Using your reading in your writing

Whenever you write about an idea which is not your own, you need to make sure it is clear where you read that idea and this is referred to as citing your reference e.g. (Smith, 2007). This means your reader will know where the idea came from and when they look at your Bibliography or Reference List they will be able to find the information needed to go and get that information source (for example they will be able to find out the title of the book written by Smith and published in 2007).

**Direct quotes, summarising and paraphrasing**

Short direct quotes should be enclosed in quotation marks and can be included in the body of your text. Add the page number. For example:

Pelletier (2006, p109) indicates that “the Greeks invented tragedy first and arrived at comedy later”...

It is often considered good practice to indent substantial quotations as a separate paragraph. Substantial usually means a quotation which is more than one sentence or which is longer than 3 lines. However, please follow the advice from your tutors or in your course/module handbook on how to present your essay or report.

It is not necessary to include direct quotes to speak about an author’s written work. Instead you can summarise or paraphrase the ideas you have read about and this often makes your writing more concise, takes up less of your word count and can flow better for the reader. As with all writing, it takes practice to feel comfortable in writing like this.

Here is a made up example of how your reading can be integrated into your writing

Jones (2012) has recently put forward a new theory which suggests that … (summary of the new theory in your own words)... However, this has been criticized by Franks (2015), who says that …. (summary of Frank’s criticism in your own words)... Yet, very recently there has been an article (TES, 2017) which seems to suggest that recent research conducted (explain setting and research in your own words) could throw light on the issue of… (explain in your own words) which makes a useful psychological argument highlighting that (your own explanation) cannot be ignored if (your own words) is to be successfully implemented.

All information or ideas you refer to in your writing, which did not originate with you, need to be referenced to who first published them. Whether you are using direct quotes or paraphrasing in your own words the original source needs to be cited. The system used, unless your lecturer has advised you differently, is APA.

As a guide to formatting citations and referencing –

- short quotations usually integrate into your sentence (e.g. To quote from Smith, “…” (2010, p. 4).
• when you reference/cite a source the full stop goes after the bracket (see above).

• when you quote exact words, you need to use quotation marks “…” and include the page number where it was taken from (see above).

• long quotations (e.g. 3 lines or more) are indented in from the right and left hand margin and sit on their own line, single spaced and sometimes in italics but without quotation marks

• in your bibliography or reference list, individual entries (e.g. article, book or website) are single line spaced, but put a double line space between entries.

Find out more

Find more help and advice on how to use sources in your writing through The Bridge website https://blogs.shu.ac.uk/thebridge/writing-resources/ You can also book onto a workshop or writing forum to help you with your academic writing and referencing.

More advice on referencing is available at http://libguides.shu.ac.uk/referencing

* Reference list - A list at the end of your work which includes details of each source you have quoted or referred to in the body of your text.

Bibliography - A list at the end of your work which includes details of each source you have used in your research for your work, whether you have quoted or referred to them in the main body of your text, or not.