

## Referencing Conventions for Academic Papers

**Основы научного цитирования : метод. пособие для студентов и магистрантов, обучающихся по спец. 1-23 01 04 "Психология" / Т. О. Куликович. - Минск : БГУ, 2010. - 58 с**

### (Extract)

All academic papers involve referencing. These can be references to sources of materials or specific results, ideas and conclusions taken as the basis for issues, tasks and questions considered in the given academic paper. Referencing enables to check the sources and verify the presented information, and obtain the core information about such sources (their scope, language, content).

Providing references in academic papers is mandatory in the following cases:

- Copying text passages, formulas, tables and illustrations;
- Reproducing passages, formulas, tables, illustrations, etc. non-verbatim;
- Rephrasing someone else's text;
- Analysing the content of other publications;
- Directing the reader to other publications where the material under study is presented in more detail.

Failure to cite the source constitutes copyright violation, and improper citation is regarded as a major mistake. All sources listed in the bibliography must be cited in the text of the academic paper.

Quotations from and references to sources not listed in the bibliography, and vice versa, constitute a major mistake.

The bibliographic scope of an academic paper is judged by the quality of cited sources. Most importantly, sources must be credible and relevant to the research topic. The most credible sources are latest academic articles and monographs (including foreign ones). The author's credentials and the journal's reputation must be taken into account when deciding whether to cite an article.

An overview of theoretical background of the research topic must demonstrate knowledge of seminal papers in the given field. To identify the most known scientific works in the given field, consult reference guides, textbooks, bibliography of academic articles and monographs, or ask the academic supervisor.

### **Points to Consider:**

- If the same source is reissued several times, provide reference to its latest edition. Earlier editions should be referenced only if they contain crucial data not included into later editions.
- Citing reference guides and textbooks in an academic paper should be reduced to a minimum. Avoid citing popular publications and sources whose author cannot be identified, even if they contain information relevant to the topic.
- Quality and credibility of a source can be identified by its title, information about the author and publication, as well as its formatting and style.
- Do not include references to online publications if the same materials are available in a paper copy.
- References imply that you have personally studied the source cited and can, if necessary, discuss its content in an academic setting (for instance, during the defence).
- When using theories, ideas, arguments or research results produced by other authors, always include references to the author and source of the information used.
- Always cite the source of graphic elements (tables, charts, illustrations, photos, etc.) or empirical data (including unprocessed source data) you reproduce in your paper.



- Sometimes it may be necessary to draw the reader's attention to a large bulk of sources that cannot all be cited in the text. In this case, only the latest or most known works should be cited, and the readers should be advised to consult other source on their own.

### **Guidelines and Recommendations for Proper Citation in an Academic Paper**

1. Always indicate both the last name and initials of the author you cite. Unfortunately, this recommendation is often ignored in academic literature and textbooks. If you cite from a secondary source where the in-text reference does not state the author's initials, check the bibliography, or look them up in other sources (in particular, the Internet).
2. The author's initials should be put before the last name.
3. Do not write first names of cited authors in full, even if they are well-known (S. Freud, not Sigmund Freud, etc.). All references must have the same format, with the initials and last name of the author.
4. It's not advisable to start a new paragraph with the initials and last name of the author cited (this recommendation may be waived).
5. Make sure that you use the right declination of the cited author's surname depending on their gender (even textbooks often overlook this).
6. Take care not to mistake the cited author for another person with the same last name, and not to cite twice the same scholar who has changed their last name or adopted a pseudonym.
7. Most common grammatical mistakes occur when citing female scholars whose last name and initials do not expressly indicate their gender.

The most common type of citation in academic works is paraphrase.

**Paraphrase** is a restatement of a quote (usually, a small passage) using other words, with a reference to the source. A paraphrase must not distort the original meaning of the text.

Paraphrasing without a reference to the source, or copying the text word for word without putting it in quotation marks constitutes plagiarism.

Paraphrasing in academic papers proves indispensable

- to convey a passage that is too long for a direct quotation;
- to summarize information from several sources;
- to describe in brief some theory, procedures or outcomes of a study referenced in the paper.

A paraphrase should be used to cite sources in a foreign language, when you're not sure if word for word translation would be of sufficient quality.

Use direct quotations to support your own findings with a reliable source or to conduct a critical analysis of some publication. Academic code of ethics requires an exact quote to be used in such cases, as even the slightest contraction of the original text may distort the meaning intended by its author.

### **General Referencing Requirements**

1. The text is copied word for word (following the author's choice of words and expressions) and placed in quotes.
2. Cited text must not be abridged randomly, and the meaning intended by the author must not be distorted.
3. Each quotation must be accompanied by a reference to the source formatted in accordance with the bibliographic requirements.



Overuse of direct quotations from other sources without any new comments or analysis to elaborate on them conveys the impression (and often rightfully so) that the academic paper lacks independent thought and research.

### Points to Consider:

- Avoid starting new paragraphs with a quotation or placing one quotation immediately after the other.
- Avoid quotes whose source is disputed or whose meaning is trite or a widely accepted fact.
- Use different referencing modes to avoid copying too much of someone else's text word for word. Direct quotations are necessary only when every aspect of the passage is important, including stylistic choices and intonation:
  - when the cited source provides a fresh approach to the issue, a concise definition or the author's take on the issue under study;
  - when a widely known quotation is used to support one's own views.
  - when the author's views are criticized or the most indicative and controversial points of the author's works are pointed out;
  - when the text itself is analysed, particularly, in regard to its style (for instance, in linguistics or literary studies);

In all other cases, a paraphrase can be used instead of a direct quotation.

It is advisable to opt for primary sources of information (monographs, academic articles, dissertations, etc.) when working on an academic paper. **Using secondary sources** seems justified only to explore the research topic at the initial stage and to establish a conceptual framework of the paper.

The two most common major mistakes when citing information from a secondary source are as follows:

- giving a reference to the primary source, as if the information was taken directly from it (any use of a secondary source is concealed, and only the primary source is included into the bibliography of a student paper);
- attributing the cited information to the author of a secondary source (in this case, the existence of the primary source is ignored, and only the secondary source is included into the bibliography of a student paper).

Both mistakes are unacceptable in an academic paper, as they lead to distortion of facts and appropriation of someone else's work. To avoid such mistakes, carefully study the referencing guidelines for secondary sources.

Students are responsible for checking primary sources of all quotations they use in their academic papers. If some crucial information is cited, its primary source should be checked even if it is not presented as an exact quotation. This will help to avoid repeating mistakes made by other authors citing the source, to acquire a better understanding of the author's views, and to check how accurately they have been conveyed.

The academic code of ethics prescribes personal analysis of cited works: texts should be cited as primary sources only if you have studied them personally. Failure to mention a secondary source (if the data was actually taken from it) constitutes plagiarism, as it discounts research and analysis conducted by the author of the secondary source.

A reference to a primary source is impossible in the following cases:

- The primary source is lost and cannot be recovered.
- The primary source is unavailable or difficult to access (for instance, it is stored in libraries or archives with restricted access).
- The cited text is taken from a recollection of the author's words by a third party.
- The primary source is written in a rare language that the student cannot translate.



- The author of a secondary source has come upon the cited information as a result of extensive literary research or archive work (for instance, some passage from a classical literary work). In this case, if the student personally checks the primary source indicated in the secondary source and provides a reference to this primary source only, it will convey a false impression that the student has personally conducted the literary research or archive work needed to identify this primary source.
- The quotation is taken to exemplify argumentation employed by the author cited (in this case, not the quotation itself is important, but the context in which it was used in the secondary source).

### **Points to Consider:**

- When citing information from a secondary source, provide details on both the primary and secondary source
- It is recommended to indicate the primary and secondary source in an introductory text to the quotation. The bibliography, however, should indicate only the secondary source where the information was found.
- References to works by foreign authors signal comprehensive exploration of the issue's theoretical foundation and extensive research on the student's part. As a rule, most academic papers must contain references to foreign sources.
- Exploring the latest international trends in the given field will not only help students to produce a scientifically relevant paper, but also engage them in the international academic dialogue and expose them to latest research.

However, many students tend to cite works by foreign authors only through secondary sources or translated textbooks. This may be due to uncertainty on how to cite foreign sources. Main referencing guidelines for foreign sources or works by a foreign author are provided below in order to eliminate any such uncertainty on their use.

### **Foreign Initials and Last Names**

Names of foreign authors must be indicated in the language of the academic paper, with the original spelling of the name in brackets. If a work by a well-known foreign scholar is cited in the paper, there is no need to indicate the original spelling of the name.

Refer to similar publications in Russian to check how the cited author's name is stated there. If the author has not been mentioned in Russian publications previously, use standard transliteration rules to convert his/her name into Russian.

### **Points to Consider:**

In the bibliography, the names of foreign authors, titles of foreign publications and other information pertaining to them must be stated in their original language.

### **Citing Foreign Terms**

Foreign terms cited in an academic paper must be in the language of the paper. First, check how the term is translated in Russian-language publications. If there is no translation or the existent translation is inaccurate, propose your own translation (existing translations of the term must be discussed, and the reason for providing a different translation must be expressly stated).

If special terms are not widely known or used for the first time, put the original term in brackets, next to its proposed translation.

### **Quotations from Sources in a Foreign Language**



Quotations from sources in a foreign language should be translated into the language in which the paper is written. If you are not sure that the translation is accurate, use a paraphrase instead. Using machine translation for quotations from foreign sources is inadvisable. If you are not sure about translation of names and terms, consult your academic supervisor or a teacher of the corresponding language.

### **Self-Citation**

If the given paper draws on your previous research that was published, it should be referenced properly. Referencing to one's own works and listing them in the bibliography is a common practice. It prevents self-plagiarism and repetition of the information published previously, and makes the readers aware of other works by the same author that might be of interest to them. Just as citing other authors, self-citation must be justified and relevant in the context of the given academic paper.

### **Citing Laws and Regulations**

Laws and regulations must be cited from official sources; use of secondary sources is inadvisable.

Make sure that you cite laws and regulations in their latest edition effective at the time of paper preparation. Sometimes it may be beneficial to consult a professional to ensure appropriate referencing.

### **Citing Fiction**

Classic literature should be cited using reputable editions (collected works, complete works, etc.). Depending on the purpose of the paper, earlier editions (published in the author's lifetime) may be used, for instance, when the text differs depending on the edition.

### **Changing the Text, Commenting and Abridging Quotations**

The strict requirement to reproduce a quoted passage word for word can be waived in the following cases:

- Changing spelling and punctuation in texts published before the 20<sup>th</sup> century.
- Expanding shortened words. The added fragments must be put in square brackets. Shortenings should be expanded only if it would be hard for readers to understand the quotation otherwise.
- Changing grammatical forms of words in a quotation to ensure concord with the rest of the text outside the quotation marks.
- Pointing out typos and errors in the cited document. In this case typos and mistakes made by the author are not corrected, but a question mark (?) or a correct word is put in brackets after them.

