

# Reference List Checklist

## A comprehensive guide to ensure your references are correctly formatted

This checklist will help you verify that your reference list meets academic standards and follows your university's requirements.

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### General Formatting

- ☐ All references are arranged in **alphabetical order** by author's surname (except for numbered styles like Vancouver)
  - ☐ Reference list has the appropriate title ("References," "Bibliography," or "Works Cited" depending on style)
  - ☐ Consistent formatting is used throughout (font, spacing, indentation)
  - ☐ Each reference uses a **hanging indent** (first line starts at margin, subsequent lines indented)
  - ☐ Every source cited in the text appears in the reference list
  - ☐ Every entry in the reference list is cited at least once in the text
  - ☐ No sources appear in the reference list that aren't cited in the text (except in a bibliography)
  - ☐ Capitalization follows the required style (title case vs. sentence case)
  - ☐ Italics are used correctly and consistently for titles of books, journals, etc.
  - ☐ Punctuation (commas, periods, colons, etc.) follows the required style exactly
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### Source-Specific Checks

#### Books

- ☐ Author names are in the correct format (surname first, then initials)
- ☐ Multiple authors are listed in the correct order with correct connector ("and" or "&")
- ☐ Publication year is in parentheses (for author-date styles)

- ☐ Book title is in italics
- ☐ Edition number is included (if not the first edition)
- ☐ Place of publication and publisher are included and separated correctly

## **Journal Articles**

- ☐ Author names and year are formatted correctly
- ☐ Article title is in 'single quotes' (or without quotes, depending on style)
- ☐ Journal title is in italics
- ☐ Volume number is included (and in correct format - italics or not, depending on style)
- ☐ Issue number is in parentheses (or formatted per style guidelines)
- ☐ Page range is included with correct prefix (pp. or appropriate alternative)
- ☐ DOI is included when available (with correct format, including <https://doi.org/> prefix if required)

## **Websites and Online Sources**

- ☐ Author/organization name is included when available
- ☐ Year of publication or last update is included
- ☐ Title of webpage/document is formatted correctly (italics or quotes as appropriate)
- ☐ Complete URL is included (without underline if printed)
- ☐ Access date is included in the required format ("Accessed: 15 March 2025" or appropriate alternative)
- ☐ URL is still active and accessible (check before submission)

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## **Style-Specific Checks**

### **Harvard Style**

- ☐ Authors' names format: Smith, J. (comma after surname, periods after initials)
- ☐ Year in parentheses after author names: Smith, J. (2022)

☐ 'Article titles' in single quotes, Book/Journal titles in italics

☐ Page ranges with "pp." prefix: pp. 45-67

☐ "Available at:" and "Accessed:" for online sources

### **APA Style (7th Edition)**

☐ Authors' names format: Smith, J. (period after initial)

☐ Year in parentheses after author names: Smith, J. (2022).

☐ Only book/journal titles in italics (not article titles)

☐ Issue number in parentheses and italicized with volume: 45(2)

☐ DOIs formatted as <https://doi.org/xxxxx>

☐ Retrieval dates only included for content that changes over time

### **MLA Style (9th Edition)**

☐ Authors' names format: Smith, John. (full first name, period after name)

☐ No parentheses around dates, which appear near end of citation

☐ Book and journal titles in italics

☐ Article titles in "double quotes"

☐ Volume and issue format: vol. 45, no. 2

☐ Page ranges with no prefix: 112-28

☐ URLs without "http://" or "https://" and no access dates

### **OSCOLA (Law)**

☐ Authors' first names appear as initials only

☐ No punctuation between author name elements: Smith J

- ☐ Book titles in italics with publication information in parentheses
  - ☐ Journal article format includes volume, journal name (italics), first page
  - ☐ Cases and legislation formatted according to OSCOLA rules
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## Final Checks

- ☐ Reference list is on a separate page at the end of your document
  - ☐ All URLs are unbroken and don't contain long tracking parameters
  - ☐ No personal information appears in URLs (e.g., institutional login details)
  - ☐ Special characters display correctly (particularly in foreign names or titles)
  - ☐ No typos or spelling errors in names, titles, or other reference elements
  - ☐ No orphaned punctuation marks at the beginning of lines
  - ☐ Page numbers in the document header/footer don't interfere with reference layout
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## Citation Tools

Need help with your references? Try these free citation generators:

- **BibGuru:** [www.bibguru.com](http://www.bibguru.com) - Free with no signup required, supports UK university styles
- **ZoteroBib:** [zbib.org](http://zbib.org) - Quick references without an account
- **Cite This For Me:** [www.citethisforme.com](http://www.citethisforme.com) - Good for UK styles
- **Mendeley Reference Manager:** [www.mendeley.com](http://www.mendeley.com) - Full reference management
- **Zotero:** [www.zotero.org](http://www.zotero.org) - Comprehensive reference manager

Remember: Always double-check automatically generated citations against your university's specific guidelines.

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