Referencing – APA style

The APA (American Psychological Association) style of referencing is an author-date system of referencing. Copies of the APA style guide are available in the RMIT Library at 808.02 A512. The following information is based on the American Psychological Association (2001). Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (5th ed.). Washington:Author.

There are two parts to referencing: 1. in-test citation and 2. list of references or bibliography.

In-text referencing

Here are some of the most common kinds of references:

Single author
- Robertson (1998) has further developed this argument.
- In a major study (Jones, 2004), it was found that...
- …and this argument has been further developed (Robertson, 1998).
- Rowbotham (1997) states that “it is essential to organise knowledge into meaningful chunks” (p. 361).

Note that a page number is given for quotes.

When an author has published more than one cited article in the same year, distinguish each article by using a lower case letter after the year within the brackets (this is also written in the reference list).
- In a study by Brightman (2000a), coping with financial ruin was investigated.

Two authors
- … and this is therefore not appropriate (Sleeman & Jones, 1999).
- Sleeman and Jones (1999) state that ...

Note that an ampersand (&) is used between the names only when they appear in brackets.

Three, four or five authors
Cite all authors the first time the reference occurs.
- … should be used only when appropriate (Smith, Spencer, Thomas & Kay, 2001).

The second and subsequent times, use et al. (Note the full-stop after al.):
- Smith et al. (2001) conclude that ...
If cited again within that paragraph, drop the year:
- Smith et al. also found that ...

Six or more authors
Use only the first name and year:
- Cander et al. (2004) identified ...

More than one citation is provided in your sentence
List citations all alphabetically.
- There are indications that passive smoking is potentially threatening to health (Applebee, 1997; Cookson, 1997; Sheldon & James, 1998).

Secondary citation
This acknowledges the work of an author that you have read about in another’s work.
- Jones (as cited in McKenzie, 2003) believes that...
- …to improve learning (Jones, as cited in McKenzie, 2003).

In the reference list you refer to the author of the text from which your information came (in this case, McKenzie).
Reference List

References should be listed in alphabetical order by author’s name and then by date (earliest first), and then if more than one item has been published during a specific year, by letter (1999a, 1999b, etc).
If there’s no author, the name of the organisation should be used. (If an Internet site has no author or no organisation you should think carefully before using it—it’s unlikely to be an appropriate source.)

Book—one author

Book—two to six authors

Book—more than six authors

A book by a corporate author (eg a government department or other organisation)

An edited book

Chapter or article in a book by another author

An article in a journal

Paper from published conference proceedings with author or editor(s)

Internet sources

Note: The date given for websites should be the date it was last modified. If you can’t find this information at the bottom of the first page, go to ‘File’, then ‘Properties’ on the toolbar.