

VCC – Harvard Style: How to Cite Literature and List References

There are a number of variations on the way to cite literature in scientific publications. For this course, use the following protocols, which are based on the Harvard or Oxford style. This approach is the most common style for scientific reporting. Another common style used is the Vancouver style, which is even more concise.

Note that in scientific reporting, MLA and APA styles are **NOT** typically used. Those styles are usually found only in fields of the humanities or some of the social sciences.

There are a few major differences between humanities-style citations and those in science. First, in scientific reporting, the source of material is given typically by citing the author of the work and the year that work was published (Author, Year). Second, direct quotes are extremely rare in science. Instead, material is paraphrased, but the source of the information is provided. Third, footnotes are even rarer than direct quotes. Basically, they aren't seen in scientific reports.

Citing Literature

In all written reports, you **MUST** provide the source of your information for any idea that is not your own original work. Every time you provide descriptions of structures, functions or any other material that you did not think of for the very first time, you must credit the person or work from which you obtained the material. The good news is that crediting the source of information is a simple process. All that is required to cite any published work is to add the name of the author and the year the work was published right in the sentence where you use their ideas. This applies to written material and to pictorial information.

Be sure that when you use information from other researchers, that you do not use their words verbatim. In science, direct copying of words is not considered legitimate even if the source is cited. Copying material without putting it in your own words is **plagiarism** and carries heavy penalties. For this course, plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the assignment, and may carry more serious penalties up to expulsion from the college. This can be easily avoided by citing the author properly, and by using their ideas but not their words. Some excellent information on plagiarism, citing and paraphrasing can be found at www.plagiarism.org (iParadigms, October 8, 2003, electronic communication).

There are a very few situations where direct quotes can occur. Basically, they should only be used if the exact wording of the original material is critical to convey some aspect of the material, such as a famous phrase or passage. Otherwise, put the material in your own words. Do not quote material just because you like the way the author put something or because you don't want to bother rewriting it. For our purposes, direct quotes are very rare. Check with your instructor if you think you need to quote something directly.

Citation Formats

If you are citing a work with a single author, the simplest way to handle the citation is to end the sentence with the citation including the author and the year of publication:

The plasma membrane consists of a phospholipid bilayer with embedded proteins (Saladin, 2007).

Alternatively, you can incorporate the citation directly into the sentence:

Saladin (2007) describes the plasma membrane as a phospholipid bilayer with embedded proteins.

If the work has two authors list both, citing the senior author first, that is the author whose name appears first on the book or journal article:

The cell membrane consists of a phospholipid bilayer with various proteins projecting through, known as intrinsic proteins (Raven and Johnson, 2002).

For works with more than two authors, just list the senior author, followed by *et al.* This is a Latin term, short for *et alia*, which literally means and all the others. Note that *et al.* should be in italic font for the citation, or underlined if you do not have a word processor that produces italic font.

The phospholipid bilayer is an important component of the cell membrane (Campbell *et al.* 2003).

If you are citing multiple publications written by the same author in the same year, differentiate them by labelling them with a letter. The first one that you cite will include an "a" after the year and the second one a "b" and so on. Make sure that your references section also includes these notations so that readers can tell which work you mean.

The amygdala is involved in emotional regulation (Ray *et al.*, 1987a). The development of the amygdala can be affected by prolonged exposure to stress factors (Ray *et al.*, 1987b).

The semipalmated sandpiper is a scarce migrant through western British Columbia (Kaufman, 2000a).

For written publications where the author is unknown, list a corporate entity or organisation if you know them, or use anonymous if you do not.

There are five species of the pacific salmon, genus *Onchorhynchus*, found in the lower mainland of British Columbia (Department of Fisheries and Oceans, 1998).

Cardiac muscle is easily damaged by prolonged restriction of blood flow through the coronary arteries (Anonymous, 2006).

Refereed websites, that is electronic journal articles or electronic editions of books, should be cited just as you would a hardcopy publication.

If you are citing **unrefereed** websites the approach to crediting them differs, since websites can change so easily. For these sources, it is important to include the day that you accessed the information, so that readers of your report will be aware of the potential for change, and can track down what information was available at the time you referenced this material. If you do not know the author of the page, include the corporate entity that put the information on the web, or cite it as anonymous, if there is no indication of authorship:

Using other people's words, without crediting them, is considered plagiarism (iParadigms, October 8, 2003, electronic communication).

Many people have tried to determine the meaning of life (Anonymous, October 8, 2003, electronic communication).

When citing material you should always check with the original material if you can. Using secondary citations (ones where you cite a source that you have only seen as a source in another paper) is dangerous as the citation you are reading may not accurately reflect the content and intentions of the original authors. If you have no other option but to use a secondary citation make sure it is made clear that this is the case.

There is not necessarily a link between high biodiversity and high environmental quality (Livingston, 1975, cited in Green, 1979).

Creating A References Section

Throughout your report, you have provided information about the works you have referenced by providing the author and year. These citations don't provide a reader with enough information to find the original material. The references section provides a more detailed set of information for each work you cited in your report. Note that a references section is different from a bibliography that would include every article you looked at. Scientific reports **only** list the material that you actually used in writing your report.

The references section should be a single list in alphabetic order. Each entry should be single spaced, with the first line flush to the left hand margin and subsequent lines in each entry indented. A blank line should be left between entries. The examples that follow show you what this format looks like.

When referencing a book, include (in order), the complete list of authors, the year of publication, the title of the book, the publisher of the book and the city in which it was published. The list of authors should be in the same order that you found them on the title page of the book. Do not use et al. or other shortcuts in the reference list. You must provide the full list of authors here, no matter how long. Put the surname of the author first, followed by their initials (for our purposes, use just the initials and not the full first name). The title of the book should be italicized, or underlined if you are not using a word processor with italic fonts. Electronic editions of books follow the exact same format as their hard copy equivalents.

Saladin, K.S. 2004. *Anatomy and Physiology: The Unity of Form and Function, 3rd edition*. McGraw-Hill, Boston.

Seeley, R.R., Stephens, T.D., and Tate, P. 2003. *Anatomy and Physiology, 6th Edition*. McGraw-Hill, New York.

Journal articles should have a similar format but now you must include the title of the article (this does not get put into italics) as well as the title of the journal (italicized). Along with the title of the journal you should include the volume number and page numbers for the article you are referencing. Note that in the following reference, the latin name for a species is also italicized.

Zanette, L. and Ratcliffe, L.M. 1994. Social rank influences conspicuous behaviour of black-capped chickadees, *Parus atricapillus*. *Animal Behaviour* 48: 119 – 127.

Electronic versions of journal articles have citations identical to regular journal articles unless they are only available online. In the case of articles that are only available online you should include the url for the article and the date that you accessed it.

Han, S.O. and New, P.B. 1998. Variation in nitrogen fixing ability among natural isolates of *Azospirillum*. *Microbial Ecology* 36: 193 – 201. <http://link.springer.delink/service/journals/00248/papers/36n2p193.html>. Accessed September 15, 2003.

Unrefereed internet articles are always difficult. Provide as much information as you can from the following: author's name (if known), date of publication or last revision, title of document, title of complete work (if relevant), url, date of access. If you don't know the author's name use a corporate name if possible, or anonymous, otherwise.

Anonymous. 2003 October 8. *WRZL Weblog*. <http://www.meaningofthelife.com>. Accessed October 8, 2003

Mitra Biology Resources on the Web. 2012. *Histology*. <http://biology.mitrasites.com/histology.html>. Accessed June 4, 2012.

Another situation you are likely to run into is a chapter in an edited book. These groups of articles by different authors are fairly common scientific publications. Cite and reference them using the chapter authors as the prime reference.

Straley, G.B. and Douglas, G.W. 1994. Rare and endangered vascular plants – an update. In: Harding, L.E. and McCullum, E., editors. *Biodiversity in British Columbia: Our Changing Environment*. Environment Canada, Ottawa.

Here is what a reference list might look like using the references above:

References

Anonymous. 2003 October 8. *WRZL Weblog*. <http://www.meaningofthelife.com>. Accessed October 8, 2003

Han, S.O. and New, P.B. 1998. Variation in nitrogen fixing ability among natural isolates of *Azospirillum*. *Microbial Ecology* 36: 193 – 201. <http://link.springer.delink/service/journals/00248/papers/36n2p193.html>. Accessed September 15, 2003.

Mitra Biology Resources on the Web. 2012. *Histology*. <http://biology.mitrasites.com/histology.html>. Accessed June 4, 2012.

Saladin, K.S. 2004. *Anatomy and Physiology: The Unity of Form and Function, 3rd edition*. McGraw-Hill, Boston.

Seeley, R.R., Stephens, T.D., and Tate, P. 2003. *Anatomy and Physiology, 6th Edition*. McGraw-Hill, New York.

Straley, G.B. and Douglas, G.W. 1994. Rare and endangered vascular plants – an update. In: Harding, L.E. and McCullum, E., editors. *Biodiversity in British Columbia: Our Changing Environment*. Environment Canada, Ottawa.

Zanette, L. and Ratcliffe, L.M. 1994. Social rank influences conspicuous behaviour of black-capped chickadees, *Parus atricapillus*. *Animal Behaviour* 48: 119 – 127.

Other situations may arise than the ones I have described here. If you are unsure, check with your instructor, or ask one of the librarians for help. Be sure to let them know you are writing a scientific report using the Harvard or Oxford style, as the styles differ for other publications. One item I have not dealt with in this section is the use of personal communications. Generally, you should avoid them in favour of published material.