



Compiling your bibliography: video tutorial

<http://www.screencast.com/t/NHjVee6k2n>

Transcript

Introduction: Welcome to this tutorial on Compiling Your Bibliography from the University of Reading Study Advice team. The tutorial is designed for you to go through at your own pace and you can pause it at any time to look at the examples more closely.

Slide 1: Believe it or not, the bibliography is often a place that markers look at first, as it gives them a good feel for the quality of your research and the care you have taken with the assignment – so it is worth getting it right.

Depending on your referencing style your bibliography will be formatted in different ways but there are common elements that you need to collect for any full citation regardless of the individual referencing style.

Slide 2: These are: Author, Date, Title, Publication details.

No matter what sources you are referring to, or what referencing style you are using you will need to record these details. So have a good method for capturing them as you do your research.

Slide 3: As you can see, different sources all have the common elements but there are some variations in the way these are expressed to suit each type of source and the way it is published.

For a website, sometimes you don't have an individual author so it is fine to use the name of the organisation responsible. Also some websites (and other sources) don't have a specific date of publication so it is acceptable to use the abbreviation n.d. for no date.

So how do you turn these into a bibliography?

Slide 4: The first step is always find your department's referencing guide – this will tell you how to lay the details out depending on your referencing style. The things to pay attention to are the order of items in the bibliography, the punctuation between the common elements in each full citation, and the layout of the bibliography. These may seem like small details, but they matter (and they will get you marks) as they show you are respecting the academic conventions of your discipline and acting like an academic.

Slide 5: In a 'name-date' referencing style like Harvard or APA (by the American Psychological Association) the in-text citation is in brackets with author surname and date. This links to the bibliography which compiles all materials into a single integrated list and is ordered alphabetically by author surname followed by the date (as these are the important clues from the in-text citation that allow people to scan down the list and find the full citation).

Sometimes for arts and humanities subjects like English Literature, Classics or Film, Theatre and TV you may be expected to have a separate alphabetical list for your primary texts or films that you are analysing in depth. Again check with your department.

Harvard and APA are both name-date systems but they have a different order and punctuation for the common elements of the citation. Be careful particularly with Harvard as it can have a lot of variation in punctuation – this example of Harvard uses mainly full-stops to separate the items in the citation but you may see other variations of Harvard that use commas. APA is more prescriptive in its punctuation. But this is why it is always important to find your referencing guide and stick to it meticulously.

Slide 6: Oxford is a footnote referencing style so each footnote links to the bibliography which is also ordered alphabetically by author surname. The punctuation for the bibliography entry is the same as in the footnotes.

Slide 7: In a numeric referencing style like Vancouver (which can be used in the Sciences or Life Sciences) each citation is given a number depending on the order in which they first appear in the body of the assignment. They then keep this same number for further appearances in the text. The sources are then listed in the bibliography in their numerical order (so not alphabetically). Again, there are the same common elements like author, title, publication details and date, but they have a different order and punctuation style.

Slide 8: Another common confusion is whether you need a 'bibliography' or a 'reference list' as you may have heard both terms being used interchangeably, but there is an importance difference: A reference list is a list of only the sources you cite in your assignment itself. A bibliography is a list of all the materials you have consulted when preparing your assignment. Usually you are asked to include either a reference list OR a bibliography – not both, so check with your referencing guide for what is preferred.

Summary: So to recap, when compiling a bibliography:

Have a good system for capturing all the common elements needed to create a full citation.

Check the order, punctuation, and layout needed for your particular referencing style.

Put your sources in a list ordered carefully following the requirements for your referencing style.

And be meticulous and consistent.

A well-presented bibliography shows you respect your subject and have taken time and care with your assignment.