

## Assignment writing guidelines

### A/ Preparing

- (i) Your lecture notes will give you the basic framework **ONLY** of the ideas, theories and concepts you will need to complete the assignment. These notes will therefore **NOT** be sufficient on their own. You will need to make use of the required reading, extra references and any other material you come across in the course of researching your assignment.
- (ii) When you are taking notes for your assignment, try and 'translate' what the author is saying into your own words. Don't just copy out huge chunks from other people's work, otherwise they will probably end up in your assignment with very little of the wording changed (which is plagiarism). Also try to think about what is being said from your own point of view - do you agree or disagree with the points that the author is making?
- (iii) Take down basic points from as many sources as you can manage and compare what the authors are saying as you are reading. There will be both similarities and differences in their views and it helps if you can begin to classify authors together.
- (iv) Try and only take down relevant points - authors don't (unfortunately!) write just so that students can write assignments and not everything you read will be useful to you. When you are taking notes, try and keep the assignment in mind – ask yourself how you can use this material in the assignment itself.
- (v) Remember, for referencing purposes, to take down page numbers of all the quotes you reproduce from other people's work, and full citation details for each source you use. See the referencing guidelines for details of how to reference academic work.

### B/ Writing

- (i) Make sure you have understood what the assignment is getting at and that you know how to complete it. In particular please be aware that no assignment will ask you just to write down everything you know about a subject area – instead it will require you to consider specific issues.
- (ii) When evaluating different viewpoints, make sure you give each a 'fair crack of the whip'. You can't produce a valid conclusion unless you have sorted through the arguments for each perspective in a balanced way - comparison often helps here.
- (iii) Try to stick to the introduction/ discussion/ conclusion format in your essay - ie, set the context of the essay and outline the structure of your argument, cover the relevant material, and then tie the discussion up by summarizing what has been said and offering **YOUR** opinion on what the question is asking about, based on the sources you have used.

- (iv) Make sure you 'operationalize your concepts' - a posh way of saying 'define the terms you use'. However, don't go overboard - only 'technical' terms (ie, that are not in common usage) need to be defined. In general, you should aim to write for a layperson – that is, someone who is not an expert in the area, but who will understand the relevant ideas if they are explained properly.
- (v) You should provide evidence for all the assertions that you make during your assignment; that is, make reference to ideas, theories and concepts, empirical research and/ or experience of your own which support your claims.
- (vi) Direct quotations are always good to see - they prove you have read the source in question for a start! However, again, don't go mad. A good rule of thumb is, if you can say it just as well yourself, then don't use a direct quotation - but if you do summarize what someone else is saying in your own words, don't forget that you still need a reference because this is an indirect quotation.
- (vii) Remember to cite the sources of **ALL** the ideas and quotations that you have used in-text. Also, don't forget to provide a full bibliography - and don't try and pad it out! Only list sources you have actually looked at. See the referencing guidelines, and ask for help if you are stuck.
- (viii) Try to write in a structured way - that is, make sure that one point links clearly to the next. If you need to move on to new material, then try using constructions like 'Moving on' or 'On a different issue' at the start of the new point. Also make sure you link the sections of your argument together, so that your assignment is not just a series of points. Linking points make an assignment flow better.
- (ix) You also need to try and paragraph properly. The most common tendency is to make paragraphs too short, which gives the assignment a bitty, fragmented feel. It is difficult to be prescriptive about paragraphing but the usual guidance is to end a paragraph when you have finished discussing a particular point. If you feel that your paragraph is getting too long, and you haven't come to the end of the point, then break off at a logical place and restart using a construction like 'Moreover', 'Furthermore', 'Additionally' etc., which makes it clear that you are still discussing the same issue. We also prefer you to use a **FULL BLANK LINE** to indicate a paragraph break.
- (x) Develop your points to make it clear what you are getting at - don't leave arguments 'hanging in mid-air'.
- (xi) Try not to be overly bombastic in your argument. Most if not all of the issues in the discipline of management are a matter of opinion - so try not to make it sound as if what you are arguing is the definitive viewpoint. There will almost always be another way to look at the issue.
- (xii) Please do not use sexist language. We **MUCH PREFER** gender inclusive language like he/ she, his/ her, they, them, their etc. to gender exclusive language like he, him, his etc. You should only refer to an individual as he or she (etc.) when you either know their gender or you are directly quoting someone who

uses sexist language (and even then [*sic*] might come in handy ... see the referencing guidelines). Also avoid insensitive terminology such as 'coloured person' when you mean 'person of colour' or 'queer' when you mean 'homosexual'.

(xiii) Don't be afraid to ask for help - but do so in plenty of time before the deadline!

You might also want to consult the Written Communication guidance which is available on the university web site at

<http://www.le.ac.uk/teaching/writtencommunicationguides.html>

### **Referencing guidelines**

What is detailed below is one version of the Harvard system of referencing. You need to read, learn, inwardly digest **AND FOLLOW** these rules on referencing. This is for three reasons - (a) it demonstrates a disciplined approach to your work (academic rigour); (b) it means you won't be accused of plagiarism because you have acknowledged your sources; and (c) anyone who reads your work will be able to follow up on citations which interest them. This is a fairly comprehensive guide, so follow it as closely as you can ... we would much rather you made an effort even if it is not perfect.

**NB** You may have been taught to reference in a different way from that detailed below, and this may be equally appropriate - check with me. Also remember that staff teaching on other courses may prefer a different style of referencing.

#### **A/ In-text referencing**

**ALL** sources, whether academic books, journal articles, newspaper articles, material from the Internet etc., must be cited in the main text of your assignment itself.

##### *Direct quotations*

(i) There are two kinds of in-text citation - firstly, a direct quotation, where you use the author's own words in your text and for which the format is as follows:

"Sociological discourse claims to be a knowledge of modern society, the mirror of modern society or the social." (Game, 1991: 20).

*or*

As Game (1991: 20) tells us: "Sociological discourse claims to be a knowledge of modern society, the mirror of modern society or the social."

So the necessary components are author - date of publication (ie, year) of source - page number.

(ii) Sometimes you might want to use a direct quotation which isn't taken from the original source - ie, that you have found in someone else's work. Here the format is as follows:

"A power relationship can only be articulated on the basis of two elements ... "  
(Foucault, cited in Game, 1991: 45).

*or*

As Foucault (cited in Game, 1991: 45) tells us: "A power relationship can only be articulated on the basis of two elements ... ".

Here the format is author - cited in - author of source where you found the quotation - date of publication of **THE SOURCE YOU HAVE READ** - page number in this source.

(iii) You can use dots, as in the Foucault quotation above, to show that you have not lifted the entire sentence from the source that you consulted. **NB** three dots is sufficient! Also you can use **SQUARE** brackets if you want to slightly alter the quotation from the way it appears in the source - for example:

"[Power relationships] can only be articulated on the basis of two elements ... ".

The brackets indicate that you have inserted your own words in place of the original author's. They can also be used for additional clarification, as in the following example:

"After Jon Entine made his accusations [that Body Shop products and policies were not as ethical as they appeared], I decided that we needed to take action as quickly as possible." (Roddick, 1997: 310).

(iv) Longer direct quotations (ie, more than about 40 words) should be separated out from the rest of the text. You can also single space long quotations (in a double spaced text) and/ or indent them to make them stand out.

(v) If there is emphasis in the original source, you should reproduce it when quoting - for example:

"This is not somehow to claim that gender should *not* be a central concept and object of study for organizational analysis, but that, in constituting it as central, power is being exercised in ways which would repay further analysis ... " (Grey, 1995: 50).

You can also add emphasis to a direct quotation, but make sure that you indicate that you have added this emphasis - for example:

"Thus the new grid of intelligibility is seen as desirable ... *it provides a more accurate picture of organizations.*" (Grey, 1995: 49 - emphasis added).

(vi) Always remember to use speech marks or some other form of notation to make it clear that certain sections of your argument are direct quotations.

(vii) [*sic*] can be used after a particular word in a direct quotation to mean 'so written'; ie, that this is the way that the author worded the original. This is often

useful, for example, when quoting an author who uses sexist language - such as 'he' or 'his' when speaking about a manager - to make it clear that these are their words and not yours. 'Sic' should be italicized and placed in square brackets.

(viii) You should also use the author/ date of publication/ page number format when citing the source of any diagrams or tables which you have reproduced from other people's work.

### *Indirect quotations*

(i) The second kind of in-text citation comes into play when you want to indicate that an idea or a concept has come from another source without using that source's own words – ie, where you are **SUMMARIZING** their thoughts **USING YOUR OWN WORDS**. You can do this as follows:

According to Game (1991), sociologists tend to fall into either the Action or the Structure camp and rarely has a theory combined the two.

*or*

Sociologists tend to fall into either the Action or the Structure camp and rarely has a theory combined the two (Game, 1991).

If more than one person has come up with this idea, you can string references together, as follows:

Many writers have argued that research is inevitably a subjective exercise (Knights and Willmott, 1989; Game, 1991; Knights, 1995).

This should be done **EITHER** in date of publication order (as above) **OR** in alphabetical order of author. Make sure you stick to one format and use it throughout.

(ii) Sometimes you might want to indirectly quote material which isn't taken from the original source - ie, that you have found in someone else's work. Here the format is as follows:

As McIntosh (1994) points out, Pateman's discussion of the contract makes extensive reference to prostitution.

*or*

Pateman's (cited in McIntosh, 1994) discussion of the contract makes extensive reference to prostitution.

**NB** if the ideas that you are indirectly quoting only appear once in the source, or only in a small section of the source, then it is a good idea to include the page number/s on which they appear, even though you are not reproducing the original words. In this case, the citation (Game, 1991) might become (Game, 1991: 50).

### *Other pointers*

(i) *ibid.*, meaning 'in the same place', can also be used to stand in for a citation where the citation is exactly the same as the one immediately preceding it. So (*ibid.*) used after a quotation would mean 'the same author, date and page number as the last citation'. Do not use *ibid.* under any other circumstances: it is only appropriate when you are quoting or using ideas from the same source several times without citations from other sources intervening in the mean time. Also, do not use *ibid.* to refer back to a citation on the previous page. It should be italicized and abbreviated.

(ii) *et al.*, meaning 'and others', should be used in in-text citations where there are **MORE THAN** two authors for one source. Like *ibid.*, it should be italicized and abbreviated. So, for example, (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 1997) would become (Saunders *et al.*, 1997). However, all authors should be listed **IN FULL** in the bibliography.

(iii) If there is no obvious author for a work that you are using - for example, an editorial piece in a newspaper - use the name of the publication (emphasized using italics, bold or underlining) in which the piece appears as the author - eg, (*The Guardian*, 1997). This also applies to the bibliography.

(iv) If you are citing authors in-text who have the same surname, it is common practice to include their initials or their first names to avoid confusion. Thus you might write something like:

Many commentators agree on the importance of understanding consumption in understanding contemporary Western society and suggest that it involves, in the key cases of shopping malls and theme parks, the creation of spaces where we can be entertained as we consume (see, for example, Campbell, B. (1984). Colin Campbell (1989) identifies the modern form of consumption as originating in the eighteenth century, amongst the middle classes.

(v) Beware of writing things like 'In 1979, Burrell and Morgan argued that ...' or 'A research study undertaken by Roy in 1960 ...' when what you mean is that the source you are citing was **PUBLISHED** in 1979 or 1960. Firstly, books and articles can take a while to be published, so that Burrell and Morgan may have constructed their arguments, and Roy may have undertaken his research, a good deal earlier. Secondly, classic books in particular are often printed in several different editions, many of which post-date the death of the author! So if you read something by Weber which was published in 1994, this means it came out some 74 years after his death.

(vi) With regard to date of publication for a book, be careful of the difference between a reprint and a new edition. A reprint is simply another print run of the book when the original numbers printed have been sold - no changes are made to the book in this instance. Some books will detail numbers and dates of reprints in the front. However, the date that you should use in citations (in the text **AND** the bibliography) is the date when the edition of the book that you are using was first published, **NOT** reprinted. New editions are published when the author has made amendments to the original book. Therefore be sure in this instance that the date you

are using for citations is the date that pertains to the edition of the book that you are using.

(vii) If you happen to be using material for which there is no date of publication, the in-text citation becomes (author's name, n.d.) - the n.d. stands for No Date - and 'n.d.' would also be used in the appropriate place in the bibliographic citation.

(viii) Internet sources, whether you are quoting directly or indirectly, should be referenced in-text as follows:

*(West Legal Directory, accessed 21<sup>st</sup> April 1999).*

That is to say, you need to include either the name (**NOT THE URL ADDRESS**) of the web page (emphasized using italics, bold or underlining) **OR** the author of the piece you are citing (where available) and the date you accessed the page.

(ix) Television programmes, again whether you are quoting directly or indirectly, should be referenced in-text as follows:

*(Under the Sun, 1998)*

So you simply use the name of the series of which the programme formed a part, or the name of the programme itself if it was a one-off (whichever you use, it should be emphasized using italics, bold or underlining), and the year of transmission.

## **B/ The bibliography**

You also need to provide a comprehensive bibliography at the end of your assignment - a list of all the books, journal articles etc. you have used to write your assignment.

(i) The list should be presented in alphabetical order of author's surname. Please note that Mc should be treated in the same way as Mac in a bibliography, because it is an abbreviation of Mac. Check the local phone directory if you're not sure on this one! Also, if you have read more than one work by the same author, present them in chronological order, like so:

Chia, R. (1994) 'The concept of decision: a deconstructive analysis', *Journal of Management Studies*, 31 (6): 781-806.

Chia, R. (1996) *Organizational Analysis: A Deconstructive Approach*, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.

If you happen to be using works published by the same author in the same year, then you need to use the following format. Say you were using the following sources by Baudrillard, both of which were published in 1993:

Baudrillard, J. (1993) *Symbolic Exchange and Death*, London: Sage.

Baudrillard, J. (1993) *The Transparency of Evil: Essays on Extreme Phenomena*, London: Verso.

Also imagine that you had made reference in your text to ideas from *Symbolic Exchange and Death* first, and only later to ideas from *The Transparency of Evil*. All in-text citations for *Symbolic Exchange and Death* would then become (Baudrillard, 1993a) and all in-text citations for *The Transparency of Evil* would become (Baudrillard, 1993b). The two sources would then appear in the bibliography as follows:

Baudrillard, J. (1993a) *Symbolic Exchange and Death*, London: Sage.

Baudrillard, J. (1993b) *The Transparency of Evil: Essays on Extreme Phenomena*, London: Verso.

(ii) For books the following format should be used:

Game, A. (1991) *Undoing the Social*, Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

So you need author, date of publication, title of source, city of publication and publishers. The title of the book itself should be italicized, set in bold or underlined for emphasis. If the city where the book was published is not well known internationally (such as Englewood Cliffs, where Prentice Hall have a site in the US), or where there is more than one city of the same name (such as Cambridge), it is sometimes a good idea to include the state or county as follows:

Bandura, A. (1977) *Social Learning Theory*, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Greenberg, J. and Mitchell, S. (1983) *Object Relations In Psychoanalytic Theory*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

(iii) A chapter in an edited book should be cited as follows:

Brewis, J. (1994) 'The role of intimacy at work: interactions and relationships in the modern organization' in Adam-Smith, D. and Peacock, A. (eds) *Cases in Organizational Behaviour*, London: Pitman, pp. 43-50.

So the format is author, date of publication, title of chapter, editors, title of book, city of publication, publishers and page numbers of chapter. The title of the book itself should be italicized, set in bold or underlined for emphasis.

Remember that edited books as entire collections should only be cited separately in bibliographies if you have referred to the whole book in the text. Otherwise, only the individual chapters referred to should appear in the bibliography, as in the example above.

(iv) Articles in journals or periodicals should be listed as follows:



Willmott, H.C. (1984) 'Images and ideals of managerial work', *Journal of Management Studies*, 21 (3): 349-368.

The format here is author, date of publication, title of paper, name of journal/periodical, journal/periodical volume number and part number (or what stands in for volume and part number - eg, month of publication) and page numbers of article.

The title of the journal/periodical itself should be italicized, set in bold or underlined for emphasis.

(v) For newspapers, the format is similar to journal/periodical articles, but remember to include the actual day and month on which the piece was published. For example:

Ryle, S. (1997) 'It makes you sick, this restructuring', *The Guardian*, 22nd April: 24.

The title of the newspaper itself should be italicized, set in bold or underlined for emphasis.

(vi) For conference papers, use the following format:

Brewis, J. (1993) 'Foucault, politics and organizations: (re-)constructing sexual harassment', paper presented to the *11th Standing Conference on Organizational Symbolism*, EADA, Barcelona, Spain, July.

The format here is author, year of presentation, title of paper, name of conference, location, city and country in which the conference was held and month of presentation. The name of the conference should be italicized, set in bold or underlined for emphasis.

(vii) If you use material from the Internet, the web page should be listed in the bibliography with title or author (where available) of the relevant piece first. You need to make it clear that this is an online source and the URL address and the date on which you accessed the page should also be included in the citation. For example:

*West Legal Directory* 'Sexual harassment'. Online. Available at: <http://www.wld.com/conbus/weal/wsexhara.html> (accessed 21st April 1999).

(viii) Television programmes should be listed in the bibliography as follows:

*for a single programme*

*Under the Sun* (1998) 'What sort of gentleman are you after?', Scores Associates/BBC Bristol, 1 programme (45 minutes), 7th January, director: Jane Treays.

The format here is name of series (italicized, set in bold or underlined for emphasis), year of transmission, name of programme, producers, clarification that it was a single programme, length of transmission, date of transmission and director's name. For a single programme that is not part of a series, simply emphasize the name of the programme and use that upfront.

*for a series*

*Vice: The Sex Trade* (1998) London Weekend Television, 3 programmes (180 minutes), director: Jeremy Phillips.

The format here is similar except that there is no reference to the names of any individual programmes or to dates of transmission.

(ix) In the case of unpublished work such as a report or a dissertation, full details of the source should also be given in a bibliography. For example:

Baker, S. (1997) *Bullying at Work*, unpublished BA Business Studies Student Dissertation, University of Portsmouth.

**C/ And finally ...**

Please do ask for help if you need it - referencing can be difficult and confusing and we are happy to give advice.