A brief guide to referencing

1. Basic referencing

Whenever you use anyone else's thoughts, ideas, research or material in your writing, you should reference where you found it. Referencing is crucial as it guides both you and other sources to where you found the information used. Referencing consists of in-text citations, footnotes and bibliographies. In-text citations are shortened versions of your references that are placed directly after you use information from other sources. In-text citations are grouped together in a bibliography, which is typically an alphabetically organised list at the end of the writing of all the sources you used. Footnotes are placed at the end of a page and include additional notes or citations.

The most common citation styles are APA, MLA, Chicago, Harvard, ASA, IEEE, and AMA. For citation guides and examples, Mendeley provides a range of reliable information. Besides following a citation guide, you can also use a citation generator to create your bibliography, although it is always worth double checking your citations to ensure that they are in the correct format. Some reliable, free citation generators include BibMe and the Citation Machine.

If you will be referencing many different sources, it is often helpful to use a reference manager to organise and track your citations. A couple of free and highly rated reference managers are Mendeley, Zotero and Jabref.

2. Journal articles

One of the most important aspects of conducting research is finding existing research on the topic you are interested in. Many journal articles are locked behind a paywall; however, some libraries have collections of open-source articles which you can access at no cost. Useful resources include:

- Directory of Open Access Journals has a variety of journals and articles free to access
- Google Scholar is a large database with many articles. PDFs of available articles will appear on the righthand side of the search results. You can also click the 'Cite' link below an article to access google generated citations
- Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences has a guide to finding open access content.

Use keywords that capture the key topic you are interested in to search for relevant articles. If you are not finding relevant articles, try different keywords. Published peer-reviewed articles are considered the highest standard of articles. This is because these articles have been reviewed and approved by experts in the topic. Some databases or search engines allow you to filter by whether an article has been peer-reviewed.

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