Referencing – The basics

Referencing is referring to someone else’s work, showing the source of the material you are using. It is sometimes called ‘citing’ another person’s work. If this is not done correctly, it is plagiarism, which is a serious offence.

There are many referencing styles that may be required for different courses. Look in your Course Guide to see which style to use in that course, or ask the lecturer or teacher which style to use. The Learning Skills Unit has Quick Tips leaflets on the following referencing styles:

- Harvard
- APA
- Author-date systems
- Footnoting
- Vancouver
- Numerical systems

For more information see the Super Tips resource on Referencing and how to avoid plagiarism.

There are two parts to referencing. 1. All information and ideas, including illustrations from other writers must be acknowledged throughout your written work. This is called in-text referencing.

2. At the end of all written work give a list of all publications used. This is usually called a reference list, but sometimes called references, works cited or bibliography. A bibliography differs from the others because it includes sources used for background information but not directly referred to. However, this distinction is sometimes not clear, so ask the lecturer what is required.
There are two ways to use reference materials in your writing.

**Paraphrases**
Paraphrasing is reporting other people’s ideas or information in your own words. Paraphrases must always be referenced to acknowledge the source of the ideas. Paraphrasing is more effective than quoting because it shows you understand what you have read and retains your voice.

**Quotes**
When you use the *exact words* of another person in your work, you are quoting. As with paraphrases, quotes must always be referenced, and in many referencing styles you also need to write the page number of the reference in your text.

Here are some *reporting words* often used to introduce paraphrases and quotes:

- states
- argues
- suggests
- writes
- addresses
- maintains
- found
- believes
- contends
- mentions
- reports
- shows
- insists
- declares
- demonstrates
- promotes
- researched
- claims
- documents
- disagrees

(Note that the referencing examples in this leaflet use an author-date style of referencing)

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<th>In the text:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Effective planning means setting goals and priorities (Percy, 1989 p. 44).</td>
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<th>In the Reference List at the end of the work:</th>
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<td>Percy (1989) states that ‘setting goals and establishing priorities are a prerequisite to effective planning’ (p.35).</td>
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