



Reference once, reference properly.

A reference list is not decoration added after the argument. It is how a reader verifies your claims, how you give credit for work you did not do, and how the reading behind your argument becomes visible. This document gives the APA 7 patterns, a three-style comparison, and a checking routine to run before you submit.

1 Three reasons to reference, kept separate

Referencing is usually taught as a single idea — "do not plagiarise". It is at least three separate ideas, and keeping them apart makes the practice much easier to remember and to defend.

SO A READER CAN VERIFY

A reader who doubts a claim needs the source to find the page and check it. A citation is a route back to the evidence, not a name-drop.

TO GIVE CREDIT

The idea belongs to the person who published it. Using it without acknowledgement takes their work while leaving them the risk of being wrong.

TO SHOW THE READING

The list is evidence of what you actually read. It shows an examiner the depth behind the argument and where your position sits among others.

All three purposes are served by one short act: naming the source, in the text and in the list. A reader who can follow the trail back to the evidence is satisfied on all three counts at once — which is why the mechanics on the next pages matter more than they look.

2 The one-style rule — and why mixing fails

"One of the following methods should be used for the referencing and citation of published work in the dissertation or thesis"

UNZA, *Regulations and Guidelines for Postgraduate Studies* (2024)

The operative words are **one of the following**. You may choose a recognised style, but you apply it throughout the document. A piece of work that cites in two styles is not "nearly right": the inconsistency is itself an error, and it reads as carelessness about the origin of every claim. Choose the style in your first week and keep it to the last page.

Inconsistency shows up in small ways: an APA citation in one paragraph, a numbered marker in the next. Each is minor; together they suggest the writer did not know what they were doing.

SOURCE The University of Zambia. *Regulations and Guidelines for Postgraduate Studies*. Directorate of Research and Graduate Studies, February 2024. This rule is stated for the dissertation or thesis; for coursework, treat consistency as what examiners normally expect.

3 What "Harvard" actually is

"The University uses a variation of the Harvard referencing style called Leeds Harvard."

University of Leeds, *Leeds Harvard introduction*

"Harvard" is not one fixed system. It is a family of author–date styles, and individual institutions publish their own variant — with their own punctuation, their own handling of online sources, and their own layout of the list. "Harvard" on its own tells you very little; you need the variant your department names. APA 7 is a different author–date system, with its own fixed rules and its own published manual.

Practical consequence: do not trust a generic "Harvard" template from the internet. Find the sheet your school or department publishes, or the style your supervisor names, and copy its exact punctuation. Where none is named, any recognised style is defensible — provided you apply it consistently from start to finish.

SOURCE University of Leeds, *Leeds Harvard introduction*. The same logic holds for every named style: the institution, not the word "Harvard", fixes the details.

4 Two things that are not the same

IN-TEXT CITATION

A short pointer inside the sentence or at its end. In author–date styles it carries the author and the year so the reader can find the full entry in the list. Form: (*Dunlosky et al.*, 2013).

REFERENCE-LIST ENTRY

The full description of the source, given once at the end and arranged alphabetically. It carries everything a reader needs to locate the item: author, year, title, source and locator.

NOTE Every in-text citation must have a matching list entry, and every list entry must be cited in the text. A source that appears in only one of the two places is a fault on both sides: a claim with no route to its evidence, or a list padded with items you never used.



5 APA 7 — one worked pattern for each source type

The entries below use real items from the toolkit's source register wherever a matching type exists; where the register holds no example of a type, the standard APA form is shown with its required fields in place. Copy the details from your own source — never fill a gap with something plausible.

Source type	Reference-list entry
Book	Mayer, R. E. (2009). <i>Multimedia learning</i> (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511811678
Chapter in an edited book	Bjork, E. L., & Bjork, R. A. (2011). Making things hard on yourself, but in a good way: Creating desirable difficulties to enhance learning. In <i>Psychology and the real world</i> (pp. 56–64). Worth Publishers.
Journal article with a DOI	Roediger, H. L., & Karpicke, J. D. (2006). Test-enhanced learning: Taking memory tests improves long-term retention. <i>Psychological Science</i> , 17(3), 249–255. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9280.2006.01693.x
Web page	University of Leeds. (n.d.). <i>Leeds Harvard introduction</i> . https://library.leeds.ac.uk/info/1402/referencing/50/leeds-harvard-introduction
Corporate or organisational report	American Psychological Association. (2020). <i>Publication manual of the American Psychological Association</i> (7th ed.). https://doi.org/10.1037/0000165-000
Thesis or dissertation	Surname, A. A. (Year). <i>Title of the thesis</i> [Doctoral dissertation / Master's thesis, Name of University]. Name of repository or archive. URL
Statute or Act	Name of the Act, Source volume § Section number (Year). URL — in the APA legal-reference form, the title is not italicised.
Personal communication	Not listed at all. Cite it in the text only: (A. A. Surname, personal communication, Month Day, Year).

NOTE In a full APA chapter entry the editors' initials and surnames sit before the book title; take them from the book's own title page rather than guessing them.

6 Where the DOI or URL goes

"The DOI or URL is the final component of a reference list entry."

APA Style, DOIs and URLs

Nothing follows it — no full stop after the DOI, no "retrieved from". If an item has a DOI, give the DOI; give a URL only when there is no DOI. A reference that ends with something else has its terminal element in the wrong place.

7 In-text rules you will use most

Context	Rule	Example
Paraphrase	Give the author and the year; no page number is needed for a paraphrase.	(Cepeda et al., 2006)
Two authors	Name both, joined by & inside brackets or "and" in the running text.	(Roediger & Karpicke, 2006)
Three or more authors	First author then "et al.", from the very first citation onwards.	(Dunlosky et al., 2013)
Direct quotation	Add the page where the exact words appear; a quotation without a page is incomplete.	(Surname, Year, p. 00)
Source read at second hand	Cite the source you actually read, and name the original with "as cited in".	(Original, Year, as cited in Secondary, Year)
No author, no date	Use the title in place of the author and "n.d." for the year.	(<i>Leeds Harvard introduction</i> , n.d.)
Same author, same year	Add a lower-case letter to each, and match it in the list.	(Kobayashi, 2006a)

NOTE The letter that resolves two works from one year attaches in both places — the citation and the list entry. If it appears in one and not the other, the reader cannot tell the two items apart.



8 The same four sources in three styles

This is what actually changes when the style changes. APA 7 and Leeds Harvard are both author–date systems but punctuate differently; the numeric style, in the ICMJE tradition, replaces the author–date cue with a number that points to a numbered list.

Source	APA 7	Leeds Harvard	Numeric (ICMJE)
Book	Mayer, R. E. (2009). <i>Multimedia learning</i> (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press.	Mayer, R.E. (2009) <i>Multimedia learning</i> . 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.	1. Mayer RE. <i>Multimedia learning</i> . Cambridge University Press.
Journal article	Roediger, H. L., & Karpicke, J. D. (2006). Test-enhanced learning: Taking memory tests improves long-term retention. <i>Psychological Science</i> , 17(3), 249–255.	Roediger, H.L. and Karpicke, J.D. (2006) 'Test-enhanced learning: taking memory tests improves long-term retention', <i>Psychological Science</i> , 17(3), pp. 249–255.	2. Roediger HL, Karpicke J. Test-enhanced learning: taking memory tests improves long-term retention. <i>Psychological Science</i> . 2006;17(3):249–255.
Web page	University of Leeds. (n.d.). <i>Leeds Harvard introduction</i> . https://library.leeds.ac.uk/info/1402/referencing/50/leeds-harvard-introduction	University of Leeds (no date) <i>Leeds Harvard introduction</i> . Available at: https://library.leeds.ac.uk/info/1402/referencing/50/leeds-harvard-introduction (Accessed: date).	3. University of Leeds. <i>Leeds Harvard introduction</i> . Available from: https://library.leeds.ac.uk/info/1402/referencing/50/leeds-harvard-introduction [cited: date].
Chapter	Bjork, E. L., & Bjork, R. A. (2011). Making things hard on yourself, but in a good way. In <i>Psychology and the real world</i> (pp. 56–64). Worth Publishers.	Bjork, E.L. and Bjork, R.A. (2011) 'Making things hard on yourself, but in a good way', in <i>Psychology and the real world</i> . pp. 56–64.	4. Bjork EL, Bjork RA. Making things hard on yourself, but in a good way. In: <i>Psychology and the real world</i> . pp. 56–64.

NOTE Punctuation varies between published guides, so a detail that differs from your department's sheet is not necessarily wrong — but the *order of elements*, the italics and the position of the DOI are consistent. Follow the guide you were told to use.

THE SAME SOURCES AS IN-TEXT CITATIONS

Source	APA 7	Leeds Harvard	Numeric (ICMJE)
Book	(Mayer, 2009)	(Mayer, 2009)	[1]
Journal article	(Roediger & Karpicke, 2006)	(Roediger and Karpicke, 2006)	[2]
Web page	(University of Leeds, n.d.)	(University of Leeds, no date)	[3]
Chapter	(Bjork & Bjork, 2011)	(Bjork and Bjork, 2011)	[4]

9 Common errors a marker sees every session

Error	What is wrong, and the fix
Wrong order in the list	Entries are not alphabetised by the author surname. Arrange A–Z by the first element of the entry.
Missing italics	Journal name, volume number and book title take italics; article titles and chapter titles do not.
Initials instead of full first names	Author–date styles use initials (Mayer, R. E.), but never write a full first name where initials belong.
A stray full stop after a DOI	The DOI or URL is the terminal element; adding a full stop breaks it.
Citing a citation	You cite the source you read. If that source quoted another, name the original with "as cited in".
Alphabetising wrong	Sort letter by letter, ignore "Mc" spacing claims, and alphabetise an unknown author by its title.
et al. misuse	Two authors are always both named; "et al." is for three or more, and then from the first citation.
Hyphens in page ranges	A page range takes an en dash (249–255), not a hyphen.
Capitalisation in titles	Article and book titles use sentence case — only the first word and any proper noun are capitalised.
Lecture slides cited as published	Slides are not a published source. Cite the underlying reading, or treat the slides as unpublished teaching material.
Text and list out of step	A citation with no matching entry, or an entry that is never cited. Check both directions.
Reference list versus bibliography	A reference list holds only the works you cited; a bibliography may list everything you read. Give the one the assessment asks for.
Volume or issue missing	Journal entries need the volume in italics and, where given, the issue in brackets; without them the item is hard to find.



10 A specimen reference list (APA 7)

Twelve entries, alphabetised, in the hanging-indent layout APA 7 expects. Each is a real item from this toolkit's source register.

American Psychological Association. (2020). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.). <https://doi.org/10.1037/0000165-000>

Bjork, E. L., & Bjork, R. A. (2011). Making things hard on yourself, but in a good way: Creating desirable difficulties to enhance learning. In *Psychology and the real world* (pp. 56–64). Worth Publishers.

Bureau International des Poids et Mesures. (2019). *The International System of Units (SI)* (9th ed.). <https://doi.org/10.59161/AUEZ1291>

Cepeda, N. J., Pashler, H., Vul, E., Wixted, J. T., & Rohrer, D. (2006). Distributed practice in verbal recall tasks: A review and quantitative synthesis. *Psychological Bulletin*, 132(3), 354–380. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.132.3.354>

Dunlosky, J., Rawson, K. A., Marsh, E. J., Nathan, M. J., & Willingham, D. T. (2013). Improving students' learning with effective learning techniques. *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, 14(1), 4–58. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1529100612453266>

International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry. (2023). *Quantities, units and symbols in physical chemistry* (Green Book, 4th ed., abridged). RSC Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1039/9781839163180>

Karpicke, J. D., & Blunt, J. R. (2011). Retrieval practice produces more learning than elaborative studying with concept mapping. *Science*, 331(6018), 772–775. <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1199327>

Kobayashi, K. (2006). Combined effects of note-taking/-reviewing on learning and the enhancement through interventions. *Educational Psychology*, 26(3), 459–477. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01443410500342070>

Mayer, R. E. (2009). *Multimedia learning* (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511811678>

Rasch, B., & Born, J. (2013). About sleep's role in memory. *Physiological Reviews*, 93(2), 681–766. <https://doi.org/10.1152/physrev.00032.2012>

Roediger, H. L., & Karpicke, J. D. (2006). Test-enhanced learning: Taking memory tests improves long-term retention. *Psychological Science*, 17(3), 249–255. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9280.2006.01693.x>

University of Leeds. (n.d.). *Leeds Harvard introduction*. <https://library.leeds.ac.uk/info/1402/referencing/50/leeds-harvard-introduction>

ONE ENTRY, REPAIRED

Weak: Roediger, Henry L. and Karpicke, J. Test-enhanced learning. *Psychological Science* pp 249–255. doi 10.1111/j.1467-9280.2006.01693.x

Faults: full first name; "and" where the list needs an ampersand; missing volume and issue; hyphen instead of en dash in the page range; DOI not written as a full link.

Repaired: Roediger, H. L., & Karpicke, J. D. (2006). Test-enhanced learning: Taking memory tests improves long-term retention. *Psychological Science*, 17(3), 249–255. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9280.2006.01693.x>

11 The same twelve, cited in running text

Retrieval practice improves long-term retention (Roediger & Karpicke, 2006) and produces more learning than concept mapping (Karpicke & Blunt, 2011), while practice testing and distributed practice earn the highest utility ratings among study techniques (Dunlosky et al., 2013; Cepeda et al., 2006). Notes contribute to learning when they are both taken and reviewed (Kobayashi, 2006), and extraneous material hinders it (Mayer, 2009). Hard, effortful study is worth it (Bjork & Bjork, 2011), and sleep consolidates what was learned (Rasch & Born, 2013). Report units and significant figures to the agreed standards (Bureau International des Poids et Mesures, 2019; International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry, 2023), and remember that "Harvard" itself is an institution's variant (University of Leeds, n.d.). Formatting follows the published manual (American Psychological Association, 2020).

NOTE Every one of the twelve list entries above appears here as a bracketed citation, and every citation here has an entry. That two-way match is the test to apply to your own work.

12 Twelve checks before you submit the list

- **One style throughout.** No second style has crept in on any page.
- **Alphabetical.** Entries sort A–Z by the first element.
- **Every citation has an entry** — check the text, not just the list.
- **Every entry is cited** somewhere in the text.
- **Italics correct.** Journals and book titles italic; article and chapter titles not.
- **DOIs complete and terminal.** No full stop after a DOI.

- **Authors formatted right.** Initials, ampersand, and "et al." used correctly.
- **Years present,** with "n.d." only where there genuinely is no date.
- **Page ranges use en dashes** and the right pages.
- **Titles in sentence case,** with proper nouns preserved.
- **Sources you did not read** are handled as secondary citations.
- **No lecture slides** presented as if they were published sources.

SOURCE FOR THE STYLES APA 7: American Psychological Association (2020). Leeds Harvard: University of Leeds, *Leeds Harvard introduction*. Numeric: International Committee of Medical Journal Editors, *Recommendations for the Conduct, Reporting, Editing, and Publication of Scholarly Work in Medical Journals* (current version updated January 2026).