Guide to Writing and Referencing

Faculty of Education, University of Tasmania

This document is intended for all units, staff, and students in the Faculty of Education, and provides guidelines for writing, grammar, spelling, and referencing. In addition, it provides some guidance about presentation, although requirements about line spacing, margins, and paragraph indications should be provided by Unit Coordinators and may vary according to the type of writing task involved. These guidelines were prepared by Helen Chick, with input from various Faculty of Education committees and staff members. It has been endorsed for use by students in all undergraduate units and coursework higher degree programs, and may be a useful reference for research higher degree students, although some aspects relevant to reporting on research—such as the presentation of tables and figures—are not discussed.

Introduction: Purpose of this document

There are two keys to successful writing: to have something worthwhile to say and then to say it well, following the style conventions of the genre. These guidelines concern the latter issue, because unless you can express yourself clearly and correctly the validity of your ideas will not matter. Aspects of these guidelines are based on those of the American Psychological Association (APA), as described in the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA, 2010) and more briefly in the work of Faigley (2013). This guide is only brief and cannot cover all the issues. Moreover, it is not an actual example of a paper or essay, and so cannot be used as a model for one although it does exemplify some of the key principles. You can learn much about writing good academic work, however, by reading papers from reputable sources and chapters in books appropriate to your discipline. Note their structure and the way the ideas are organised. There are also other useful published guides that may help if you are going to be writing regularly.

Organising your thoughts

Although it may not be conventional to divide an essay or other piece of academic writing into formal sections as has been done for these guidelines, the use of temporary sections is a good idea for the planning stages of any essay, paper, or other report. For reports, sections are often appropriate or even required. Your Unit Coordinator or the publisher should provide you with clear guidelines about what structure is expected. In any

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1 Note that it may be permissible to have formal sections for essays in some subjects. Check with your Unit Coordinator if you are unsure. Note also that APA style avoids the use of footnotes, so this should not be here!
case, however, you should think about the key ideas you wish to convey and decide how they should be placed in a meaningful sequence. Each key idea usually will be the subject of one or more paragraphs, where a paragraph should comprise more than one sentence but certainly no more than a page.

The introduction and conclusion are particularly important components if you are writing an essay. The introduction should “set the scene” for the issue to be discussed and may indicate why it is an important topic or provide background context for what is to come. The conclusion should be more than a mere summary or reiteration of your main points, but should present the outcome of the arguments and themes you have developed in the essay. It may be useful to think of the introduction and the conclusion as “bookends” for the essay.

Other forms of writing have their own genres and conventions about what components need to be included. Even a lesson plan that is being submitted for assessment may need to be presented in a certain way with required sections. Make sure you check the requirements—from the task description, the Unit Coordinator, or by checking other examples of writing from the genre—to find out about expectations for the task’s structure.

Quotes, citations, and references

Plagiarism: Where to find out about the fundamentals

For most academic writing you will need to refer to and incorporate the work of others in your arguments. You must give credit to the authors of material whose work you quote or to which you refer. If you are using someone else’s actual words you must indicate this with quotation marks or similar (see later section about quotations). You should make these acknowledgements throughout your essay or assessment task as well as in the reference list at the end. Failure to do this is to plagiarise. Plagiarism is unacceptable academic behaviour. Penalties for plagiarism are severe; the university’s policy can be found on the web-sites:

http://www.utas.edu.au/students/plagiarism/ and

For further clarification on what constitutes plagiarism and how to avoid it, check the helpful booklet Using sources and avoiding plagiarism (Academic Skills Unit, n.d.). There is also a relevant chapter in the work of Faigley (2013).

Citing others’ work in APA style: How to give credit where it’s due

In the Faculty of Education at the University of Tasmania APA style is required for citations (the credit given to authors within the piece of written work) and for the list of references at the end of the work. In other places the appropriate and consistent use of other styles may be acceptable (check with the appropriate authority). The main requirement is that the reference should be complete enough for the reader to locate the source—this means that author, date, title, publisher, place of publication, volume number, and page numbers (if relevant) are essential. Examples of different kinds of references—including those for books (APA, 2010; Borchgrevinck, 1907; Faigley, 20132), journal articles (Chick, 2000a, 2000b; Chick & Pierce, 2011; Pierce & Chick, in press), a paper or chapter in an edited book (Gherkin, 1987), papers in a conference proceedings (Chick, 2011; Chick & Watson, 1998), a reprint of work published previously (Booker, Bond, Sparrow, & Swan, 2012), a thesis (Granger, 2009), a government report in which the author is also the publisher (Department of Redundancy Department, 2014), an online lecture (Chick, 2013b), a YouTube video

2 Note that the sequence of citations in a list is in alphabetical order. This footnote should not be here either!
(Chick, 2013a), and other online material (Academic Skills Unit, n.d.; Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2012; Chick, 2011; Chick & Pierce, 2011; McIntosh, 2001)—are provided in the somewhat spurious reference list for these guidelines. For articles in conference proceedings or edited books, the authors of the article or paper are the ones who should be cited, not the editors of the volume, although the editors’ names will appear within the reference list (see Booker et al., 2012; Chick & Watson, 1998; Gherkin, 1987). Proper referencing ensures that due credit is given to the appropriate people.

In general, the actual citation (author and date) should be given within the sentence that quotes or refers to the work. Try to ensure that attributions and citations are incorporated within the sentence as naturally as possible; this means that sometimes authors’ names will be within the sentence with the reference date in parentheses, while on other occasions both names and date will be within parentheses. As an example, consider the different ways that references have been cited in the following paragraph.

Many researchers (e.g., Chick, 2000b; Wallace & Gromit, 1997) have found that students love mathematics with a passion. Mills and Boone (2001) claim this passion leads to “wild parties where factors and multiples are discussed in intimate detail” (p. 34), whereas a UK team noted an increase in the frequency of dazed looks (Brooke-Taylor, Oddie, & Garden, 1979).

For papers with three to seven authors, you should list all the authors’ names at the first citation, so that the contribution of all the authors is acknowledged. For later citations use “first author et al.” (since “et al.” stands for the Latin et alia, which means “and all”). So, for example, the first citation of a certain mathematics textbook (Van de Walle, Karp, & Bay-Williams, 2013) has all the authors listed, but when you next cite it you need only give the briefer citation (Van de Walle et al., 2013; and, in fact, it should be noted that you can leave out the date when there are two or more citations of the same work within a paragraph). When there are eight or more authors you can skip to the abbreviated citation right from the first instance and you also present an abbreviated set of authors in the reference list (see Churchill et al., 2011). Good style guides (e.g., APA, 2010; Faigley, 2013) indicate what to do with more complicated situations where different papers involve some of the same authors (it is too tedious to write about here, but, despite the pain, this technical tedium is important to ensure accurate, consistent, and complete referencing).

All works that are cited should appear in the reference list, and the reference list should contain only those works you have cited (APA, 2010, p. 174). The reference list should be in alphabetical order by author. References to web-sites should be given, listing the full URL address (complete enough to ensure the actual page containing the article can be located); this is discussed further in Note 5 after the reference list.

**Tricky issues with referencing**

Online sources should be used with great caution, however, as there is not always regulation of material placed on the web. Papers in good research journals—whether online or hard copy—undergo refereeing/review before publication, which increases the likelihood of their quality; in contrast, much of the material on the web is not scholarly and may contain errors. If a web page does not have a clearly identified author—and Wikipedia is such an example—be wary about assuming it has validity.

The other thing to note about material found on the web is that it is often an electronic version of something that was originally published in hard copy and should be referenced as such. An example is Chick and Watson (1998), an article that is now available online but originally appeared in a published conference proceedings. The reference list really should
refer to the original source (journal, book, or conference proceedings), rather than the web address. If you find an article online it may be necessary to do some more research to determine the correct way to reference it—especially if the article itself does not state the details—perhaps by examining the way other authors have cited it in their own work.

One difficulty with references and citations concerns those works that may have influenced your thinking but to which you have not referred directly: should you include them in the references or not? In this case, go back to the source and your document and find an appropriate way of citing the influential part, and then include the reference.

If one author refers to another author, and you want to use what was said by the second but you do not have the relevant article that was the original source, then you should say that the second author was cited by the first (e.g., Davidson, 1985, cited in Chick & Watson, 1998). This gives Davidson the rightful credit for the idea, but indicates where you found his idea. This makes Chick and Watson (1998) a “secondary source” for Davidson’s original 1985 article, which is the “primary source”. This does mean that you should be a little wary, because Chick and Watson may not have reported Davidson’s idea correctly, which is why it is better to find the primary source if at all possible. The second author’s paper (in this case Davidson, 1985) will not appear in the reference list (despite being the original source of the idea), but the paper that was your source for the information (i.e., Chick & Watson, 1998) will, because that is where you found it (even though it was not Chick and Watson’s idea).

**Quoting: Sharing the words of the wise**

There are two ways of quoting the actual words of other authors. Short quotations of forty words or fewer should be incorporated in the text surrounded by quotation marks, whereas longer quotes should be presented in a separate [sic] paragraph with wider margins [like this one], and, since the narrower width of the paragraph indicates that it is a quotation, it is not necessary to include quotation marks. (Chick, 2000a, p. 42)

In either case, the page reference for the quote should be given. In my opinion it is also helpful to give a page number when you refer to a distinctive idea or example, even if you are not quoting it directly, especially if the source document is lengthy and a reader might have difficulty locating the actual original material you were using. For more general summaries of a source, such as when giving an overview of an author’s findings, you need only cite the author and year.

Any editorial modifications that you make to the quoted text should be indicated with square brackets as exemplified in the previous quote: the words “like this one” were added by me for this guide and were not in the original quote. If there is a typographical or author error in the original source, then you should still quote verbatim (i.e., with the exact words) but insert [sic] after the mistake to show that you have recognised the error and that the mistake is not your own. The existence of omitted text should be acknowledged by … and this is known as an *ellipsis*. It should also be noted that “APA always uses double quotation marks, with ‘single quotes’ only used for when quotation marks are contained within a quotation” (Chick, 2000a, p. 47).
Writing technicalities
The following dot points discuss some of the more common grammatical, spelling, punctuation, and general writing issues encountered in students’ written work. The issues have been divided into sections for ease of reference.

Grammar and spelling
- Make sure you write complete sentences. In general, a sentence should have a subject and a verb. A common error is to begin sentences with connectives such as “and,” “but,” “while,” “that is,” “as,” and even “however”; these should only occur in the middle of a sentence. [It is possible to begin a sentence with “while” or “as,” but it must be done with care.] Not all phrases have the strength to stand alone as sentences. If you are unsure about this, read the sentence on its own, and see if it has meaning. As an example “While the integration aide worked with a small group.” is not a sentence since it does not make sense when read on its own, because some extra information is needed to belong to the “while.”
- Ensure that the tenses are consistent. For essays it may be appropriate to use the present tense, reserving the past tense for things that genuinely occurred in the past. In particular, avoid different tenses in the one sentence, such as “the children sat [past tense] in their chairs while the teacher reads [present tense] them a story.”
- Ensure that verbs match nouns: if the noun is a plural then the verb must be in the appropriate plural form, and the same applies to singular nouns. For example, “the dogs [plural noun] in the kennel were [plural verb] barking,” and “each afternoon the team of students [singular noun, because it is a team] jogs [singular verb] around the oval.” Achieving this can be complicated, especially if the noun and verb are a long way apart, as in “The key principle guiding the teachers’ implementations of the Australian Curriculum document and its associated subject descriptions, with all their organisational complexity, was a determination to provide equitable educational outcomes for students.”
- There is an additional complication that can arise, concerning entities that can be regarded as both a single object or as a group of individuals (examples include “Murdunna Football Club”, or the “Faculty of Education”). Sometimes when writing about such entities we think of them as a single organisation, and at other times we may be more concerned with the individuals within. So, for instance, it can be correct to write “Murdunna [singular noun, as the organisation] has [singular noun] a successful program for indigenous footballers” and it may also be correct to write “Murdunna [plural noun, meaning all its players] have [plural verb] chosen Aloysius Jones as their [plural pronoun] captain.”
- Make sure it is clear whom or what is being referred to when using pronouns like “they,” “their,” “them,” “it,” and so on.
- The word “data” is plural, so “The data were analysed” is correct (and “The data was analysed” is not), while “The data shows …” is not (it should be “The data show …”).
- Some writers have difficulty distinguishing between “practice” and “practise.” The former is a noun (remember that “ice” is a noun), and the latter (which is not spelt with “-ice!”) is a verb. Here is an example: “At practice [noun] she was able to practise [verb] her goal-shooting skills.”
- Use “between” for comparisons between two things, and “among” for comparisons among several things (so, “He had to choose between mathematics, English, and

3 If I wrote this sentence I would be editing it, but I need it like this to make my point. Note that there should not be any underlining in APA style, but in this exceptional case it makes the relevant verb and noun clearer.
“science” is incorrect because there are three items involved, and hence “between” should be replaced by “among”).

- The principal is in charge of a school, and, if she is any good, uses a sound set of leadership and education principles to guide her decisions.
- An aide is a person who helps (e.g., “teacher’s aide”), whereas concrete materials and visual aids—with no “e”—are objects that help. On no account is “aide” a verb.
- If the adjective in front of a noun is a compound adjective—that is, one involving two words and not one—it is usual to hyphenate it. As examples, consider “blue-eyed girl” and “problem-solving tasks”, where “blue-eyed” and “problem-solving” are the adjectives for the nouns that follow.

**Punctuation**

- One source of confusion is the distinction between “e.g.” and “i.e.”. The first stands for “for example,” and so the items that follow its use should be examples of the thing described in the preceding text. The second stands for “that is,” which means that what is written thereafter very specifically makes clear what has gone before, not by giving an example, but by describing the same thing in another way. Here are examples of the two abbreviations in use. “Connectives, e.g., ‘and’ and ‘but,’ should not be used to begin sentences.” “He enrolled at UTAS, i.e., the University of Tasmania.” In fact, these abbreviations should only be used in parenthetical citations when writing in APA style, and should be rare even in other styles, because abbreviations are to be avoided in essays or reports. It is, however, acceptable to spell out the phrases in full and use them in the main text.
- Use colons (:) and semicolons (;) appropriately. The semicolon is like a substantial comma; in fact, it could almost be replaced by a full stop. The colon, on the other hand, is usually used to signal that a particular example is about to be described: like this. Unlike the semicolon case, the phrase following a colon is rarely capable of being a sentence in its own right.
- Use apostrophes correctly. For something that belongs to one student use student’s, and use students’ when describing that which belongs to a group of students.
- In general the word “mathematics” should be written in full; if you wish to abbreviate it, please use the English “maths” and over-ride any American spell-checker’s preference for “math.” Above all, don’t use “math’s.” It is almost impossible to have an apostrophe associated with the words “maths” and “mathematics.”
- Some writers confuse “its” and “it’s.” The first is possessive, meaning “belonging to it,” whereas the second is a contraction of “it is.” It is tempting to put an apostrophe in the possessive “its,” but it simply does not have one. It is already a possessive form in just the same way as “theirs” and “hers,” neither of which have apostrophes either.
- Avoid contractions like “shouldn’t,” “won’t,” and “they’ve.” Instead, you should write the full phrase.
- Full stops and commas should be placed before the closing quotation mark when these forms of punctuation interact. There are many examples amongst these dot points. (I think this rule is silly and often downright wrong, but that’s the official style, and it is likely that any better rule is too hard to explain!)
- Ampersands (&) should appear only in the list of authors in parenthetical citations and in the reference list. The word the ampersand stands for——“and”——should be written in

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4 You may have noticed that this guide sometimes breaks its own rules (it should be “that is” rather than “that’s”). That’s because this is not a scholarly essay, but an informal guide. Here is another errant footnote, too.
full on all other occasions. The quotation on page 2 that uses “Mills and Boone” and “Wallace & Gromit” applies this principle.

- Avoid lots of parenthetical comments in your writing. If it is an important point it should be “out in the open”; if it’s not an important point, you might like to re-evaluate if it is needed.
- Em-dashes—which are the big long dashes shown here—are useful for making semi-parenthetical comments that are “out in the open.”
- One idiosyncrasy of APA style is that if you are listing several items in a list you should include commas after all items, including before the final “and.” This is different from conventional writing but makes it easier to follow complicated lists involving compound technical terms, phrases that contain terms like “and” and “or,” and other lengthy phrases. If the phrases in the list themselves contain commas, then semicolons should be used to separate each phrase, as in the sentence “I like green eggs and ham; bacon, lettuce, and tomato sandwiches; and pumpkin soup.”

A useful (and amusing) general guide to apostrophes and punctuation—highlighting their importance for effective communication—is the classic work of Truss (2003), although it does not always reflect APA style.

**General writing advice**

- Decide whether you are going to write in the third person or the first person, and then stick to this choice. Choose carefully, because the third person approach can sometimes sound too formal, and the first person approach may be inappropriately personal. Most academic writing is in the third person, but first person is becoming acceptable in some circumstances. Check with your Unit Coordinator for the expectations here.
- If you are using dot points you must ensure that
  - each dot point follows on from the phrase that led into the dot points (as is the case here);
  - it really is necessary to use dot points rather than writing a sentence incorporating the necessary ideas, noting that it can be difficult to achieve high-level synthesis and analysis with dot points.
- Small numbers (zero to ten) should be spelt as words rather than written with numerals. Bigger numbers can be expressed in numerals, but do not begin a sentence with such numerals.
- The principles of the Association for Using Acronyms Correctly (AUAC) state that an acronym must be defined when it is first used. The AUAC’s principles also suggest that there is no point using an acronym if it is only used once at that initial occurrence.
- Pay attention to any advice given to you by your word processor’s spelling and grammar checkers. Those red and green squiggly lines may not be correct every time, but you need to have really good reasons for ignoring them.
- Finally, always make sure your sentences really do say what you meant them to say. It is important to learn to read your own written work from the point of view of an outside reader who hasn’t been reading your mind along the way.

**A point about presentation that is particularly topical right at this point**
• After you have finished preparing your document, make sure that the page breaks do not occur at an awkward place. In particular, do not leave a heading all alone on a previous page.

Other matters of style

It can be difficult to write in a way that is free of gender bias, particularly when you need to talk about a general person. For example, you may wish to discuss the teaching approach taken by a hypothetical teacher. In so doing, you may need to use the expressions “he/she” and “him/her”, both of which make for awkward reading. One way to avoid this is to talk about hypothetical teachers in the plural, so you can use the pronouns “they”, “them” and “their”. These pronouns traditionally have been plural pronouns, and so should not be used with singular nouns. This view implies that sentences like “When the teacher [singular] finished explaining, they [plural] asked questions to ensure the class understood” are incorrect because the subject and pronoun do not match. There has been a shift towards viewing the their/them pronouns as singular as well, but the jury is still out on the matter. As a consequence, use the plural approach if possible, or use the appropriate gendered pronouns if the genders of the individuals are known, or “him/her” if no other option remains.

Colloquialisms, such as “the jury is still out,” should be avoided! The overuse of exclamation marks is also to be decried; for essays even one exclamation mark is usually excessive.

In APA style, italics generally should be used only to identify technical terms when they are first being defined. You should try to avoid the use of italics for emphasis if you can, although it is permitted if the required emphasis would otherwise be lost (APA, 2010, p. 106). Quotation marks are used only for genuine quotes, and on those occasions when you really want to indicate something “ironic” or “colloquial” (irony and colloquialisms should be used only if necessary, and, even then, think twice about doing so). As is often the case when writing in a technical genre, you may have to adjust the way you write to fit the defined style, and so some of your usual writing habits may have to be curtailed.

Polishing and editing

At all stages during the writing process make sure you are addressing the topic. You should also ensure that you follow the guidelines that you have been given. This includes sticking to length and presentation requirements. Do not assume that you are writing something fantastic and that the reader surely will recognise your brilliance and forgive you for writing more than allowed. You are likely to be wrong on all counts. There are usually good reasons for the guidelines and failure to adhere to them will only make the reader feel less than positive towards your work. Indeed, there may be penalties for exceeding word limits.

When writing, be specific and explicit. Do not use vague platitudes, unsubstantiated opinions, or pad your ideas with meaningless waffle. Do not try to do too much with your writing: it is better to be simple and clear than to be convoluted and confusing because you have tried to be too clever.

One of the most important processes in writing is the editing and review process. Just because you have written all the words does not mean that the essay or report cannot be improved, and improved substantially. Do not underestimate the importance of revising your work. The main cause of poor writing is that it has not undergone a significant and critical review process. Many students struggle to stay within the word limits because their writing is filled with fatuousness (purposeless or vacantly silly expressions), clichés, excessive

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5 I felt it really needed emphasis.
adjectives, tautologies, and other expressions that just say the same thing. It can be painful to delete material that you spent time writing, but if it makes the essay or report clearer then it is worth it. Ideally you should finish the writing days before it is due, and spend the remaining time re-reading and polishing the material. During this time, edit and be brutal! Contrast the following paragraphs:

As an example of the characteristics of excessively fatuous writing that lacks terseness and bypasses or obscures the point, this sentence has been laboriously constructed for the purposes of providing a demonstration of essay writing that borders on the incomprehensible and is to be avoided at all costs: there are no grammatical errors but it has all the brevity and focus of a politician’s response to a particularly probing journalistic question and makes readers feel that they are chewing toffee.

Good writing reveals its points through the clarity and brevity achieved by judicious editing.

The finishing touches and matters of presentation

In this day and age, documents must be prepared using a word-processor rather than being handwritten. (Note that “In this day and age” is a cliché; as mentioned, these should be avoided.) Always use a spell checker, set to Australian English, to check the spelling of your work, since even those who can spell may make typing mistakes. Having done this, you should still proof-read your writing, checking for clarity, style, and spelling (automated spell-checkers will not detect the wrong word spelt correctly). It is worthwhile to read the material aloud and/or have someone else read it.

Check with your Unit Coordinator for the expectations about font requirements for assessment tasks. In general, you should use a serif font (i.e., one where the letters have “feet” like Times or Palatino) in preference to a sans serif font (such as Helvetica), because it is thought that readers achieve greater comprehension with the former. Some Unit Coordinators reserve the right to give zero for the use of Comic Sans and other really silly fonts. You have been warned! Twelve point is the recommended font size, as this is the size that the geriatric eyes of your Unit Coordinator can still manage to read if he or she holds the paper at arm’s length and squints in just the right way.

When your masterpiece is completed, make sure that you present it in a format that is acceptable for your Unit Coordinator. Some coordinators require double spacing and wide margins, others do not. If single spacing is permitted ensure that the text is not so dense on the page that it looks too daunting to read.

There are two ways to present paragraphs. One is to use an indent at the start of each paragraph, and then have no blank line between paragraphs; the other is to use a blank line to separate the paragraphs, in which case an indented start is not required. Do not do both, and do do one. APA style uses the former, but the latter can make the paragraph breaks more noticeable and this can help readability. Again, check with your Unit Coordinator about the expectations.

Finally, for work that is going to be submitted as a physical document, it is generally the case that fancy folders, plastic pockets, and other difficult-to-handle presentation approaches are not only not required, they are nuisances. Simply staple the pages together with the appropriate cover sheet.
Conclusion
To receive good marks for your essays or reports, the wise student will avoid making the marker grumpy. If you follow these guidelines, you will help the reader remain in a good frame of mind when marking; if you do not, then beware what the red pen will do to your writing.

References

American Psychological Association. (2010). Publication manual of the American Psychological Association (6th ed.). Washington, DC: Author. Reference to a book where the author and the publisher are the same. Note that the book title is italicised, but the initial letters are not capitalised (with the exception of the name of the organisation, which is a proper noun). Journal titles, in contrast, have initial capitals (see, e.g., Brooke-Taylor et al., 1979).]


Booker, G., Bond, D., Sparrow, L., & Swan, P. (2012). Approaches to mathematics teaching and learning. In T. Muir (Ed.), Primary and early childhood mathematics pedagogy (pp. 15-52). Frenchs Forest: Pearson Australia. (Reprinted from Teaching primary mathematics (4th ed.), pp. 1-39, by G. Booker, D. Bond, L. Sparrow, & P. Swan, 2010, Frenchs Forest: Pearson Australia). [This is, arguably, the most complicated example here. Booker et al. wrote a textbook in 2010, and Muir, as an editor/compiler, reprinted one of the chapters (found in pages 1-39 of the original book) in a compiled subject reader produced by Pearson in 2012 (where it appeared as pages 15-52). Since Booker et al. are the authors they receive the credit, but the place their work was found was in Muir’s book published in 2012. The reference then needs to indicate the fact that the original chapter appeared in Booker et al.’s own book (i.e., the true source, with its date, title, and place), the details of which are given in parentheses at the end of the reference.]

Borchgrevink, C. (1907). The Norwegian Antarctic sea-captain’s guide to references and citations. Moscow: Mir Publishers. [Another book reference. Again, note that no words in the title have initial capitals apart from the proper nouns “Norwegian” and “Antarctic”.]*

Brooke-Taylor, T., Oddie, W., & Garden, G. (1979). Anything, anywhere, anytime: The effect of long-term exposure to mathematics on visual acuity. Journal of Neurological Influences on Physiological Phenomena, 3, 456-457. [Reference to a journal article. 3 is the volume number—and should be italicised—and then the page numbers of the whole article are given. Note that the title of the journal is italicised but the title of the article is not. Journal titles also use initial capital letters, unlike book titles.]*

Chick, H. (2000a). Quotes for every occasion. Non-existent Journal of Useful Things, 17(3), 34–56. [Another reference to a journal article, this time with both volume and issue number shown. You only need to do this when each issue of the journal starts its page numbering from 1. Journals are usually made up of volumes, and each volume is made up of a number of issues. Most journals start from page 1 with issue 1 and then number consecutively through the whole volume, so that a later issue in the volume may have its first page numbered as 112 or similar. Some journals, such as the non-existent Non-existent Journal of Useful Things, start the page numbering from page 1 with each issue, and so the issue number must be shown.]*

Chick, H. (2000b). How to publish at least two papers a year. Journal for Making your CV Look Good, 145, 434-435. [A journal article, showing how to date the references when an author has two publications in the same year.]*


[Conference proceedings published online. Note that this conference does not fit exactly with any of the APA reference formats, so it combines the principles of a couple of formats. Note that Chick’s sole-authored papers are presented in chronological order.]

Chick, H. (2013a, April 4). Building and using LAB [Video file]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I4GjkJZ5x0w [YouTube video file. See the comments in the guide and Note 5 that caution about the usefulness of such references.]
Chick, H. (2013b, July). Week 2A Measurement — Area and perimeter. ESH321 Maths in the Middle School. Online lecture, University of Tasmania, Hobart, Australia. [Online lecture, showing date of presentation, the title of the lecture (in regular font) which was presented as part of a subject or lecture series (in italics). The publisher is the university and the location is also given. If the lecture is a stand-alone lecture, then just give its title, not in italics. It should be noted that the APA manual (2010) does not give a specific format for this kind of reference, so this follows the style of similar kinds of reference.]

Chick, H., & Pierce, R. (2011). Teaching for statistical literacy: Utilising affordances in real-world data. *International Journal of Science and Mathematics Education.* Advance online publication. doi: 10.1007/s10763-011-9303-2. [Journal article that has been published online prior to being published in hard copy. It has a DOI (Digital Object Identifier), which is kind of like a URL but is meant to be more permanent and archival. Sometimes page and volume numbers for the article may be known, so give these as well as the DOI information, with the DOI data at the end of the reference. (This paper has now been published with a volume and page reference, but I am leaving it in this form as an example of a paper that was printed online first.) Note that the alphabetical order principle implies that Chick and Pierce appear before Chick and Watson in the reference list, even though the Chick and Watson article is older.]

Chick, H.L., & Watson, J.M. (1998). Showing and telling: Primary students’ outcomes in data representation and interpretation. In C. Kanes, M. Goos, & E. Warren (Eds.) *Teaching mathematics in new times* (Proceedings of the Twenty-first annual conference of the Mathematics Education Research Group of Australasia Incorporated, pp.153-160). Gold Coast, QLD: MERGA. [Reference to conference proceedings. The authors (Chick and Watson, listed at the beginning of the reference) are the authors of the paper and thus the originators of the material you are citing; the less important editors (Kanes, Goos, and Warren) are shown later in the reference. Note that the name of the publisher (MERGA) actually appears in full in the reference as the conference organization.]

Churchill, R., Ferguson, P., Godinho, S., Johnson, N., Keddie, A., Letts, W., … Vick, M. (2011). *Teaching: Making a difference.* Milton, QLD: John Wiley & Sons. [Book with eight or more authors. In this case, the first six authors and the last are listed, with an ellipsis since this main page regularly changes here. Note how the page numbers of the chapter are shown within the reference.]

Department of Redundancy Department. (2014). *Report into the excessive production of reports in Australia.* Canberra, ACT: Author. [Report produced by a government agency/department, in which the agency is the author. In this case, the report was also published by the department, which is why “Author” is given in the place usually filled by the publisher.]*

Faigley, L. (2013). *The little Penguin handbook* (2nd ed.). Sydney: Pearson Australia. [Book, not first edition. Finding the correct publication data for this one is complicated. It’s really annoying when publishers don’t clearly give their own publication data! Government agencies are often terrible at this.]

Gherkin, B. (1987). The little blue guy’s guide to calculator use. In D. Bernacchi & W. Smith O’Brien (Eds.) *Somewhat dated research results for mathematics education students* (pp. 34-67). Darlington, TAS: Pademelon Publishing. [Chapter in an edited book. Again the listed author is the author of the chapter itself and the originator of the material you are citing; whereas the less important editors are shown later in the reference. Note how the page numbers of the chapter are shown within the reference]*

Granger, H. (2009). *Factors influencing the success rates of students undertaking overdrafts at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Melbourne, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia. [A PhD thesis. Use “master’s thesis” in place of “doctoral dissertation” if appropriate. The institution’s city, state (where relevant), and country should be given.]*

McIntosh, J. (2001). Totally amazing mathematics lesson plan web-site. Accessed on 30/2/2004. Retrieved from http://www.mathsystuff.com.au/index.html [A web-site reference. Note that the author and web-page title are given if possible, together with the date of authorship and the date you actually accessed the article since this main page regularly changes (or it might if the site really existed!). See Note 5 below for more information.]*

Mills, H., & Boone, D. (2001). *The romance of mathematics.* London: Cambridge University Press. [Book, which is fairly unexciting from a referencing point of view, but it contains lots of x.]*

Pierce, R., & Chick, H. L. (in press). Workplace statistical literacy: Teachers interpreting box plots. *Mathematics Education Research Journal.* [Journal article that has been accepted for publication and is “in press” (which means it is being prepared for printing). This may then become an “online first” publication (see Chick & Pierce, 2011) before finally being published in print (in which case it will be possible to give the volume and page numbers). The name of the journal in which the article is to appear is included. Note that papers that an author has “submitted” to a journal should not, in general, be used as sources unless and until they are “accepted” for publication and deemed “in press.”]

Van de Walle, J. A., Karp, K. S., & Bay-Williams, J. M. (2013). *Elementary and middle school mathematics: Teaching developmentally* (8th ed.). Boston: Pearson Education. [Book, with three authors. Note that the date of publication comes from the source, despite the fact that it was still 2012 when I first saw it!]


Note 1. This reference list does not contain all the variations on the kinds of references that you might need to use. The APA style guides (APA, 2010; Faigley, 2013) cover most of the remaining cases. The list above does, however, contain examples of publication types not covered by other style guides but which may be relevant to education students and staff (see, e.g., Chick, 2011, 2013b).

Note 2. The punctuation used above is correct for APA style (yes, even the full stops and commas all over the place). Note, too, the use of italics for book and journal titles, and the capitalisation of journal titles but not of book and article titles. In general, the biggest “object” in the reference is the one that is italicised (e.g., the book title, not the title of the chapter within it; the journal’s name, not the articles that comprise it). Book references include the publisher; journal references do not. Journal titles should be given in full, even if they are generally known by their initials. Names of journal editors do not need to be given.

Note 3. Articles marked with a * don’t really exist. They are merely to illustrate points.

Note 4. Descriptions in highlighted square brackets are for information only; they would not appear in a real reference list.

Note 5. IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT ONLINE SOURCES: For online sources I prefer the URL to be as complete as possible. The APA guides suggest that if the source document is easy to locate from the home page of the source website (e.g., because it has good search facilities) then only the home page URL needs to be given. On the other hand, since a reader who might want to find the source document quickly, the complete URL that goes direct to the source is very helpful. There is a risk, however, that this URL will change whereas the home page URL is likely to be more stable. For sites where the information on the source page changes regularly (e.g., a Wiki) the retrieval date should be given (see McIntosh (2001) above). If possible, the author and date of publication should be included. APA style is a little bit ambiguous about where to use italics for online sources (in one place it says to try to mirror the style of hard-copy documents but then some of the examples seem to have no use of italics at all). I prefer the use of italics for things that are like major titles (which is what applies for books and journals, as discussed in Note 2). Finally, pay particular attention to the comments in the guide about choosing GOOD sources for your academic work (not being able to locate an author can be a significant sign that the source is not suitable).
The examples in the reference list show most common reference types, and are indexed by type below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference type</th>
<th>Example(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Book</td>
<td>APA (2010); Borchgrevinck (1907); Mills &amp; Boone (2001); Truss (2003).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book (online as a website; see also “Online pdf document”)</td>
<td>ACARA (2013).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter reprinted in a compilation</td>
<td>Booker et al. (2012).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conference article (published online)</td>
<td>Chick (2011).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government agency (publisher is also author)</td>
<td>Department of Redundancy Department (2014)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal article</td>
<td>Brooke-Taylor et al. (1979); Wallace &amp; Gromit (1997).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal article (advance online publication)</td>
<td>Chick &amp; Pierce (2011).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal article (separately numbered issues)</td>
<td>Chick (2000a).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple articles by same author/s in one year</td>
<td>Chick (2000a, 2000b, 2013a, 2013b).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple authors (8 or more)</td>
<td>Churchill et al. (2011).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No date of publication</td>
<td>Academic Skills Unit (n.d.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online pdf document</td>
<td>Academic Skills Unit (n.d.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online lecture</td>
<td>Chick (2013b).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website</td>
<td>McIntosh (2001).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website (as a document)</td>
<td>ACARA (2013).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YouTube video</td>
<td>Chick (2013a).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Constructing an argument: Two examples to contrast

The last few pages of this document provide you with a simple little exercise intended to get you thinking about how to write a well-structured essay or piece of academic writing with clear arguments.

The following two examples are intended to be short extracts from two contrasting essays about the same topic. One has been written well and the other is not as carefully structured and argued. The following activities might be helpful to you to think about ways to improve your own writing.

First, I suggest you read both of the extracts to see if you can really “see” the difference between the two. If one really doesn’t appear to be better to you than the other then this activity isn’t going to help you at all and you should seek the advice of someone with greater expertise than mine in helping students with essay-writing (this assumes, of course, that I really have managed to make them different!).

Second, by working through the texts separately or together, identify specific aspects of each example that contribute to its “goodness” or “badness”. Underline and annotate the things that you notice. Be aware that the examples do not contain spelling mistakes, grammatical errors (as far as I know, apart from one deliberate one), or any technical referencing/citation issues. The differences between the extracts lie in the quality of the writing and the structure and depth of the analysis. Once you have identified as many points as you can, have a look at the annotated versions of the extracts on the final two pages. There you will find some of the things that I wanted to show you, and which I hope you were able to identify in your own analysis. You may have noticed additional aspects.

Having identified these points of difference, and how they strengthen or weaken the essay, now think about what you would have to do with the “bad” example to turn it into a “better” example that is more like the “good example”. (To be honest, the “bad” example probably needs major work, not just a few edits here and there with a red pen!) It is this process of identifying and improving — “editing” — that you need to carry out with your own writing in order to improve it. The only catch is that you don’t usually have a directly comparable “good” example to use as a model. The more reading you do of appropriate academic literature in your area, however, the more you will learn about writing at this level.

Please note that the references do not exist, but were invented in order to illustrate key points. Note, too, that the “good” example is by no means “excellent” as it was written in a hurry and did not receive further editing. It does, however, avoid most of the problems evident in the “bad” example.
Excerpts from two essays on “The effective use of calculators in the classroom”

Good example

One of the most common arguments put forward by critics of calculator use in the classroom (e.g., Webb, 2005) is that their too frequent use will lead to a loss of mental computation skills. The work of Arden and Smith (2001) provides some evidence that students tend to reach for a calculator in cases that can be dealt with easily “in one’s head”, such as multiplying by powers of ten. A careful reading of their work, however, suggests that they did not consider the role of the teacher in modelling and discussing appropriate computational choices. Swan and Sparrow (2003), in contrast, emphasise the key role of the teacher in “sanctioning” certain computational approaches. In the classrooms that they studied, if teachers openly questioned students about what computational tools could be used to solve a problem, then it was found that students generally made sensible choices and used efficient mental strategies when appropriate.

Other authors have found that appropriate calculator use can actually allow students to develop mental strategies sooner, and tackle more advanced concepts than typically attempted. Groves (1993) gives the example of a student who noticed the alternating patterns in the units digit when skip counting by 5s, and Tait reports on a Grade 2 student who showed understanding about 0.5 when 4.5 came up on the calculator display after dividing nine by two, saying “the dotty thing and the five must be like a half, because a normal five is halfway between zero and ten, and I know that a half of nine is four-and-a-half.” (1999, p. 4)

These are, however, only anecdotal case studies; what is needed is a larger scale study to obtain statistically valid quantitative data on the extent to which constructive calculator use can foster mental strategies.

What makes this good?
Bad example

“The ease with which children—and adults—reach for a calculator when a mental strategy will suffice is disturbing” (Tambith, 2003, p. 34). Pressing buttons seems to be a replacement for thinking. In many classrooms children do times-table calculations using a machine instead of having these facts ready to recall. Students in secondary school write down answers like 2.56E14 instead of using correct scientific notation, and one is forced to wonder if they know what these symbols actually mean. They also write down answers that are clearly nonsensical, if only they thought about reasonableness and the meaning of the answer.

Clearly this is a problem. It is also a problem that many classrooms are under-resourced. In many primary schools there are not enough calculators to go around, and teachers often use them to play games that have limited educational value (e.g., do a calculation and then turn the display upside-down, and, lo and behold, the inverted symbols reveal a word that usually has nothing to do with the problem). Damon (2006, p. 2) says that “students can become confused when they encounter unexpected notation on the calculator that they aren’t ready to interpret”. For example, the negative sign.

There are some good points, however. One is that you can get students to focus on the operations involved in a problem, rather than having to cope with complex calculations. They can play games that allow you to target particular number properties. An example of this is that multiplying by a number less than one produces a smaller answer (Davis, 2001; Smith, 2003; Teller, 2001). What’s more, and in contrast to a point made earlier, you can allow students to access ideas that they would not encounter until later, because they might get answers on the calculator that will raise questions in their minds. This is shown by the student who learnt about decimal points, as discussed by Tait (1999).

What makes this bad?

Task and sample paragraphs constructed by Dr Helen Chick.
Bad example

“The ease with which children—and adults—reach for a calculator when a mental strategy will suffice is disturbing” (Tambith, 2003, p. 34). Pressing buttons seems to be a replacement for thinking. In many classrooms children do times-table calculations using a machine instead of having these facts ready to recall. Students in secondary school write down answers like 2.56E14 instead of using correct scientific notation, and one is forced to wonder if they know what these symbols actually mean. They also write down answers that are clearly nonsensical, if only they thought about reasonableness and the meaning of the answer.

1. Clearly this is a problem. It is also a problem that many classrooms are under-resourced. In many primary schools there are not enough calculators to go around, and teachers often use them to play games that have limited educational value (e.g., do a calculation and then turn the display upside-down, and lo and behold the inverted symbols reveal a word that usually has nothing to do with the problem). Damon (2006, p. 2) says that “students can become confused when they encounter unexpected notation on the calculator that they aren’t ready to interpret.” For example, the negative sign

2. - Not a sentence.

There are some good points, however. One is that you can get students to focus on the operations involved in a problem, rather than having to cope with complex calculations. They can play games that allow you to target particular number properties. An example of this is that multiplying by a number less than one produces a smaller answer (Davis, 2001; Smith, 2003; Teller, 2001). What’s more, and in contrast to a point made earlier, you can allow students to access ideas that they would not encounter until later because they might get answers on the calculator that will raise questions in their minds. This is shown by the student who learnt about decimal points, as discussed by Tait (1999).

What makes this bad? Note that this is referenced correctly and, with one exception (I hope!), is grammatically correct. However, although the points are—possibly—valid, the paragraphs do not present a clear scholarly argument.

1. Possibly belongs in the previous paragraph, although I’d cut it out.

2. Two distinct points are being made here, and each has different implications.

3. And another distinct point. There’s too much jumping around in this paragraph and little analysis.

4. These two points seem to contradict each other. They could be discussed together, and certainly need deeper analysis.

5. Are all three references really needed or is this just “name dropping”? Did these authors all talk about this example? Did they provide some useful—and worth discussing—analysis of why the example is important?

6. Why not discuss this with the point made earlier... and try to reconcile or weigh up the merits of the two alternatives.

7. There is not enough detail to understand Tait’s example.

*In essays you should not start sentences with “and” or “but”.

Task and sample paragraphs constructed by Dr Helen Chick.
Excerpts from two essays on "The effective use of calculators in the classroom"

Good example

One of the most common arguments put forward by critics of calculator use in the classroom (e.g., Webb, 2005) is that their too frequent use will lead to a loss of mental computation skills. The work of Arden and Smith (2001) provides some evidence that students tend to reach for a calculator in cases that can be dealt with easily "in one's head", such as multiplying by powers of ten. A careful reading of their work, however, suggests that they did not consider the role of the teacher in modelling and discussing appropriate computational choices. Swan and Sparrow (2003), in contrast, emphasise the key role of the teacher in "sanctioning" certain computational approaches. In the classrooms that they studied, if teachers openly questioned students about what computational tools could be used to solve a problem, then it was found that students generally made sensible choices and used efficient mental strategies when appropriate.

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These are, however, only anecdotal case studies, what is needed is a larger scale study to obtain statistically valid quantitative data on the extent to which constructive calculator use can foster mental strategies.

What makes this good? [Actually, it isn't great, since it didn't get any polishing, but it is much better than the bad example.]

1. Supporting evidence for the claims is provided.
2. Limitations are recognised.
3. Evidence for a counter-argument is presented and explained clearly.
4. The longer quote details the example and probably says things more clearly than paraphrasing. It is formatted as a "block quote" because of its length.
5. Page number is given for a direct quote.
6. Need for further work is identified.

N.B.: Both of these examples are just sample paragraphs from within an essay. Neither example includes an introduction or a conclusion, which are important components of an essay. The arguments presented in the essay should allow you to draw your conclusions.

Task and sample paragraphs constructed by Dr Helen Chick.