

Reference List Checklist

A comprehensive guide to ensure your references are correctly formatted

This checklist will help you verify that your reference list meets academic standards and follows your university's requirements.

General Formatting

- All references are arranged in **alphabetical order** by author's surname (except for numbered styles like Vancouver)
 - Reference list has the appropriate title ("References," "Bibliography," or "Works Cited" depending on style)
 - Consistent formatting is used throughout (font, spacing, indentation)
 - Each reference uses a **hanging indent** (first line starts at margin, subsequent lines indented)
 - Every source cited in the text appears in the reference list
 - Every entry in the reference list is cited at least once in the text
 - No sources appear in the reference list that aren't cited in the text (except in a bibliography)
 - Capitalization follows the required style (title case vs. sentence case)
 - Italics are used correctly and consistently for titles of books, journals, etc.
 - Punctuation (commas, periods, colons, etc.) follows the required style exactly
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Source-Specific Checks

Books

- Author names are in the correct format (surname first, then initials)
- Multiple authors are listed in the correct order with correct connector ("and" or "&")
- Publication year is in parentheses (for author-date styles)

- Book title is in italics
- Edition number is included (if not the first edition)
- Place of publication and publisher are included and separated correctly

Journal Articles

- Author names and year are formatted correctly
- Article title is in 'single quotes' (or without quotes, depending on style)
- Journal title is in italics
- Volume number is included (and in correct format - italics or not, depending on style)
- Issue number is in parentheses (or formatted per style guidelines)
- Page range is included with correct prefix (pp. or appropriate alternative)
- DOI is included when available (with correct format, including <https://doi.org/> prefix if required)

Websites and Online Sources

- Author/organization name is included when available
- Year of publication or last update is included
- Title of webpage/document is formatted correctly (italics or quotes as appropriate)
- Complete URL is included (without underline if printed)
- Access date is included in the required format ("Accessed: 15 March 2025" or appropriate alternative)
- URL is still active and accessible (check before submission)

Style-Specific Checks

Harvard Style

- Authors' names format: Smith, J. (comma after surname, periods after initials)
- Year in parentheses after author names: Smith, J. (2022)

'Article titles' in single quotes, Book/Journal titles in italics

Page ranges with "pp." prefix: pp. 45-67

"Available at:" and "Accessed:" for online sources

APA Style (7th Edition)

Authors' names format: Smith, J. (period after initial)

Year in parentheses after author names: Smith, J. (2022).

Only book/journal titles in italics (not article titles)

Issue number in parentheses and italicized with volume: 45(2)

DOIs formatted as <https://doi.org/xxxxx>

Retrieval dates only included for content that changes over time

MLA Style (9th Edition)

Authors' names format: Smith, John. (full first name, period after name)

No parentheses around dates, which appear near end of citation

Book and journal titles in italics

Article titles in "double quotes"

Volume and issue format: vol. 45, no. 2

Page ranges with no prefix: 112-28

URLs without "http://" or "https://" and no access dates

OSCOLA (Law)

Authors' first names appear as initials only

No punctuation between author name elements: Smith J

- Book titles in italics with publication information in parentheses
 - Journal article format includes volume, journal name (italics), first page
 - Cases and legislation formatted according to OSCOLA rules
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Final Checks

- Reference list is on a separate page at the end of your document
 - All URLs are unbroken and don't contain long tracking parameters
 - No personal information appears in URLs (e.g., institutional login details)
 - Special characters display correctly (particularly in foreign names or titles)
 - No typos or spelling errors in names, titles, or other reference elements
 - No orphaned punctuation marks at the beginning of lines
 - Page numbers in the document header/footer don't interfere with reference layout
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Citation Tools

Need help with your references? Try these free citation generators:

- **BibGuru:** www.bibguru.com - Free with no signup required, supports UK university styles
- **ZoteroBib:** zbib.org - Quick references without an account
- **Cite This For Me:** www.citethisforme.com - Good for UK styles
- **Mendeley Reference Manager:** www.mendeley.com - Full reference management
- **Zotero:** www.zotero.org - Comprehensive reference manager

Remember: Always double-check automatically generated citations against your university's specific guidelines.
