

WARNING

READING OF THIS HANDOUT MAY CAUSE IRREPARABLE LEARNING

*“The time has come,” the Walrus said,
“To talk of many things:
Of shoes—and ships—and sealing wax—
Of cabbages—and kings—
Of why the sea is boiling hot—
And whether pigs have wings.”*

Quiz: who wrote this? What poem does it come from? What book includes the poem?

Ah, good; you knew the answer. No? You don't know who wrote it? Well, the answer is ... is ...

Sorry, I've decided not to tell you. You will have to find out for yourself. Students are always handing in papers to me without giving the sources of their quotes, their borrowed data, their xeroxed diagrams and their various plagiarisms. For once, I'm not going to give the source to them!

Frustrating, isn't it? Even when it doesn't really matter whether the source is given or not, there is something annoying about reading a quote that is not followed by the name of the author, the name of the book and so on.*

Sometimes, failing to provide a source does matter: like when you're sneakily copying something out of the encyclopedia and passing it off as your own work. If your instructor catches you doing this ... but let's not even consider it.

There is also the matter of credibility. Suppose that you are the mining-safety engineer at the Mt. Pleebie Coal Mine, near East Deerdropping, British Columbia. You discover that further mining might cause Mt. Pleebie, which overlooks East Deerdropping, to collapse and bury the town. Many years ago you had read about a similar catastrophe in Germany.

You telephone the mining company's head office in Vancouver, warning of the danger, but they ask for a written report before doing something so rash as closing the mine and throwing everyone at East Deerdropping out of work. In your report, you write:

Another engineer, whose name I can't recall, once wrote about a disaster in Germany that reminds me of what might happen to East Deerdropping if the Mt. Pleebie Mine is not shut down. I can't remember the name of the report, and I don't know how to get it, but you had better shut the mine down.

The operators ignore your plea because you haven't located the document that would support your statements. You shrug your shoulders, go back to work, and mining continues. Two years later Mt. Pleebie does its worst to the town, and everyone blames the fiasco on you.

Yes, students: referencing the sources of borrowed information is necessary. And this may be your last chance to learn how to do it properly. So read on; I have prepared this handout just for you.

—Ben Gadd, *Grant MacEwan Community College*, 2003

*Okay, the poem is “The Walrus and the Carpenter,” by Lewis Carroll, from *Through the Looking-Glass*, 1872

1. What exactly are “references,” and why should I use them?

First: we are not speaking of the sort of references you put in a résumé. These are not the names of people who will recommend you for a job.

Second: please understand that it is perfectly okay to copy information from other sources into something you’re writing. This is done all the time; in fact, it’s a rare academic paper or article or dissertation or report that doesn’t contain borrowed information. ***However***, if you borrow information without telling the reader that it’s borrowed, or where it came from, then you’re treating that borrowed material as if you produced it yourself. Intentional or not, that’s a serious academic offense. You’re a plagiarist.

To avoid becoming a plagiarist, give credit where credit is due. In scholarly writing, every statement based on the work of someone other than the author should be backed by a **reference**. A reference tells the reader where the author got the information. It *refers* the reader to a book, a magazine article, a report, a website or computer file, a map—even a letter or telephone call made by the person who originally showed the information to be correct.

Thus, *references establish the validity of borrowed facts*. Without references (which are also called **citations**), quoted statements and borrowed information are worthless. No one wants to write papers that are worthless, and no one wants to be labelled a plagiarist. So whenever you write something borrowed from another author—a quoted item, a rephrased idea, some data, an illustration—you should always give a reference.

For example, it is improper to write that Alberta’s Check Stop program has curbed thousands of drunken motorists unless you can refer to an RCMP document that says so. In that document, the RCMP can demonstrate whether the statement is true by supplying facts and figures available only to them. In this case the RCMP is the authoritative source, and you, as an author wishing to pass along the facts, must provide enough information to the reader that the reader, too, could get in touch with the RCMP and have a look at the same document you saw. That is the principle of referencing.

If a statement is so vague that you cannot trace it to its source, omit it. Don’t write that the number of dogs in Edmonton is excessive, or that turtles are lovable creatures, unless you can prove it.

There are two ways to prove such things: (1) do the necessary research and inform the world of your findings by writing a paper, article, report or thesis that is published by a reputable academic or technical organization, or (2) locate someone else who has done the necessary research and inform the reader of that person’s findings. Nothing less is acceptable in the professional world.

It is better to over-reference than to under-reference. You are unlikely to receive a low mark on a paper for using too many references, but you will certainly lose marks for using too few.

2. Okay, okay—I’ll include lots of references in my term papers. Now how do I deal with them?

If you plan to refer to the source of a piece of information, you must write down that source when you collect the information. So after copying out the statement or the data or whatever, don’t forget to also take down the author’s name, the title of the book and so on.

If you don’t write down your sources as you gather the information, you’re going to have a lot of trouble trying to find those sources later on, when you’re writing the paper.

Here is what you need to do. Each time you locate something you will need to refer to, copy down the following five points of information about it:

1. *The name of the author.* Write down the first name, last name and middle initial. If two or three authors are listed with the item, then get the last names and first names of each, keeping them in the same order in which they appeared in the item. If more than three authors are listed, write down just the first one given—the senior author, shown as highest on the page or first in a line of names—and write the words *et al.* (short for *et alii*, which is Latin for “and others”) after the name. You need not write down the other authors’ names.

What if no author is named? This is a common problem in dealing with newspaper articles, short magazine articles, government publications, pamphlets and web pages. In such cases, substitute the name of the organization responsible for the item. For periodicals (newspapers, magazines, scholarly journals) use the name of the periodical, e.g. “*Scientific American.*” For web pages on which no author’s name is given, use the name of the website sponsor as the author. If the website sponsor’s name is not obvious, it can often be found by scrolling down to the end of the page. Or work your way up to the website’s home page and look there. For government publications and pamphlets, write down any name appearing on the item that identifies the person(s) who may have been responsible for it. You may find the name of a committee, a government agency, a company or some other kind of organization. Such names are valid. If nothing of any sort can be found, write down “Anonymous.”

2. *The date the item was published.* Look for this date next to the copyright symbol “©” or the word “Copyright.” In books and other long works, the year of publication is usually found on the back of the title page. In magazines and journal articles, the date—including the month and sometimes the day—is usually found on the cover. In films and videotapes/DVDs, look for the date at the end of the credits. On pamphlets and other short items, look on the back. The date of a website is the date you retrieved the information. If you download a computer file, use the date given with the file name.

Unpublished material such as correspondence (letters, e-mails) and phone calls can often be dated, too. Give the date of the correspondence or the date you made the call. If no date can be found, write down “Undated.”

3. *The title, headline or web-page heading.* Carefully write down the whole title, even if it is long, taking up several lines. Nearly all published items have titles, headlines or headings. Some written items do not have titles: letters, for example, or field notes. Neither do such items of non-literature as audio or video recordings of meetings. If you are referencing one of these, make up your own descriptive

title, for example, “Letter on locations of Metis settlements in northern Alberta,” or “Untitled painting of horses along the McLeod River near Cadomin.”

- If the item is a **book**, underline the title to indicate that it is a book (or if you’re working on a computer, put the title in *italics*.) Underline or italicize titles of reports, pamphlets, maps—anything that is not part of another publication. If the item *is* part of another publication—a magazine article, for example—then put the title in quotes and underline or italicize the name of the main publication.
- If the item is a **chapter in a book** or some other long document, or if it’s a short magazine article grouped with others in a section of a magazine, put the name of the chapter or magazine section in quotes—include the name of the short magazine article—and underline or italicize the name of the book or magazine. If the item is part of a collection of stories, essays, poems, etc. by various authors, put the title of the item in quotes and underline or italicize the name of the book in which the item appears. Also write down the name of the book’s editor, if an editor is listed on the title page.
- If the item is from a **website**, put the heading at the top of the web page in quotes. This is not the lengthy web-page address shown on your computer; we’ll get to that. This is just the heading on the page itself, e.g. “Climate data for Montreal.” Since web pages change frequently, or just disappear, it’s a good idea to print out each page you used and save it.

4. The publisher. Get the full name of the publisher, including the publisher’s city. (You need write down only one city if more than one is given.) Look for this information on the back of the title page. If the publisher is an uncommon one, and a street address is given, write that down, too.

Collecting the publisher’s name is usually easy for books, but it can be difficult for other items. Fortunately it’s not always required. Letters and telephone calls, for example, have no publisher. Audio recordings and videotapes of meetings and private interviews are usually unpublished, as are many legal documents. Some university doctoral and master’s dissertations (theses) are published, while others are not; look at the beginning and end for an indication. Write down what kind of dissertation it is and the university department for which it was prepared.

By convention, when referencing a journal article, magazine article or any other item appearing in a periodical, you normally don’t have to name the publisher. This is fine for periodicals that are well known, but there are many lesser-known periodicals that are practically unknown outside their small readership or geographical area. For these, you should include the publisher’s name and address, usually found somewhere in the periodical.

Government publications often include some sort of publication number. Write it down, along with the full name of the government agency that issued the item. This can be quite long, for example, “Bulletin 93-8, Operations Directorate, Parks Canada, Department of Canadian Heritage, Ottawa.” If you’ve had to list a government agency or some other group/company/organization as the author (typical for pamphlets), then you may have to list that same name as the publisher, if it is the only name on the item. This is acceptable.

For information published on a website, write down the main website address, e.g. “www.canada.gc.ca.” (Again, we will get to the long address of the exact page on that site later). Also find out who the **site sponsor** is: the company, organization or person whose name is associated with the website, usually found at the end of each web page (scroll down). A **downloaded computer file** can be thought of as published if it appears on a website that does not require a membership password. (If a membership password is needed, note this.) A computer program, whether downloaded or obtained on CD ROM, is considered to be a published item. Look in the “About” box under “Help” for information on the person, company or other organization that produced the program.

When an item is unpublished, say so. Tell what kind of item it is and where the author can be located, for example, for example, “Unpublished report, Envirocon Ltd., Calgary,” or “Personal communication (telephone call) with Millie Granger, Produce Manager, Tomboy Foods, Edson, AB.” You needn’t give the actual telephone number. Use business addresses for your sources whenever possible; avoid home addresses.

5. The page number(s). Write down the page number on which the information is located. If the item runs onto the next page or beyond, write down the beginning and ending page numbers. You can abbreviate “page” as “p.” and “pages” as “pp.” Examples: “p. 28,” “pp. 29–34.” (To be extra-proper, don’t use a hyphen between the numbers. Use a medium-length dash, also known as an “en dash,” no space on either side)

For web pages, write down the full web-page address as shown in the address box in your web browser, e.g. Internet Explorer. Such addresses are often long and complex, so be careful.

Don’t worry about the way you write these things down. So far, they are only notes to yourself. They needn’t be beautiful. The important thing is to make sure that *all* the reference information you need for each item is there.

3. Once I’ve written all this down, how do I use it?

Having taken down the information you need to reference something, the other half of the job is to present those references properly when you write your paper. Every time you come to a borrowed fact, figure, table or whatever you wish to include, you add the reference. That reference refers to the writing (or the drawing, or the table, etc.) that comes just ahead of it. Here’s a simple example:

The Thirty Years’ War lasted a lot longer than thirty years, according to the *Encyclopedia Britannica*.

Nearly anyone could find the *Encyclopedia Britannica* article on the Thirty Years’ War. But most references are more complicated, requiring a book title, page number, author’s name, publisher, date of publication and so on to help the reader find the item. Putting all that in a sentence gets ugly:

The source of detritus for sequence-B formations was the Canadian Shield, according to Jim Aitken and Margo McMechan on page 341 of “Middle Proterozoic assemblages,” which is chapter 5 in *Geology of the Cordilleran Orogen in Canada*, edited by H. Gabrielse and C. Yorath, available as Geology of Canada Report No. 4 from the Geological Survey of Canada, Ottawa, 1992.

If references were given this way, the references would take up more space than the information they support. So writers have come up with a solution in which the sentence looks like this:

The source of detritus for sequence-B formations was the Canadian Shield (Aitken and McMechan, 1992, p. 341).

The rest of the information is tucked away at the back of the report. You look it up in an alphabetic list of all references by finding the one that begins with “Aitken.” It would look like this:

Aitken, J. and M. McMechan (1992) “Middle Proterozoic assemblages,” in *Geology of the Cordilleran Orogen in Canada*, Geology of Canada Report No. 4, Geological Survey of Canada, Ottawa

And that's how referencing works. Immediately following any statement you need to back up, you put in a **short reference** to the source. This keys to a **long reference** at the back of the document.

The short reference gives the reader just enough information to look up the long reference, which has all the information needed to locate the item, be it a book, magazine article or whatever. The short reference also gives the relevant page number in the item.

Note that this is not **footnoting**. Footnoting is an awkward, difficult referencing style, seldom used these days. It has been supplanted by the newer methods described here. This handout doesn't cover footnoting.

Three varieties of modern referencing are widely used in North America. Scientists generally prefer **alphabetic references**, as illustrated above. In the humanities (especially in English and history), a version of alphabetic referencing called **MLA** ("Modern Language Association") references, is popular. Engineers have invented a simplified style, in which a number is substituted for the author's name. These are called **numeric references**.

In the sections that follow, I present all three styles, with examples for you to follow. If your instructor has no preference for one style over another, take your pick. Just be consistent. Use the same style throughout any particular report or paper you write.

4. Alphabetic references

In the short reference, the author's last name is given, along with the year of the publication and the page number(s) on which the information will be found. Suppose you are writing a report about voles in Alberta. You might write the following:

The chestnut-cheeked vole was common in southern Alberta in the 1950s (Soper, 1964, p. 226).

This tells the reader that an author named Soper has published something that shows, on page 226, that the statement about chestnut-cheeked voles being common in Alberta in the 1950s is true. Note how the reference is given in parentheses, and how it comes right after the statement it supports, *in that same sentence*. This is the short reference.

At the back of your report, the reader would find the following:

Soper, J. (1964) *The Mammals of Alberta*, Queen's Printer, Edmonton

This is the long reference, placed in alphabetic order with all the other long references. Put book titles in italics, as shown above. Or use underlining, which is equivalent.

The short reference supports the whole sentence. Sometimes you will want a short reference to back only part of a sentence. In that case, put the short reference partway through the sentence, immediately after the part it supports:

The chestnut-cheeked vole was common in southern Alberta (Soper, 1964, p. 226) but rare in southern British Columbia (Hunt, 1972, p. 31).

In this case, at the back of the report the reader would find these two references, placed in alphabetic order along with any others used in the report (see next page):

Hunt, J. (1972) *Common Mammals of B.C.*, Orca Books, Vancouver
Soper, J. (1964) *The Mammals of Alberta*, Queen's Printer, Edmonton

Each fact has its own reference. ***That's important:*** one fact, one reference immediately following it.

Suppose that you have several facts in a row, all supported by the same section of the same source. This is no problem. Start the paragraph with the words "According to," or something similar, and finish the section with the reference. This combination will bracket your borrowed material and the reader will know what you are doing. Place the short reference *outside* the last sentence instead of inside. For example:

According to Dr. Timothy Sarcophagus, the practice of embalming elephants is very old. It originated in Egypt, where sacred African elephants from the upper Nile basin were embalmed and placed in the tombs of deceased royalty. Embalmed elephants, most of them mummified, have been found in Egyptian tombs 4000 years old. (Sarcophagus, 1948, pp. 314-318)

Summing up the alphabetic style: each short reference gives the author's last name, the year of publication and the relevant page number(s). All the long references are found at the back, in alphabetic order based on the authors' last names.

5. *MLA references*

The referencing style adopted by the Modern Language Association uses short references that are similar to alphabetic short references, but the date is omitted. The author's last name is given, then the page number, with no comma between them, like this:

Beginning in the 1970s, film critics began to use plainer language (Markowitz 214).

The long references are similar to those of the alphabetic style, but the date is usually placed at the end of the reference. There are a few other differences—minor ones—as shown in the example below:

Markowitz, Margaret J. *Reviews of Films: a Fifty-year Perspective*.
New York: McGraw-Hill, 1993.

Note how an item that takes more than one line uses a **hanging indent**, in which the second line of the item is pushed right. You should do this for all items that don't fit on one line, regardless of the referencing style.

The MLA style takes less space in the text than the alphabetic style, which is an advantage as long as the writer doesn't reference many works by the same author. In the alphabetic style, different works by the same author are identified by their publication dates, but since the MLA style doesn't use the date in the short reference, a problem is created when you're referencing more than one work by the same author. The solution is to give the author's last name and the first major word or two in each work by that author, for example:

Many film critics now write their reviews in plain language (Markowitz, *Reviews* 214), but a few continue to use the "stilted lexicon of the literary critic" (Markowitz, "Words" 27).

Note that in the example on the previous page, when a quote comes at the end of a sentence with a short reference, you take out the period that would otherwise appear at the end of the quote. Remember to put a period after the short reference.

The list of long references would contain the following two items:

Markowitz, Margaret J. *Reviews of Films: a Fifty-year Perspective*.
New York: McGraw-Hill, 1993.

---. "Words, words, words." *International Film News*.
Sept. 1994: 25-27.

Note how the hyphens and period in the second entry take the place of the author's name, which would otherwise be repeated, and that the beginning and ending page numbers of the magazine article are given (again, a standard practice in doing a long reference to a periodical article). You can use a long dash (—, also called an "em dash") in place of the hyphens.

Summing up the MLA style: each short reference gives the author's last name and the relevant page number(s). No date is given. All the long references are found at the back, in alphabetic order based on the authors' last names.

6. *Numeric references*

Why not just number the short references instead of using the author's last name? This method is popular with engineers, so here is an example of a numeric-style reference from an engineering report:

By 1975, there were 20 natural-gas processing plants in southern Alberta (1, p. 51).

Turning to the list of long references at the back of the report, the reader would find the following:

1. Soporific, K.O. (1991) *Gas Plants of Alberta*, Alberta Energy Resources Conservation Board, Edmonton

Each short reference is given a number. The first reference in a report is number 1, the second is number 2 and so on. The numbers get larger as the report gets longer. If the statement about gas plants in Alberta had come later in the report, the reference number might have been 2, 3 or higher. But every time you referred to K.O. Soporific's book about gas plants, you would have used the same number, in this case, 1.

While the numeric style gives no indication of the author's name in the short reference, the numbers take less space in the text, giving the writing a cleaner look. Another advantage is that you can use the same number whenever you refer to the same item, instead of repeating something like "Aitken and McMechan, 1992" each time.

Remember, though, that each publication or other reference you list must have its own, separate, number. And you have to keep track of the numbers. If you decide to add a reference somewhere, all the numbers following it will have to be increased by one, something your word processing program may or may not do well. With alphabetic and MLA referencing this problem does not occur.

Summing up the numeric style: each short reference includes an item number and the relevant page number(s). All the long references are found at the back, numbered in the same order in which they appeared in the text.

7. *Can you give some more examples of short references?*

Sure. Here are some for all three styles. (For examples of long references, see pages 10–14.)

A recent study by Sarcophagus (1947) indicates that elephants have fascinating sex lives.

This is alphabetic style. Note that the author's name needn't always be in parentheses, and that the page number(s) may be omitted if the reference is to the entire publication. Here's an example of the same thing in numeric style:

A recent study by Sarcophagus (23) indicates that elephants have fascinating sex lives.

The MLA version of this reference is even simpler, because no date or number is required:

A recent study by Sarcophagus indicates that elephants have fascinating sex lives.

You can reference more than one source at a time. In the alphabetic style, put the most recent publication last (note use of semicolons):

As described by several authors (Berezowksi, 1973, pp. 245–248; Miller, 1974, p. 96; Alvard, 1988, p. 1325), the cheesecloth effect is most pronounced during solar eclipses.

The numeric version would be similar, with numbers in place of the names:

As described by several authors (13, pp. 245–248; 14, p. 96; 15, p. 1325), the cheesecloth effect is most pronounced during solar eclipses.

Here's what the MLA version would look like:

As described by several authors (Berezowksi 245–248, Miller 96, Alvard 1325), the cheesecloth effect is most pronounced during solar eclipses.

- ***What if no author's name was given in the item?*** If it's a newspaper or magazine article, use the name of the newspaper. If it's something else (a website, for example), follow the advice in item 1 on page 3.

8. How do I give references for tables and figures?

Many authors borrow information in the form of data tables and figures (illustrations). When copying a figure or table to use in your own work, always credit the source by giving it a reference. If you don't, you're committing plagiarism. On tables, give the reference at the bottom of the table, below any notes used. Here's an example:

Table 5: Melting points (°C) of elephant tallow

TYPE	Male	Female	Neutered	Immature
Asian	92	92	92	92
African	92	92	92	92
Antarctic	-10	-10	-10	-10

Source: Sarcophagus (1951), p. 1067

—or, if using MLA-style references:

Source: Sarcophagus 1067

—or, if using numeric-style references:

Source: 34, p. 1067

For illustrations, give the reference in the caption. Most writers put the caption under the illustration. They often use italic type and refer to the illustration as a “figure.” Here is an example:

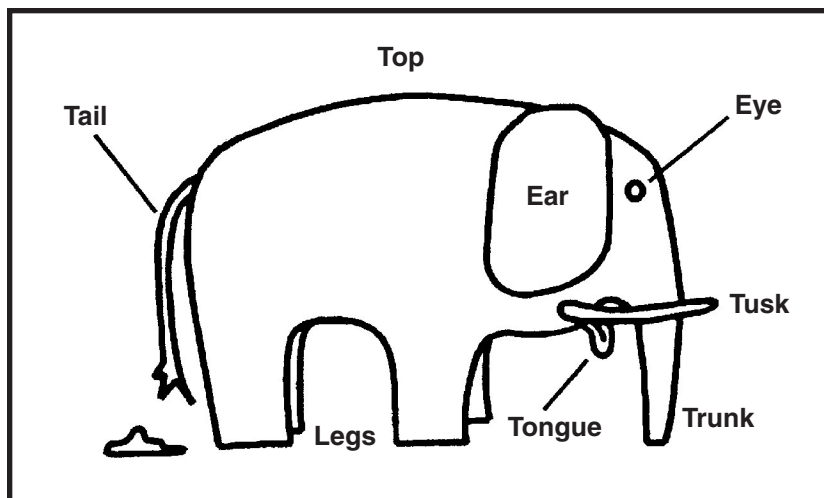


Figure 5: parts of an elephant.

Source: Sarcophagus (1953), p. 2

—or, if using MLA-style references:

Source: Sarcophagus 2

—or, if using numeric-style references:

Source: 15, p. 2

If you have redrawn or otherwise altered a figure or table, use the word “After” instead of the word “Source.”

9. What about those long references?

There are many variations on typing long references: different punctuation, different abbreviations, different ordering of the information within a particular entry. I have shown only two styles here: one is a style commonly used by technical writers for both alphabetic and numeric references (for the numeric references, just stick a number ahead of the reference) and the other is the style approved for MLA references.

Be careful when doing MLA references. The style is quite exact, with no room for variation. If one of your instructors demands MLA-style references, you'll have to get them just right.

The alphabetic and numeric styles, though, are more flexible. Just be sure they include all the information required.

Italic type is used for book titles and some of the other information in these examples. If you are writing by hand, then substitute underlining. Some of the entries have **hanging indents**: the second and third lines in an entry are shifted right, so the author's name can be found easily in the list.

The next four pages give examples of long references.

• *Book*

Author and initial	Date	Title	Publisher	City
Sarcophagus, T.	(1941)	<i>Embalming Elephants</i> ,	Formalin Press,	Guelph

—MLA-style:

Author, first name spelled out	Title	City	Publisher	Date
Sarcophagus, Timothy.	<i>Embalming Elephants</i> .	Guelph:	Formalin Press,	1941

• *Chapter in a book*

	Chapter title in quotes	Section in regular type
Sarcophagus, T. (1941)	"Preparing the Hide,"	chapter 12 in
	<i>Embalming Elephants</i> ,	Formalin Press, Guelph
Book title in italics	Publisher	City

—MLA-style:

Sarcophagus, Timothy.	"Preparing the Hide."	<i>Embalming Elephants</i> .
	Guelph:	Formalin Press, 1941.
City	Publisher	Date

• *Item in a book of works by many authors*

Author	Chapter title in quotes	Section in regular type
Sarcophagus, T. (1949)	"Keep that elephant around,"	in <i>How to Preserve Your Pets</i> ,
	K. Rutter, Editor;	Panoply Press, London
Give name of editor (usually indicated by "Editor" or "Ed.") if shown on title page		

—MLA-style:

Sarcophagus, Timothy. "Keep that elephant around." *How to Preserve Your Pets*. Ed. Karen Rutter. London: Panoply Press 1949

- ***Journal article***

Article title in quotes, first word and proper nouns capitalized

Sarcophagus, T. (1956) "A new method of embalming Asian elephants," *Undertaker's Journal*, volume 59, number 7, pp. 490-567

Also give beginning and ending page numbers in the article

—MLA-style:

Sarcophagus, Timothy. "A new method of embalming Asian elephants." *Undertaker's Journal* 59.7 (1956): 490-567.

Volume number and issue number separated by a period, colon after date

- ***Mass-readership magazine article***

Sarcophagus, T. (1958) "Embalming elephants for fun and profit," *Popular Mechanics*, October 1958, pp. 78-80

Give month and year of issue, and beginning and ending pages

—MLA-style:

Sarcophagus, Timothy. "Embalming elephants for fun and profit." *Popular Mechanics*. Oct. 1958: 78-80.

- ***Web page***

Sarcophagus, T. (1998) "*Digital methods for embalming elephants*," <http://www.undertakersj.org/1998/sarcoph.html>, retrieved 15 Nov 98.

Give complete web address and exact date you retrieved the information.

Most web browsers automatically underline addresses, which is okay in alphabetic or numeric styles, but not in the very restrictive MLA style.

—MLA-style:

Sarcophagus, Timothy. "*Digital methods for embalming elephants*." <http://www.undertakersj.org/1998/sarcoph.html>. Retrieved Nov. 15, 1998.

- ***Non-literature item (film, video, audio, photograph, speech, etc.)***

Give nature of the item

Sarcophagus, T. (1960) *Elephant Burial Mounds of Tibet*, film by Canadian Broadcasting Corporation Educational Services, Toronto

—MLA-style:

Sarcophagus, Timothy. *Elephant Burial Mounds of Tibet*. Film by Canadian Broadcasting Corporation Educational Services. Toronto: 1960.

- ***Unpublished item (dissertation, private report, one-of-a-kind document)***

Sarcophagus, T. (1939) *A Practical Method of Embalming Elephants*, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Dept. of Pachyderm Studies, University of Toronto **Give nature of the item and where to find it**

—MLA-style:

Sarcophagus, Timothy. *A Practical Method of Embalming Elephants*. Diss. U of Toronto, 1939.

- ***Personal communication (letter, telephone call, interview)***

Give nature of the item and business address

Sarcophagus, T. (1964) Letter to the author on mummification of elephant skin, Dept. of Pachyderm Studies, University of Toronto

—MLA-style:

Sarcophagus, Timothy. Letter to the author on mummification of elephant skin. 14 Nov. 1964. **Give the date of the letter**

- ***Multiple-author work (up to three authors)***

In this case you need to identify the main author, also called the “senior author.” This person’s name typically appears higher on the title page than the names of the other authors, also called “junior authors.”

Main author listed first, other authors after. Note order of initials and use of semicolon

Sarcophagus, T.; D. Lited and B. Fuddled (1948) *Elephants for the Undertaking*, Knopf Publishers, New York

—MLA-style:

Note that MLA style does not use semicolon, and a comma is placed before the “and”

Sarcophagus, Timothy, Deedee Lited, and Bryan Fuddled. *Elephants for the Undertaking*. New York: Knopf, 1948.

- **Multiple-author work (more than three authors)**

Use “et al.” (short for “et alii,” meaning “and others”) instead of naming all the authors

Sarcophagus, T., et al. (1953) *More Elephants for the Undertaking*, Knopf Publishers, New York

—MLA-style:

Sarcophagus, Timothy, et al. *More Elephants for the Undertaking*. New York: Knopf, 1953.

- **More than one publication by the same author**

Whenever you list more than one item written by the same author, put the items in order by date of publication (oldest first) and omit the author’s name after listing the first item. Substitute a long dash, or three hyphens in a row if you can’t produce long dashes. Here is an example, in the alphabetic style:

Sarcophagus, T. (1944) “Elephants: what you always wanted to know but were afraid to ask,” *Undertaker’s Journal*, volume 47, number 9, pp. 351-359

— (1948) “Elephant mummies of ancient Egypt,” *National Geographic*, March 1948, pp. 34-41

— (1967a) “No one cares about elephants anymore,” *Undertaker’s Journal*, volume 82, number 11, p. 625

— (1967b) “A gratifying response from elephant lovers,” *Undertaker’s Journal*, volume 82, number 12, p. 951

Sarcophagus, T. and G. Whiz (1957) *Our Friend the Undertaker*, film strip by Young Canadians Productions Ltd., Winnipeg

Note how two or more publications in the same year are assigned “a,” “b” and so on. Use the “a” and “b” in the short references, too. Note also that publications by the author alone are listed before publications by the author plus other authors.

In the MLA style, the rules are similar: omit name and substitute a long dash or hyphens. Additionally, put a period after the hyphen, as shown on page 8. There is no need for “a,” “b,” etc.

If you’re doing numeric references, you seldom will have multiple publications by the same author listed together, but if you do, omit the name and use a long dash, as per the alphabetic and MLA styles.

10. What’s a “bibliography”?

Many writers call their lists of references “Bibliography,” which is incorrect in most cases. A bibliography, properly speaking, is a list of all the information sources on a particular subject, not just the books and articles used as references to back up the information in a particular paper.

Libraries keep bibliographies of published literature on many topics to help readers locate the literature they need, and these bibliographies typically contain hundreds of entries. This is not the same as the short list of references found at the end of a paper. So unless you are preparing a true bibliography, call your list of references “References,” not “Bibliography.”

The Modern Language Association likes to use “Works cited” as the heading for a list of references.

A **selected bibliography** is a short list of recommended books and other sources of information on a topic. Such bibliographies are often found in textbooks, which are usually written without using references.

Why would textbooks, which are supposed to be authoritative, be written without using references? It’s because textbooks are loaded with facts, sometimes two or three per sentence, and referencing all those facts would make a textbook very hard to read. Instead, a selected bibliography is usually placed at the end of each chapter under a heading such as “Further reading.”

Everyone knows that the author of a textbook is passing along borrowed information, and trying to do so accurately and well, so textbook authors are not thought of as plagiarists. In rigorous technical and academic writing, though (term papers, journal articles, dissertations), omitting references in favor of a selected bibliography is not permissible.

11. Summing up ...

Make your academic and professional writing *strong* by referencing anything that might possibly require it. Make your references clear, consistent and easy to follow. Use a standard referencing style.

*** BG 2003