MEDINFO 2013. Proceedings of the 14th World Congress on Medical and Health Informatics; 2013 Aug 20-23; Copenhagen, Denmark. Amsterdam, Holland: IOS Press; 2013. p. 57 - 61.

Conference paper/presentation (online):

Author's Surname Initial. Title of presentation/paper. In: Editor's Surname Initial, editor. Title of publication if there is one [Internet]. Conference; date; location. Place of publication: Publisher Name; Year of publication [cited Year Month Day]. p. page numbers. Available from: URL.

Reeder B, Le T, Thompson HJ, Demiris G. Comparing information needs of health care providers and older adults: findings from a Wellness Study. In: Lehmann CU, Ammenwerth E, Nøhr C, editors. MEDINFO 2013 [Internet]. Proceedings of the 14th World Congress on Medical and Health Informatics; 2013 Aug 20-23; Copenhagen, Denmark. Amsterdam, Holland: IOS Press; 2013 [cited 2015 Jun 24]. p. 18-22. Available from: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3233/978-1-61499-289-9-18>.

Scientific or technical report (printed):

Author's Surname Initial. Title of report. Place of Publication: Publisher Name; Year Month of publication. Report Number (if relevant).

Centre for Health Technology Evaluation at NICE. Crizotinib for previously treated non-small-cell lung cancer associated with an anaplastic lymphoma kinase fusion gene. London: National Institute for Health and Care Excellence; 2013 Sep. Report No: TA296.

Theses and dissertations

Thesis, Dissertation or Project (printed):

Author's Surname Initial. Title of dissertation/thesis etc [dissertation/thesis etc]. Place of publication: Publisher Name (generally the University that the student attended); Year of Publication.

Yates MT. Effect of ESC/EACTS guidelines on myocardial revascularisation on heart team discussion of patients with severe coronary artery disease in the United Kingdom [thesis]. London: St Georges, University of London; 2015.

Thesis, Dissertation or Project (online):

Author's Surname Initial. Title of dissertation/thesis etc. [dissertation/thesis etc on the Internet]. Place of publication: Publisher Name (generally the University that the student attended); Year of Publication [cited Year Month day]. Available from: URL.

Patient L. A comparison of the requesting of investigations by nurses versus doctors during rapid assessment and treatment (RAT) in an emergency department [dissertation on the Internet]. London: St George's, University of London; 2014 [cited 2014 Jun 24]. Available from: https://elearning.sgul.ac.uk/exampapers/Postgraduate/MRes_Clinical_Practice/2014/L_Patient.pdf.

Videos / DVD recordings:

Videos:

Author's Surname Initial (if known). Title of video [videocassette]. Place of publication: Publisher Name; Year of publication.

Dispatches: living with aids [videocassette]. London: Channel 4; 2005.

DVD recordings:

Author's Surname Initial (if known). Title of dvd [dvd]. Place of publication: Publisher Name; Year of publication.

St George's, University of London. A patient guide to deep vein thrombosis [dvd]. London: Media Services, St George's, University of London; 2005.

Online resources – web pages, images and multimedia

In the context of online resources it is useful to remember:

- The author can be a person or the organisation that produced the resource.
- The term “publisher” means an organisation responsible for the website.
- If you are unable to find out either the place of publication or the publisher, then leave them out.
- The date of publication means the date on the document, if it can be found. If not, you need to use the date that the pages were last updated. This may appear at the bottom of the page.
- The cited date is the date that you looked at the resource.
- You must give the full web address (URL or DOI), it is never acceptable to omit this.

Web pages/web document:

Author’s Surname Initial. Title of web page/web document [Internet]. Place of publication: Publisher Name; Year of Publication [cited Year Month Day]. Available from: URL.

Cancer Research UK. Lung cancer statistics [Internet]. London: Cancer Research UK; 2015 [cited 2015 Jun 24]. Available from: <http://www.cancerresearchuk.org/health-professional/cancer-statistics/statistics-by-cancer-type/lung-cancer>.

Images and multimedia:

For images or multimedia sources found online you will need to give some format information such as: image/photograph/video/podcast, followed by the phrase ‘on the Internet’ in square brackets after the title of the source that you are using.

Creator’s Surname Initial. Title [image/illustration/photograph/video/podcast on the Internet]. Place of Publication: Publisher; Year [cited Year Month Day]. Available from: URL

For example, an image from a specialist website:

Moscote-Salazar LR. A traumatic frontal epidural haematoma [CT scan image on the Internet]. London, UK: Trauma.org ; 2012 [cited 2015 Jun 25]. Available from: <http://www.trauma.org/index.php/main/image/1396/>.

Or, a video on YouTube:

St George’s University of London Clinical Skills Online (SGULCSO). History taking (Phase One: Initiating the session) [video on the Internet]. London, UK: St George’s University of London; 2008 [cited 2015 Jun 25]. Available from: <https://youtu.be/CrqNa9a9PZY>.

Note: Graphs and tables do not count as images, you therefore reference them in the appropriate format for the type of resource where the graph or table was published. So for example, if the table is in a journal article then you would reference it as a journal article.

Remember! As everything on the Web is in copyright unless stated otherwise, it is best to only include images that are in the public domain, where this is explicitly stated on the website or against the image.

There are a wealth of websites now with high quality images that are in the public domain or use a Creative Commons license.

The Library has a web page with sources of images in the public domain here: [Library website > Resources > Images and multimedia](#).

If it isn't clear whether the image is in copyright, you should contact the publisher of the image for permission to use it.

Virtual Learning Environment such as Moodle or StudySpace

Virtual Learning Environments are used increasingly as stores for course documents and teaching materials. You will need to be clear about what it is you are citing e.g. lecturer's notes, a journal article, an image digitized for use in VLEs or an item from a discussion board.

Moodle – Tutor's notes/lecture/other format:

Author/Tutor's Surname Initial. Title of item. Name of academic module [vle online]. Year of publication if known [cited Year Month Day]. Available from: URL: of virtual learning environment.

Woolhead A. Lung mechanics quiz. Cardiovascular I [vle online]. 2006 [cited 2006 Jun 26]. Available from: <http://moodle.sgul.ac.uk/>.

StudySpace (Blackboard) – Message from Course Discussion Board:

Author's Surname Initial. Title of message. Title of Discussion Board in Name of academic module [vle online]. Year of publication if known [cited Year Month Day]. Available from: URL: of virtual learning environment.

Leonard L. Autonomy. Autonomy in contemporary perspectives in Nursing Perspectives [vle online]. 2002 [cited 2006 Jun 26]. Available from: <http://lms.kingston.ac.uk>.

Missing details

Sometimes either the **date** or **place** of publication may not be printed/displayed anywhere on the resource you wish to refer to. If the **date** is missing, you can use [date unknown]. If the **place** of publication is missing, use [place unknown]. Always put these in **square brackets**. If you do not know the name of the author then start your reference with the title of the resource instead, do not use Anon or Anonymous.

Note: - If you cannot identify either an individual or a corporate author, you should consider very carefully whether it is an appropriate source to be using to support your work.
- It is never acceptable to omit a URL/DOI in references to online resources.

Further information for using the Vancouver system

The Vancouver Style is part of the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors' Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals, which are available at <http://www.icmje.org>

The ICMJE no longer publishes a list of reference formats, but instead recommends that authors follow the National Library of Medicine (NLM) guidelines. For samples of reference citation formats, authors should consult NLM's Citing Medicine here: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK7256/>

Note: If you are writing for publication you should check the instructions to authors for the journal that you are submitting to. Some journals use their own variation of the Vancouver style, or use a different referencing style.