

Referencing



WHY SHOULD I REFERENCE?

If you think that referencing is all about commas and brackets, think again. Referencing not only allows you to record the details of the sources you used in a systematic way, it also adds credibility to your writing.

You should reference to

- Acknowledge all information or ideas that you did not think of yourself;
- Give the reader the opportunity to find the original sources;
- Strengthen your argument and give credibility to your writing; and
- Avoid plagiarism.



WHEN SHOULD I REFERENCE?

You should reference when

- You quote someone directly;
- Write someone's ideas in your own words;
- Summarise someone's ideas;
- Use data, facts or other information from any source; and
- Use tables, figures, diagrams, photos or graphs that are not your own.



COMMAS & BRACKETS

Commas and brackets may seem like technicalities, but they help you to record the necessary information so that you and your reader can easily find and consult the original sources.

Different faculties and departments may use different referencing techniques, so make sure you know which technique you are required to use.

Don't panic! Nobody expects you to memorise where the commas and brackets go. Simply keep a reference guide handy and consult it when you do an assignment.



FIND YOUR VOICE

Your tutors and lecturers are not interested in a summary of the relevant literature (trust us, they've read it!). They want to see that you're able to combine information in new and interesting ways, formulate an argument, and draw a conclusion. For more tips on writing an assignment, check out [Chris's journey through Bloom TV](#).



WHAT IS PLAGIARISM?

Plagiarism means using someone else's work, words, thoughts or ideas without acknowledging them. For example:

- Taking someone else's writing and pretending that it is your own.
- Asking someone to write on your behalf (even if you pay them!).
- Writing someone else's work in your own words without giving them credit.

But what if you plagiarise accidentally? What if you use someone else's words without realising it? What if someone else had the idea first and you don't realise it?

Relax. Your lecturer doesn't expect you to come up with a thought that nobody has ever had or arranged words in a way that nobody has thought of before. Some phrases are common and will show up in many people's writing (especially when an entire class is writing on the same topic!). And it's okay to use someone else's words as long as you acknowledge them and integrate the reference into your argument.

