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The Vancouver referencing style

The Swansea University Library Guide to the Vancouver Style is based on Citing medicine: the NLM style guide for authors, editors & publishers. Citing Medicine is the official guide to the Vancouver style. You may find other guides to Vancouver or see variations of the style in different journals. In particular, secondary citations may be handled differently. Journals will also differ as to whether numbers in the text should be inside or outside of punctuation marks. Follow the guidance below and consult Citing Medicine or contact the Library for further advice.

Why reference?
Correct referencing is essential to avoid allegations of plagiarism and collusion, the penalties for which are severe. It allows examiners to check the sources on which you have based your discussions or arguments, and to differentiate your own thoughts, views and ideas from those of other authors.

What is a reference?
A reference is a set of data describing a document, sufficiently precise and detailed to identify it and enable to be located.

The Vancouver Style
The Vancouver style is a numeric system. It was developed at a meeting of editors of biomedical journals in 1978 and has been widely adopted by journals in many disciplines, particularly in the physical sciences.

Each reference is given an (Arabic) number as it first appears in the text. The number given becomes the unique identifier for that reference, and so if it is cited again later in the text, it will still have the same number. The first reference cited will always be number 1 and numbers are allocated sequentially.

The reference number may be written in round brackets (1), square brackets [1] or superscript¹. If you use Endnote bibliographic software to manage your references you will see that the Endnote Vancouver style defaults to round brackets. This can be used when you are required to use round brackets for another purpose (such as numbering equations).
Citing Medicine does not specify the placement of reference numbers with respect to punctuation. Always be consistent, whichever method you use. Read your assignment instructions carefully and check with your lecturer/supervisor if in any doubt.

If given a free choice, a common method is to place numbers after full-stops and commas but before colons and semicolons. Do not leave a space between the last word or punctuation mark that precedes the reference number.

Example:

It has been estimated that there are over 20,000 medical journals, and over two million articles published each year[1]; and that a doctor practicing general medicine would need to read 19 articles every single day in a year just to keep abreast with the publications.[2]

Referencing in the text with Vancouver

Citing one work

Using square brackets:

Recent research[1] indicates that the number of duplicate papers being published is increasing.

Using superscript:

Recent research¹ indicates that the number of duplicate papers being published is increasing.

Citing more than one piece of work at the same time

If you want to cite several pieces of work in the same sentence, you will need to include the citation number for each piece of work. A hyphen should be used to link numbers which are inclusive, and a comma used where numbers are not consecutive.
The following is an example where works 6, 7, 8, 9, 13 and 15 have been cited in the same place in the text.

Several studies[6-9,13,15] have examined the effect of congestion charging in urban areas.

**Citing the author’s name in your text**

You can use the author’s name in your text, but you must insert the citation number as well.

As emphasised by Watkins[2(p1)] carers of diabetes sufferers “require perseverance and an understanding of humanity”.

**When should I use page numbers?**

Page number references are rarely included when citing within the text of an assignment or essay when using Vancouver style. However, for quotations or if you wish to be specific regarding the source of information, quotations or statistics, page or figure numbers may be given as below.

The incidence of the syndrome was rare.[12(fig4)]

**Quotations**

For quotations of less than 40 words, use double quotation marks to enclose the direct text.

For example: In-text: As Neville emphasises, “you should cite all sources and present full details of these in your list of references”.1(p37)

For quotations of more than 40 words, a separate indented paragraph is needed. For example:
Smith (7) summarises the importance of mathematics to society and the knowledge economy, stating that:

Mathematics provides a powerful universal language and intellectual toolkit for abstraction, generalization and synthesis. It is the language of science and technology. It enables us to probe the natural universe and to develop new technologies that have helped us control and master our environment, and change societal expectations and standards of living.(p11)

Citing more than one author’s name in your text

If a work has more than one author and you want to cite author names in your text, use ‘et al’ after the first author.

Simons et al[3(p4)] state that the principle of effective stress is “imperfectly known and understood by many practising engineers”.

Citing works by the same author written in the same year

If you cite a new work which has the same author and was written in the same year as an earlier citation, each work will have a different number.

Communication of science in the media has increasingly come under focus, particularly where reporting of facts and research is inaccurate.[4-5]

What is plagiarism?

Plagiarism is using someone’s words or ideas and passing them off as your own, without acknowledging your source. Self-plagiarism is using your own previously published work as new scholarship.
How do I present referenced material in my assignment?

There are two ways to refer to the works of other authors:

**Paraphrasing** allows you to summarise another author's ideas in your own words, whilst still acknowledging the original source. Quotation marks are not needed. A concise well-paraphrased account demonstrates your understanding of what you have read.

When paraphrasing or referring to an idea contained in another work, you are encouraged to provide a page or paragraph number, especially when it would help an interested reader locate the relevant passage in a long or complex text. If you refer to a table or diagram, you must include a page number as the reader may wish to check it.

**Secondary Citations** - All efforts must be taken to locate and read the *original* text (book or article) rather than make reference to the work of one author cited by another. However, there may be some instances when you are not able to obtain and read the original source. In this case, you must make it clear when writing your full references that you are not making reference to the original source.

In your Reference List, you should **either** only cite the work that you have read at first hand.

**Example:**

In text:
Neville\(^1\)(p17) cites the CBI report from 2006, in which it was claimed that 23% of employers were dissatisfied with the literacy skills of graduates.

**References**
What will my reference list look like?

The Vancouver system lists the cited references at the end of the text and the references are listed numerically.

*Citing Medicine* does not specify a heading for the reference list. Most journals use the heading References (or sometimes REFERENCES).

*Citing Medicine* does not specify line spacing or paragraph indenting. (These are normally specified by individual journals in their instructions to authors.)

Always check to see if you are required to use a specific heading or formatting for your reference list, either in your student handbook or the instructions for a particular assignment. Consult your lecturer/supervisor if in any doubt.


Managing references

Whenever you read anything (book, article, etc) it is worth noting down all the details, a summary of the key points, and direct quotes that may be of use. Noting these on a card is helpful. It is also useful to make a
note of where you obtained the book or article, so that you can easily re-
locate it if you need to refer back to the original text again.

Using EndNote

There are bibliographic software packages available which can help you
manage your references and insert citations into your documents. EndNote is available on University PCs for desktop use. There is also an online version called EndNote Basic (previously called EndNote Web or EndNote Online). More information about Endnote can be found in Libguides: http://libguides.swansea.ac.uk/endnote
The Reference List

Books

Author(s). (Surname followed by initial(s)).
Title of book.
The edition of the book if it is not the first edition.
Place of Publication:
Publisher;
Year of Publication.

Note the required punctuation after each part.

Every attempt must be used to correctly identify the author, which may be a corporate body such as the NHS Executive, Department of Health, Welsh Office or National Assembly. Frequently, publications from these corporate bodies contain a foreword - the person who signs this is not necessarily the author of the document.

Author names
The rule in Citing Medicine is that no more than two initials should be given for an author. Many journals give all initials for authors, and you will find that most bibliographic software uses a similar approach with Vancouver style.

Multiple authors
The rule in Citing Medicine is to list all authors, regardless of number. Some journals apply a cut-off (usually around six authors or more) and your Department/College may follow the style of a particular journal or have its own preference. You must check carefully to see which rules you should apply.

Author name not given - Where no author/editor can be found, begin the reference with the title. Do not use Anonymous.

Multiple places of publication – Where more than one place is given, prefer the UK location if given; otherwise, use the first place mentioned.

Place of publication not given – If the place is not stated, but you can reasonably infer the location, enter the place in square brackets, e.g. [Cardiff]. Otherwise, use [place unknown]. Similarly, if the publisher cannot be found or inferred, use [publisher unknown].
**Date of publication not given** – If the date of copyright can be found, use that, and place a ‘c’ in front the date, e.g. c1955. If you are able to estimate or infer the date, enter the year followed by a ‘?’ in square brackets, e.g. [1999?]. If no date can be found or estimated, use [date unknown].

**Examples:**


Culpeper N. Culpeper's astrological judgment of diseases. [London?]: [publisher unknown]; [date unknown].

**Capitalisation** should be only used for the first word in the title, proper nouns, and acronyms.

**Book with many authors (In the list of references list all the authors)**

**Examples:**


**In-text:**

List only the first author in-text, followed by et al

…as stated by Wenger et al…..
**Edited books**

Editor(s). (Surname followed by initial(s)).
Title of book.
The edition of the book if it is not the first edition.
Place of Publication:
Publisher;
Year of Publication.

**Examples:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Title of Book</th>
<th>Place of Publication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Chapter/Paper/Image/Table/Figure/Chart in a Book**

Author(s) of chapter/paper/table/image etc. (Surname(s) followed by initials).

Title of chapter/paper/table/image etc

In:
Author(s) or Editor(s) of overall book.

Title of book.
The edition of the book if it is not the first edition.

Place of Publication:
Publisher;
Year of Publication.
Page numbers preceded by p.

If you have adapted the image/chart/table in anyway, add [adapted] using square brackets at the end of the reference.
Examples:


E-book

Author(s). (Surname followed by initial(s)).
Title of book [Internet].
The edition of the book if it is not the first edition.
Place of Publication:
Publisher;
Year of Publication.
[cited year month day].
Available from:

Examples:


**Edited e-book**

Editor(s) surname(s) followed by initial(s), and the word editor(s).
Title of book [Internet].
The edition of the book if it is not the first edition, e.g. 4th ed.
Place of Publication:
Publisher;
Year of Publication.
[cited year month day].
Available from:

**Example:**


**Chapter/Paper/Image/Chart/Table/Figure in an E-book**

Author(s) (of chapter/paper/image etc).
Title (of chapter/paper/table etc).
In:
Title of book [Internet].
The edition of the book if it is not the first edition
Place of Publication:
Publisher;
Year of Publication.
[cited year month day].
Available from:

If you have adapted the image/chart/table in anyway, add [adapted] in square brackets at the end of the reference.

**Examples:**


Journal Article

Authors(s). (Surname followed by initial(s)). Article Title. The name of the journal. Year of publication; Volume number of journal: (Issue number): Inclusive page number(s) of the article.

Note: Multiple authors
The rule in Citing Medicine is to give all authors, regardless of number. Some journals apply a cut-off (usually around six authors or more) and your Department/College may follow the style of a particular journal or have its own preference. You must check carefully to see which rules you should apply.

Note: Anonymous articles and editorials in journals. Where there is no author, begin the reference with the title. Do not use anonymous. If you want, you can enter [editorial] immediately after the title as a helpful note.

Note: The rule in Citing Medicine is that journal titles should be abbreviated according to a standard list of abbreviations. The PubMed database, among others, uses these abbreviations. For student assignments you should give the names of journals in full. Swansea University Medical School explicitly require full journal titles for assessed work.
Example:


Note: Page numbers should not be repeated except where followed by a letter. For example, 255-9 but 255A-259A.

Charts/tables/figures taken from a journal article

Authors(s). (Surname followed by initial(s)).
Article title.
The name of the journal
Year of publication;
Volume number
(Issue number):
Inclusive page number(s) of the article.
Title of the chart/table/figure (e.g. Table 1, Estimate UK prevalence of diabetes);
Page number for the chart/table/figure.
Available from:

If you have adapted the image/chart/table in anyway, add [adapted] at the end of the reference.

Note: If there is no issue number, place the colon after the volume number as in the example above.
In the text, label the chart using the word Figure or tables with the word Table and allocate the numbers sequentially, e.g. Table 1. Give the chart a title. At the end of the title, give the reference a number.

Example:

Online journal articles

Cite all the elements as for a print article, but in addition:

- Add: “[Internet]” after the title of the journal and before the full stop. For example, Annals of Internal Medicine [Internet].
- Add a date of citation in square brackets following the date of publication.
- Add: “Available from:” and provide a URL or doi

Authors(s). (Surname followed by initial(s)).
Article title.
Journal name [Internet].
Year of publication [cited date];
Volume number
(Issue number):
Inclusive page number(s) of the article. [If available. See advice below]
Available from:

Note: Cited dates must always follow the formula of “Year Month Day”. Always abbreviate the month to the first 3 letters.

Note: Do not put any punctuation marks after URLs and dois.

Note: Do NOT include URLs from databases where you found the reference. Only use the URL or doi for the article being referenced. The URL or doi should link you to the article’s location and not to a record in PubMed or Web of Science.

Note: If using dois, begin with “doi” followed by a colon and a space e.g. doi: 10.1371/journal.pctr.0010009

Note: If pagination is not given, count or estimate the number of pages and enter the number in square brackets preceded by about e.g. [6 p.] or [about 3 p.]. If the online journal uses another system (e.g. article number) use that and follow with the number of pages in the pdf in square brackets.
Examples:


Charts/tables/figures/images taken from an online journal article

Authors(s). (Surname, followed by initial(s)). Article title. The name of the journal [Internet]. Year of publication [cited date]; Volume number (Issue number): Inclusive page number(s) of the article. Title of the chart/table/figure (e.g. Table 1, Estimate UK prevalence of diabetes); [cited Year Month Day]; Page number for the chart/table/figure. Available from:

Note: If there is no issue number, place the colon after the volume number, as in the example above. In the text, label the chart using the words Figure or Table and allocate the numbers sequentially, e.g. Table 1. Give the chart a title. At the end of the title, give the reference a number.
Example:


Using your own drawing, poem or photograph.

In the text label your work using the word Figure and allocate the numbers sequentially, e.g. Figure 1. Give the drawing, poem or photograph a title. Do not give the reference a number as it is your own work.

Epubs or ‘online first’ articles

These articles are published online before appearing in print or being given a volume and issue number. There is also the possibility that they may be modified before final publication. It is therefore useful to acknowledge their status by putting Epub before the date of publication online, which for this should include the full date (year, month, day). Providing a DOI will also help the reader trace the article.

Example:


When citing Epubs and Online first articles after they have appeared in print and been allocated volume and issue numbers, you need to ensure that you are referencing the version of the article you read. If you want, you can add a note at the end of the reference to indicate that it was an Epub.
Example:


(Note – BMJ & others use “Published Online First” – This is acceptable for students.)

Book review in an online journal

Authors(s). (Surname followed by initial(s)). Article title [book review]. Journal name [Internet]. Year of publication year, month, day [cited date]; Volume number (Issue number): Inclusive page number(s) of the article, if available. Available from: url Review of: Give details of the book being reviewed author(s). If editors, add the word editors after the last initial of the editor(s) name. Title of the book. Place of publication: Publisher; Publication year. (if unsure of date add a c before the year)

Example:

Online Newspaper
Authors(s). (Surname followed by initial(s)).
Article title.
Publication Title [Internet].
Year, month, date published [cited date]:
Pages Used. (You may have to approximate, e.g.[ about 3 p.]. or [about 4 screens].
Available from: http://Website URL

Example:


Online Magazine
Authors(s). (Surname followed by initial(s)).
Article title.
Publication Title [Internet].
Year, month, date published [cited date]:
Issue number:
Pages Used. (You may have to approximate, e.g.[ about 3 p.]. or [about 4 screens].
Available from: http://Website URL

Example:

Tidy D. Smoking - The Facts | Health | Patient.co.uk [Internet]. Patient.co.uk. 2015 [cited 26 April 2015]. Available from: http://www.patient.co.uk/Health/smoking-the-facts
Websites

Authors(s). (Surname followed by initial(s) if one is identifiable; otherwise start with the Title of the Homepage)
Title [Internet].
Place of publication:
Publisher;
Year of publication. (i.e. the date first put on the Internet. Can be a range of dates.)
[updated year month day; cited year month day]. (where appropriate.)
Available from:

Examples of homepages:

Swansea University [Internet]. Swansea: The University; [cited 2013 Jul 12]. Available from: http://www.swansea.ac.uk


Individual Webpage(s)/charts/tables/images/database within a website

Note: Use this when the part of the website you are referring to is produced by the organisation behind the website. If you are citing a piece written on a website by a named author then treat as you would an E-book (see above).

Title of homepage
[Internet].
Place of publication: (if available)
Publisher; (if available)
Year of publication of home page.
>Type of material if required e.g. Chart/Video/Podcast etc.],
Title of web page/chart/image/table;
Date of publication of webpage/chart/image/ – only insert if different to date of publication of website [updated year month day; cited year month day].
Available from:

**Note:** You should try not to shorten the URL

**Example of an individual webpage on a website:**


**Example of individual webpage with same publication date as the website.**

| Fruit & veggies more matters [Internet]. [place unknown]: Produce for Better Health Foundation; c2008-2013. [Chart], Ways to get more; [cited 2013 Jul 22]. Available from: http://www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org/ways-to-get-more?iCat=22 |

**Example of a podcast:**


**Example of a video on the internet:**

Government report (printed)

Government department.
Title.
Place of publication:
Publisher;
Year of publication.
Report number if available e.g. Report No.: Cm 6374.

Example:


Government report (online)

Government Department.
Title of paper/report [Internet].
Place of publication:
Name of Publisher;
Year of publication.
Report No.: (If available, e.g. “Report No.: Cm 6374”.)
[cited Year Month Day].
Available from:

Example:


Official publication

Author(s) (Surname, followed by initial(s)).
Title of document.
City:
Publisher;
Year Published
p. Pages Used.
Example:


**British Standard**

Name of Standard Body/Institution.
Standard number:
Title.
Place of publication:
Publisher;
Year of publication.

Example:


**Online British Standard**

Name of Standard Body/Institution.
Standard number:
Title [Internet].
Place of publication:
Publisher;
[cited year month day].
Available from:

Example:

Personal communications

Where the personal communication is not archived or retrievable, for example conversations or personal letters, then the communication does not need to be listed in the reference list. Instead, place the information in brackets in-text.

Patient confidentiality means that you will need to use a pseudonym for the patient.

For example:

… and most of these illnesses proved to be treatable (2018 conversation between HJ Lewis and author; unreferenced) while the few that …

If the information is retrievable, use this format for the reference list:

Author’s name(s) Surname then first name. Use an initial for the first middle name- ignore any further middle names.
(Author’s place of occupation).
Connective Phrase: e.g. Conversation with:
Recipient name(s) Surname then first name. Use an initial for the first middle name- ignore any further middle names.
(Recipient’s occupation).
Date year month date.

If a document also add
Number of pages.
Place the item can be retrieved.

Example of a letter:

Anfinsen, Christian B. (Department of Biology, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD). Letter to: Cyril Ponnamperuma (University of Maryland, College Park, MD). 2018 Apr 23. 1 leaf. Located at: Modern Manuscripts Collection, History of Medicine Division, National Library of Medicine, Bethesda, MD; MS C 496, Box 8, Folder 3.
Example of a conversation:

Patrias, Karen (Public Services Division, National Library of Medicine, Bethesda, MD). Conversation with: Margaret Madison (Reference Department, University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, Little Rock, AR). 2018 Mar 3.

Bill (either House of Commons or Lords)

House of...
Title
Bill number (in round brackets)
Publication details
Year of publication

In-text citation:
…The MP for Crawley, citing the Landfill Bill [12], disagreed with the amendment….

Reference list:

Statutory instruments

Name (in italics)
SI year and number (in round brackets)
[cited…]
Available from: URL

In-text citation:
It was stated [8] that…

Reference list:
House of Commons and House of Lords Papers

House of...
Title
Paper number (in round brackets)
Publication details.
Year.

In-text citation:
“Using the example of the Parliamentary reports on social housing[6] ...

Reference list:

Command Papers – Green and White Papers

Name of committee or Royal Commission
Title
Paper number (in round brackets)
Publication details.
Year.

In-text citation:
Citing the recent green paper[11] the councillor stated...

Reference list:

Devolved legislation from Wales

Title of Act
asp number (in round brackets)
[cited...]
Available from: URL
In-text citation:
   The predicted migration of labour \(^{(1)}\)
   …

Reference list:

**European Union publications**

Name of EU institution
Title
Publication details
Year of publication

In-text citation:
   In the legislation [17]…

Reference list:

**NICE Guidelines & other publications on the Internet**

Author. e.g. National Institute for Health and Care Excellence.
Title: subtitle [Internet].
Place of publication:
Name of publisher;
Year of publication
[Date of update/revision (if applicable); Date of citation].
(Series & Series number).
Available from:
Examples:


Cochrane Review

Author(s). (Surname followed by initial(s)). Systematic review title. Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews [Internet] Year of publication [cited Year Month Day]; Issue number Art. No.: Available from:

Example:


Online Patient Information Leaflet

These can usually be treated in much the same way as other publications/ebooks on the Internet.

Author. If no author can be found, start with the title. Title: subtitle [Internet]. Place of publication: Publisher; Year of publication [cited Year Month Day]. Available from:
Example:


PRISMA

This is how we would advise you to reference PRISMA. You will just need to change the cited date to the date that you viewed it online.

Note: Cited dates must always follow the formula of “Year Month Day”. Always abbreviate the month to the first 3 letters.

Author(s).
Article title.
Journal name [Internet].
Year of publication [cited date];
Volume number
(Issue number):
Inclusive page number(s) of the article.
Available from:

Example:

British National Formulary (BNF)

Referencing the online British National Formulary.

Authors(s). (Surname followed by initial(s) if one is identifiable; otherwise start with the Title of the Homepage).

Title [Internet].

Place of publication:
Publisher;

Year of publication. (*i.e. the date first put on the Internet. Can be a range of dates.*)
[updated year month day; cited year month day]. (*where appropriate.*)

Available from:

Example:


Referencing a particular entry from the online British National Formulary e.g. Doxorubicin hydrochloride: side-effects.

Reference following the guidance for websites with the name of the drug leading the reference:

Example:

**Thesis**

Author.  
Title  
[PhD thesis] or [master's thesis].  
Place of publication:  
Publisher;  
Date of publication.  

**Example:**

Garner JLS. Peer feedback on professional behaviours in the undergraduate medical curriculum: a case study of tutor and student views at the University of Liverpool [Thesis (PhD)]. Liverpool: University of Liverpool; 2012.

**Thesis available online**

Author.  
Title  
[PhD thesis on the Internet] or [master's thesis on the Internet].  
Place of publication:  
Publisher;  
Date of publication  
[cited Year Month Day].  
Available from:  

**Example:**

Conference Proceedings

Editor(s).
(Surname, followed by initial(s)).
Conference Name/Title;
Date of conference;
Conference Location.
Place of publication:
Publisher;
Date of publication.

Example:


Further Information on the Vancouver style

Library Guides – libguides.swansea.ac.uk

Acknowledgments

This guide is modelled on the Vancouver model in:
Citing medicine: the NLM style guide for authors, editors and publishers

https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK7256/

Additional information from:

Some of the examples in this guide are taken from:
University of Birmingham Library. Vancouver Referencing Handbook

https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/as/libraryservices/library/referencing/ici te/referencing/vancouver/index.aspx