REFERENCING IN ACADEMIC WRITING

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Introduction

Referencing is required to acknowledge the source(s) of the information used in any academic writing. Failure to properly acknowledge other author's contribution to our own writing amounts to academic theft (plagiarism). Referencing, in terms of acknowledging other authors 'contributions in academic writing, is done in two ways: referencing in the text (write-up) (in-text citation) and listing all references cited at the end of the write-up (A reference list). These can also be referred to as the two types of referencing in academic writing.

The Golden Rule for Referencing in Academic Writing

The golden rule is to point out to the reader enough helpful information for him or her to easily and quickly identify sources you have cited in your work. Such that, if anyone needs to read more for the details, they can easily find the details with the sources you have provided in your **reference list** (Pillay et al[1]., 2022).

Referencing helps to show the understanding and rigour that academic work is placed within a context and/or framework meticulously considered relevant to the topic of discussion (University of Otago, 2017). It becomes imperative to substantiate, support, validate, corroborate or contrast your own ideas and arguments with the views of other scholars. When this is done, you should, as a matter of integrity, acknowledge by providing detailed references to the sources of ideas and work which are not originally yours if you do not want to be guilty of academic theft (plagiarism).

In summary, referencing in academic writing is acknowledging: "ideas and work that originate from another person; information that you have included in your work that comes from some other source (which is not common knowledge or widely accepted)" (University of Otago, 2017, p. 3).

Clarification of Related Terms

- **Plagiarism:** Using someone else's work or ideas without giving appropriate credit to the original author or source.
- **Integrity in academic writing:** The quality of being honest and having strong moral principles.
- **Research ethics:** A set of moral principles or values which govern the conduct of a researcher.
- **Citation:** A brief reference to a source of published information, typically in the form of an author's name and date of publication.
- **Bibliography:** A brief reference to a source of published information, typically in the form of an author's name and a date of publication. All the sources you have referred to in any academic writing. These sources include those mentioned in the write-up and those not specifically and explicitly mentioned but have contributed to developing your ideas in the write-up (Pillay et al., 2022).
- **Referencing:** A brief reference to a source of published information, typically in the form of an author's name and date of publication.
- The terms **refer** (reference) and **cite** (citation) may sometimes be used interchangeably to mean the same thing since citing a piece of

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[1] The Latin phrase "et alia" means "and others," and the abbreviation "et al" stands for that. When referencing a source with several authors (more than two others), it is utilised in academic citations.

academic work presupposes making a reference to its source(s) (University of Otago, 2017).

Types of Referencing/Citation

1. An in-text citation
2. A reference list at the end of academic writing e.g. Journal article and thesis.

The two types of referencing go together. Once you have an in-text citation in the academic work, you should also enter the same under the reference list at the end of the academic work.

An in-text citation

An in-text citation is inserted in the body of your academic work or writing and indicates that you are referring to, talking about or paraphrasing another person's work. It is also required when you directly quote another author's original words. It usually includes minimal details such as the name(s) of the author(s) as well as the date of the publication (author-date method). It is important to understand that a citation that comes at the end of a paragraph has to appear in brackets just before the *full stop* in the last sentence of such a paragraph.

Pillay et al. (2022) opine that in-text citations are required when there is a need to:

➢ Paraphrase information (by using your own words), and credit has to be given to the original owner of the idea or thought at the end of the sentence(s) or paragraph(s), as the case may be.
➢ Use direct quotes from other sources with a view to validating arguments you make in any academic writing.
➢ Use phrases like "According to…" to state the source and corresponding information.

Examples:

- **In-text citation/referencing**
- ***Direct quote:***

  "The concept of Work-From-Home (WFH) was first used by Nilles as far back as 1973" (Badaru et al., 2022, p. 288).

- ***Paraphrasing:***

  Work-From-Home (WFH) was an idea first used in 1973 by Nilles (Badaru et al., 2022).

There are some numeric referencing methods which utilise footnotes. It is important to note that in-text citations provide adequate information for readers to locate the full references in the list at the end of academic writing (The Open University, 2020).

According to Mphahlele and Maphalala (2023), the democratically elected government of South Africa took over an unequal and divided educational system from the apartheid regime.

The democratically-elected government of South Africa took over an unequal and divided educational system from the apartheid regime (Mphahlele & Maphalala, 2023).

- *Summarising*

When you summarise concepts and arguments from a paragraph or an entire book or journal article written by another scholar or author, a citation must be given. By summarising, we mean that you explain the key concepts from pertinent sources of information that will be incorporated into the new academic writing.

Reference List at the end of Academic Writing

A reference list is a complete list of references related to sources cited in academic writing. Again, all in-text citations used in academic writing must be included as detailed references under the reference section at the end of the work.

Badaru, K. A., Adu, K. O., Adu, E. O., & Duku, N. (2022). Teaching in a Pandemic: An Exploratory Study into University Instructors' Perceptions of Work-from-Home Opportunities and Challenges during the COVID-19 Lockdown in South Africa. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*, *21*(7). https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.21.7.15

Note that punctuation marks such as the full stops (.), colon (:), and comma (,) may be used in specific positions in the references.

Sources to be Referenced in Academic Writing

- ➢ Electronic or online journals
- ➢ Printed books or eBooks.
- ➢ Tutorials
- ➢ Video and audio materials
- ➢ Photos and images
- ➢ Forum or blog posts
- ➢ Module materials
- ➢ Websites

- ➢ Government reports
- ➢ Social media posts
- ➢ Newspapers/Magazines/Periodicals

Elements of a Complete Reference

- ➢ Author name(s) (Who?)
- ➢ Publication date (only year e,g. 2022) (When?)
- ➢ Title of article or book chapter (What?)
- ➢ Publication title
- ➢ Issue and volume numbers
- ➢ Place of publication (Where?)
- ➢ Publisher
- ➢ Edition
- ➢ Page numbers
- ➢ URL[2] or DOI[3] link (Whichever is available)
- ➢ Access date of the referenced material

Referencing Styles/Techniques

Using referencing strategies or styles is a common practice in academic papers. In South African higher education institutions, the following referencing practices have been adopted:

- ➢ American Psychological Association (APA)
- ➢ Harvard
- ➢ Modern Language Association of America (MLA)
- ➢ Chicago Manual of Style

However, the University of South Africa references sources according to the Harvard system. Whatever referencing style is used, it must be applied consistently throughout the academic work.

Tools for Managing citations and sources.

You may easily generate, manage, and insert citations into your text using the citation tools in MS Word, located under the References tab. This relieves the burden of manually adding an in-text citation each time you need to refer to something. This function is helpful when considering how many citations and references are frequently used in dissertations.

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[2] A computer can find and open a webpage on the internet using its Uniform Resource Locator, or URL, a special address.
[3] An article or document is permanently identified by its DOI, a series of numbers, letters, and symbols used to link to it on the internet.

Setting the citation style will be your first step. (The referring convention or citation style is another name for the citation style.) Your college or department would have explained the preferred referencing style in your Tutorial Letter. The MLA (Modern Languages Association) system, the APA (American Psychological Association) system, the Harvard system, and the MHRA system are the more widely used formats (Modern Humanities Research Association)

- How to set up the citation style in the MS Word Document?

In the References tab on the ribbon, click on the drop-down menu next to Style to choose the appropriate referencing style.
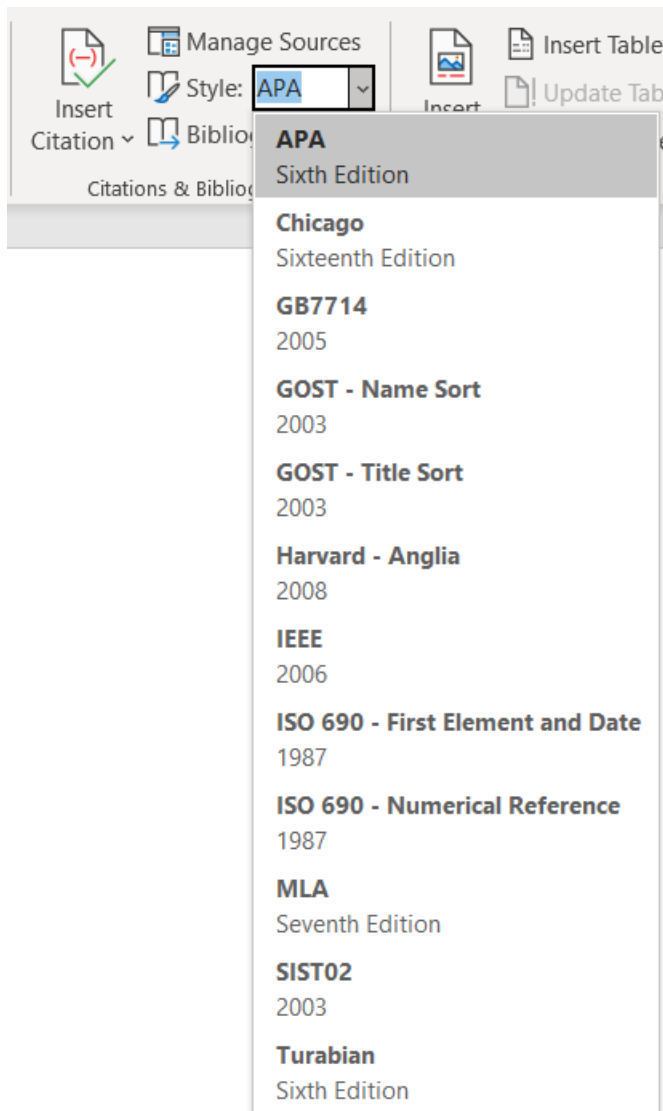

You must enter all of your sources after choosing the citation style. Remember that all of these sources you used to compose your dissertation should be listed someplace. You will enter those sources into the database of sorts in this stage so that you can quickly access them when you need to include citations.

- How do you add sources?

To add your sources, click Manage Sources, and in the Source Manager box, click New...
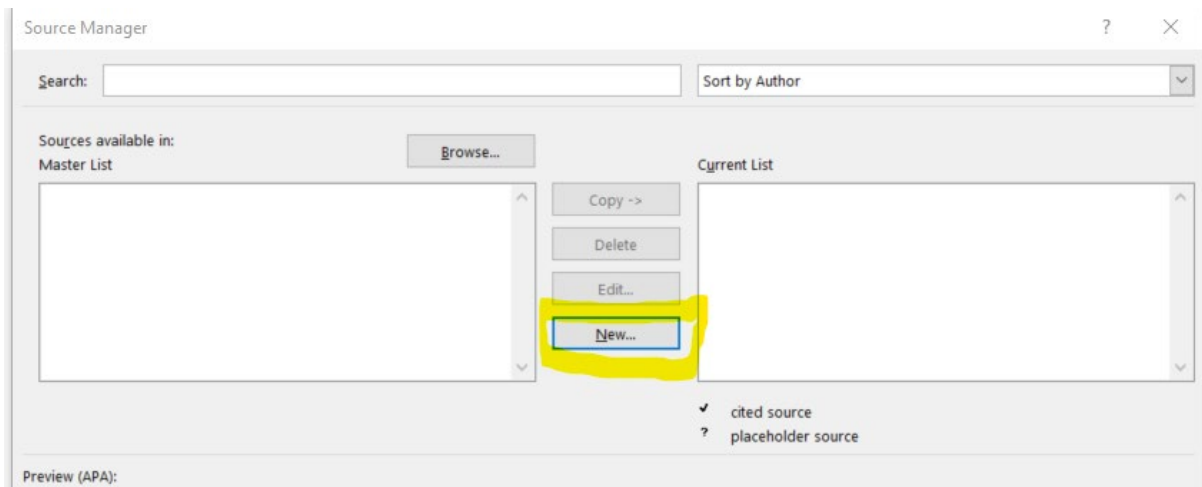
In the Create Source box, first select the type of source. This will impact which fields are displayed below. Required fields will display with red asterisks to the left of the field.
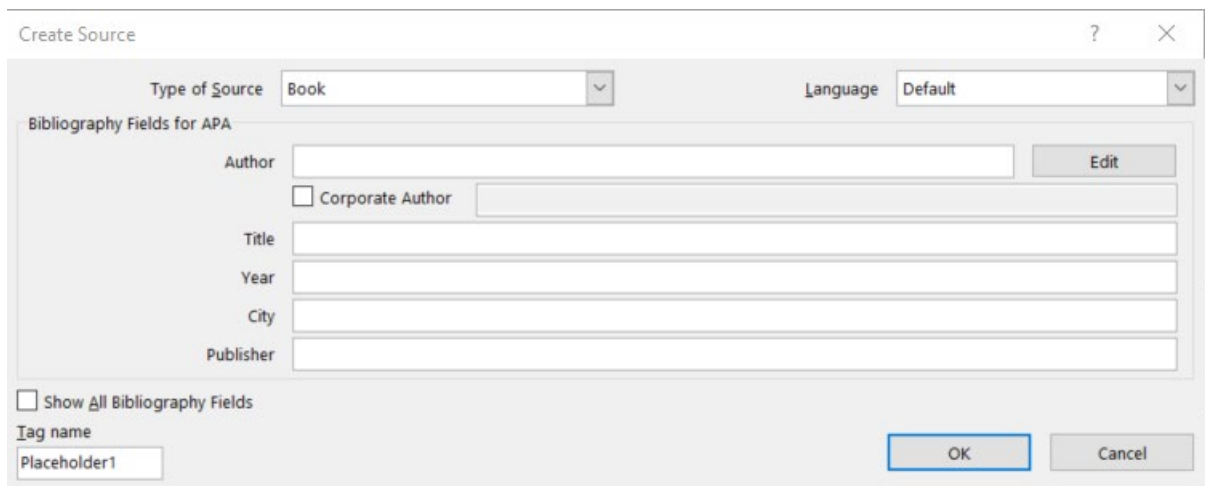
Note that the volume and issue number for journal articles do not appear in the default view of the Create Source box. So, you must check the box labelled: show all Bibliography Fields to generate all the required fields.

Fill out the fields as they should appear in your bibliography. Watch the bottom of the screen for formatting examples for each field. When finished, click OK. You will be returned to the Source List box to add more sources.


Now, the Source Manager box will display both a Master List and a Current List of sources. When you go to add citations to your work, Word will access the currently open list. This list is exclusive to the current document. The sources you have previously produced using this technique are all kept in the master list in

the meantime. Word will only include references from the Current List for usage as citations in this document.

- How to insert in-text citations in the MS Word Document?

Once you have added all your sources to the citation list, you can easily pull from them to cite your work. To insert a citation from your Current List, place the cursor where you would like the citation to appear. Click References, then Insert Citation and click on the citation you would like to use from the list above Add New Source tab. (If your citation does not appear in the drop-down list, return to the steps of adding it)
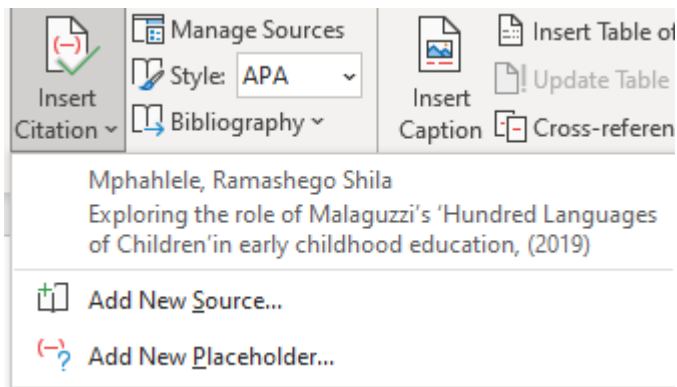
To add details, like page numbers if you're citing a book, select Citation Options, and then Edit Citation.

- How to create a reference list in the Ms Word Document?

Please note that you can add the reference list anytime, even if you are still working on your dissertation/chapter/paper. As you cite the sources, the reference list will be updated. Place the cursor where you would like the reference list to begin. From the Bibliography drop-down in the References tab, select the bibliography with the heading you need.
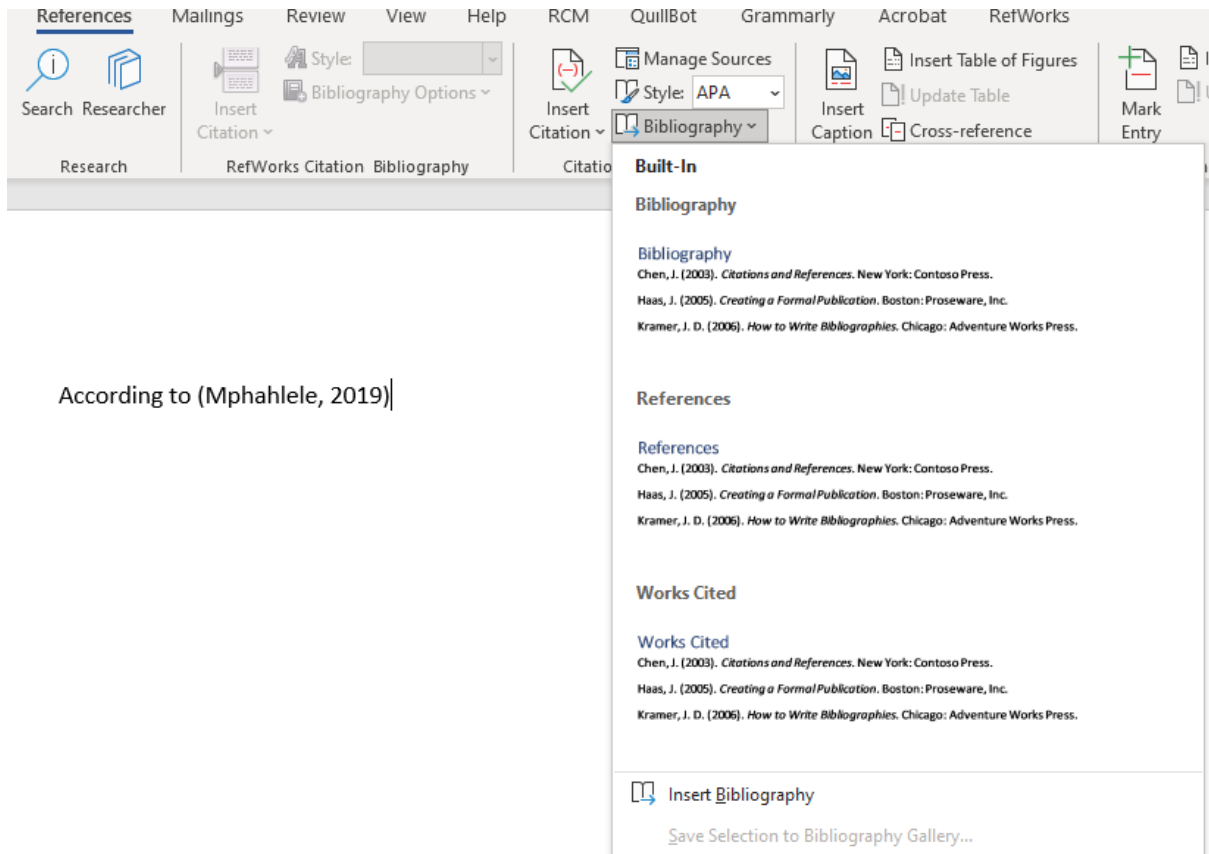
Other tools are also available for managing and organizing references in academic writing. Let's examine some of the most well-known:

1. Mendeley: Mendeley is a free reference management and social network for academics that supports scholars in organizing their work, collaborating online, and finding the most recent studies in their area of expertise. It comes in desktop, online, and mobile application forms.

2. EndNote: EndNote is a well-liked reference organization software that enables researchers and students to gather, arrange, and cite references in their writings. Numerous features are available, such as the capacity to import and export references, search internet databases, and create bibliographies in different formats.

3. Zotero: Users may gather, organize, and cite materials with the help of this free, open-source reference management software. It can produce citations and bibliographies in a number of styles and has a browser plugin that can collect bibliographic data from websites and databases.

4. Citavi: Users can gather, arrange, and analyse materials for their research with the aid of Citavi, a reference management and knowledge organization tool. It has functions including task management, note-taking, PDF management, and literature search.

5. RefWorks: Researchers may organize their research, collaborate with others, and produce citations and bibliographies using RefWorks. RefWorks is a cloud-based reference management service. Along with compatibility with Microsoft Word and Google Docs, a lot of additional features are offered.

These tools can be a priceless resource for researchers and students who must manage many sources and citations in their academic papers. It is crucial that each researcher and student master the use of at least one or two of these tools. We believe that most university librarians could assist in guiding faculty members and students in using these reference management tools. We suggest that anyone needing help or training on how to use these tools for research and academic writing should get in touch with the librarians at their school.

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