Setting Out References

How to reference in the Vancouver Style

A guide prepared by Philson Library Information Services staff

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BACKGROUND TO REFERENCING

When writing essays or articles, you must support your statements and opinions with references to the scientific research studies on which they are based. Those reading your work may wish to follow up this previous research, so you must provide details for each reference sufficient to differentiate the item you are citing from others - such as articles by the same author or articles with a similar title. Providing references is also important because failure to attribute (reference) your sources of information may be seen as plagiarism.

There are many different styles of identifying and setting out references. The **Vancouver style** (Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals) is recommended by the International Committee of Biomedical Journal Editors, and may be used when submitting an article for publication in a range of biomedical journals. Vancouver is a “numbered” style i.e. each reference you cite in the text of your document is identified by a consecutive number, with a full description of each reference in a numbered list at the end. This list may be called by a variety of terms - common ones are: “Literature Cited”; “List of References”; “References” or “Bibliography”.

This guide provides examples of different types of reference (journal articles, books etc), showing features of the Vancouver style such as layout and punctuation. It is based on two publications - “Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals: Sample References” (1) and “Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals: Writing and Editing For Medical Publication” (2). The Uniform Requirements are commonly known as the Vancouver style. Additional examples of references in this style have been provided by staff at the Philson Library, University of Auckland, together with an example of a piece of written text and list of references in the Vancouver style. For further general information on referencing in the Vancouver style, see section IV.A.9. References in the “Uniform requirements for manuscripts submitted to biomedical journals: writing and editing for medical publication” at: [http://www.icmje.org](http://www.icmje.org).

References:


Other Reference Styles

Students in some sections of the Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences may be asked to use other referencing styles - for example:

- The Auckland School of Medicine style – very similar to Vancouver, but modified to an “author-date style, in which the in-text citations give author’s surname and date; and the list of references is arranged alphabetically by author’s surname. There is a separate guide for this style.
- The APA (American Psychological Association) style – another author-date style. Philson has the full printed manual for this, entitled "Publication manual of the American Psychological Association", plus a shorter guide prepared by library staff.
- Details of these and other styles can be found on LEARN - click on Training and Help – Reference styles used in the University of Auckland.
VANCOUVER STYLE

Introduction:

References should be numbered consecutively in the order in which they are first mentioned in the text. Identify references in text, tables, and legends by Arabic numerals in parentheses. References cited only in tables or figure legends should be numbered in accordance with the sequence established by the first identification in the text of the particular table or figure. The titles of journals should be abbreviated according to the style used in Index Medicus. Consult the List of Journals Indexed in Index Medicus, published annually as a separate publication by the US National Library of Medicine. The list can also be obtained through the library's web site (http://www.nlm.nih.gov).

Sample references:

Articles in Journals

Note from Philson Library staff:
The basic elements needed for a reference to a journal article in the Vancouver style are:
- Author(s) name(s)
- Title of article
- Title of journal (abbreviated according to Index Medicus journal title abbreviations)
- Year of publication
- Month and day of publication (if available; note that there is an option not to include these, see no. 1 in the examples below)
- Volume number (if the journal has volume numbers)
- Issue number (if the volume has individual issues; note that there is an option not to include this, see no. 1 in the examples below)
- Page numbers

1. Standard journal article
List up to the first six authors; if the article has more than six authors, list the first six, followed by et al.

As an option, if a journal carries continuous pagination throughout a volume (as many medical journals do) the month and issue number may be omitted.

1-6-authors:

More than six authors:

2. Organization as author

3. Both personal authors and an organization as author
4. No author given
21st century heart solution may have a sting in the tail. BMJ. 2002;325(7357):184.

5. Article not in English

6. Volume with supplement

7. Issue with supplement

8. Volume with part

9. Issue with part

10. Issue with no volume

11. No volume or issue

12. Pagination in roman numerals

13. Type of article indicated as needed

14. Article containing retraction

15. Article retracted

16. Article republished with corrections

17. Article with published erratum

18. Article published electronically ahead of the print version

These examples have been omitted from this pamphlet to save space. For sample references of these types, go to this url: http://www.nlm.nih.gov/bsd/uniform_requirements.html
**Books and Other Monographs**

Note from Philson Library staff:
The basic elements needed for a reference to a **book** in the Vancouver style are:
- Author(s) or editor(s) name(s)
- Title of book
- Edition number (if other than first edition)
- Place (city) of publication
- Publisher's name
- Year of publication
- If the reference is to a specific part of a book (e.g. a single chapter, or one paper in a conference proceedings), details of the name of the author(s) of the chapter/paper, the title of the chapter/paper and the pages covered by the chapter/paper are also given (see examples 23 and 25 below).

19. **Personal author(s)**

20. **Editor(s), compiler(s) as author**

21. **Author(s) and editor(s)**

22. **Organization(s) as author**

23. **Chapter in a book**

24. **Conference proceedings**

25. **Conference paper**

26. **Scientific or technical report**

a) Issued by funding/sponsoring agency:
b) Issued by performing agency:
Russell ML, Goth-Goldstein R, Apte MG, Fisk WJ. Method for measuring the size distribution of airborne
Rhinovirus. Berkeley (CA): Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, Environmental Energy Technologies
of Energy.

27. Dissertation (or Thesis)
Borkowski MM. Infant sleep and feeding: a telephone survey of Hispanic Americans [dissertation]. Mount
Pleasant (MI): Central Michigan University; 2002.

28. Patent
Pagedas AC, inventor; Ancel Surgical R&D Inc., assignee. Flexible endoscopic grasping and cutting device

Other Published Material
29. Newspaper article

30. Audiovisual material
Chason KW, Sallustio S. Hospital preparedness for bioterrorism [videocassette]. Secaucus (NJ): Network for
Continuing Medical Education; 2002.

31. Legal Material
32. Map
Omitted from this pamphlet to save space - for sample references of these two types, go to this url:
http://www.nlm.nih.gov/bsd/uniform_requirements.html

33. Dictionary and similar references
(NB: This example shows how to reference a specific dictionary entry, in this case the word “Filamin”).

Unpublished Material
34. In press
Electronic Material

Note from Philson Library staff:
The basic elements needed for a reference to electronic material in the Vancouver style are as follows. However, the rules for electronic material are much less clear than for print items and in many cases details of all these different elements will not be given in the electronic item. Include as many as are possible/appropriate for the specific electronic item you are referencing.

- Primary responsibility (who produced the electronic material - person or organization)
- Title
- Type of medium (e.g. CD-ROM, internet site)
- Subordinate responsibility (other person(s) or organization(s) involved in producing the material)
- Edition
- Volume/issue designation (for serials)
- Place of publication
- Publisher’s name
- Date of publication
- Date last updated or revised
- Date of citation (i.e. the date on which you accessed the material. This is very important with things such as websites, which may be there one day and gone the next - either completely removed, or shifted somewhere else, or completely rewritten)
- Series
- Notes (physical description; accompanying material; system requirements; frequency of publication; language; other notes)
- url from which the material is available

35. CD-ROM

36. Journal article on the Internet

37. Monograph on the Internet

38. Homepage/Web site

39. Part of a homepage/Web site

Additional example of this type of reference provided by Philson Library staff:

(NB: This example indicates how to refer to a single datasheet on the MedSafe website - datasheet for the drug Voltaren).
40. Database on the Internet
Open database (i.e. a database which is being actively updated and maintained):

Closed database (i.e. a database which is no longer being updated or maintained):

41. Part of a database on the Internet

Additional examples of this type of reference provided by Philson Library staff

a) Drugdex

(NB: This example indicates how to refer to the entry for a single drug (Rivastigmine) in the Drugdex Evaluations part of the Drugdex database. Drugdex is a database to which an institution must subscribe in order for members of that institution to access it. The url indicates you accessed the database via the University of Auckland Library’s connection to it on LEARN. People who are not members of the University of Auckland cannot access Drugdex via this LEARN url).

b) Cochrane Systematic Review

(NB: Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews (CDSR) is a database to which an institution must subscribe in order for members of that institution to access it. The url indicates you accessed the database via the University of Auckland Library’s connection to it on LEARN. People who are not members of the University of Auckland cannot access CDSR via this LEARN url).
ADDITIONAL REFERENCE TYPES
Students frequently wish to reference a variety of other sources of information for which the Vancouver style does not give any examples. In this section, Philson Library staff have given some guidance, applying what seem to be the underlying principles of the Vancouver style; however, we cannot vouch for the complete accuracy or acceptability of this guidance. Check with the person who will be marking your assignment about whether it is acceptable to use these types of sources as references for your assignment.

Some general guidelines are given in section IV.A.9. References in the “Uniform requirements for manuscripts submitted to biomedical journals: writing and editing for medical publication” at: http://www.icmje.org, as follows:

Type of source you wish to reference:

a) Abstract (short summary) of a journal article
The general guidelines noted above state:
• “Avoid using abstracts as references” – i.e. the style expressly indicates this is not possible.

b) Emails and other personal communications - includes notes you have written down yourself during a lecture
The general guidelines noted above state:
• “Avoid citing a “personal communication” unless it provides essential information not available from a public source, in which case the name of the person and date of communication should be cited in parentheses in the text. For scientific articles, authors should obtain written permission and confirmation of accuracy from the source of a personal communication.”

This means that all details of the communication should be provided in the text of your document, and you do not provide a numbered reference at the end. It would also be wise to ask your assignment marker if it is acceptable to reference this type of material; and check with the lecturer whose lecture or other personal communication you are quoting that your notes accurately reflect what he/she said. Some possible ways of providing the in-text details would be:

“The head is connected to the spine by the neck (Professor John B Smith, lecture on anatomy of the head and neck, 18.5.2005).

“The head is connected to the spine by the neck (Professor John B Smith, emailed personal communication 18.5.2005)”.

c) Lecture notes and other print material provided by lecturers during a lecture, or as course notes:
In this case, you have the actual printed words produced by the lecturer (the same would apply to notes in electronic format e.g. on CD), so it seems likely that you should be able to cite these in the text of an assignment and provide a reference in the list of references at the end. However, check with the assignment marker; if s/he says it is acceptable to reference this type of material, this format should be adequate:

Smith JB. Anatomy of the head and neck [unpublished lecture notes]. University of Auckland, NZ; notes provided at lecture given on 18.5.2005.
(In this example, the lecturer provided a lecture title on the notes)

OR

Smith JB. [Unpublished lecture notes on anatomy of the head and neck]. University of Auckland, NZ; notes provided at lecture given on 18.5.2005.
(In this example, the lecturer did not provide a title on the notes, so you have indicated the subject of the lecture)
d) Unpublished reports of various types – e.g. summer studentships, elective reports:


EXAMPLE OF A PIECE OF TEXT AND REFERENCES IN THE V Anouver Style

Blood levels of total cholesterol and high density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol have well-established relationships to the future risk of ischaemic heart disease (IHD). (1, 2). Also, they are related to other important risk factors for heart disease such as alcohol consumption (3), cigarette smoking (4) and obesity (5).

References:


“CITED BY” REFERENCES

When citing an author’s work, you should have read the original. On occasions, this will not be possible, and you will only have access to another author’s interpretation of the original. In this case, you must make it clear that you are relying on someone else’s interpretation, so that you are not held responsible for any errors in that interpretation. Note that the authors of the Vancouver style do not allow this type of reference, and so do not give any examples of it. The example below has been provided by library staff.

Example of a “cited by” reference:


In this example, you have read the article by Stein et al, in which you have found a description of Wahlberg et al's technique. Because you are unable to get access to the journal Cryobiology to read Wahlberg's original article, you give a full reference to Wahlberg's article, but indicate that you are relying on Stein's description by use of the "Cited by" technique.
USING THE VANCOUVER STYLE WITH ENDNOTE

The following two problems occur with the Vancouver style template that comes with some versions of EndNote:

1) Full journal titles may appear in your list of references instead of the approved Index Medicus (IM) abbreviated journal titles.

   This problem can be addressed in different ways. Library staff have developed background information and guidelines about displaying abbreviated journal titles, available online at http://www.library.auckland.ac.nz/endnote/endnotevancouver.htm

2) An electronic reference type will not display correctly in your reference list or bibliography (e.g. with an Internet website the url does not display with the reference, and the updated date does not appear in the same square brackets as the date accessed/cited date).

   To address this problem, library staff have created an edited version of EndNote's Vancouver style template (called VancouverUOA.ens), which helps with some parts of the problem. The Vancouver style template is available online for downloading (ensure you read the information on the following webpage, before downloading):
   http://www.library.auckland.ac.nz/endnote/endnotevancouver.htm
   Or, go to LEARN >> Training & Help >> EndNote >> Styles >> New and Updated Styles

   You should also read the following information:

   The edited Vancouver UOA style template does not come on the EndNote CD
   The edited style has been produced by library staff and is designed to handle electronic materials better than the original Vancouver style (as well as print materials like books and journal articles), although it is still not perfect. Once you have followed the instructions above to save this new style into EndNote’s Styles folder (C:/Program Files/EndNote/Styles) use it instead of any of the other styles already on the EndNote CD.

Using EndNote in the Information Commons

If you are using EndNote in the Information Commons, you cannot save this style into EndNote’s Styles folder on an Information Commons computer, as the C: drive of those computers is locked.

Using EndNote to Reference Electronic Materials

Referencing electronic materials is difficult, whichever style you are using. EndNote Style templates prescribe which parts of the original reference in your EndNote library should be used to create a reference at the end of a document you are writing; they also prescribe the order in which those elements appear. Therefore, what comes out in the references at the end of a document depends on what has been put into the EndNote reference in your EndNote library, and which field it was entered into.

This has particular bearing on electronic references. EndNote 7 has only one "generic" reference type for electronic items, the "Electronic Source" reference type. This has to be used for many different types of electronic materials - whole websites, parts of websites, electronic databases, CD-ROMS etc etc.

EndNote’s Electronic Source reference type has many different fields; the ones that are used in making up a reference at the end of a document if you are using the VancouverUOA style template are:

Author;
Title;
Type of Medium;
City;
Publisher;
Year;
Last Update Date;
Access Year;
It is likely that you will not be able to put details in for all of these fields, as many electronic items (e.g. websites, databases) do not provide all these pieces of information. However, it is pretty important to fill in some of them, and to do it in the correct way - e.g.:

**Author** - there may or may not be an author (a person or organisation who is responsible for the content). Sometimes it is hard to differentiate between the author and the publisher. It doesn't matter if you put the same details into both the Author and Publisher fields; or you could leave the Author field blank.

**Title** - you should usually be able to find some sort of title – for the database, or the website, or part of a website etc.

**Type of Medium** - you have to decide on this and type the correct phrase into this field e.g. VancouverUOA style requires the phrase "homepage on the Internet" as part of a reference to a website, and the phrase "database on the Internet" as part of a reference to a database; these phrases should be typed into the Type of Medium field; other possibilities would be "monograph on the Internet"; "CD-ROM" etc.

**City** – this is the city where the publisher of the website/database/other electronic item is located, you may or may not be able to find this, leave blank if you can't.

**Publisher** - again, you may or may not be able to find this, and it may be difficult to distinguish from the author.

**Year** - there may or may not be a year of publication; if possible, put something either into this field, or into the **Last Update Date** field (see next); put details into both fields if you can find both.

**Last Update Date** - may differ from the year of publication, if you can find a date on which the item was last updated, type it into this field in the format of year, abbreviated month, day e.g. 2001 Aug 21

**Access Year** - this is the year in which you accessed this electronic item e.g. 2005

**Access Date** - this is the month and day you accessed this electronic item, put it in the format Aug 21 (or Jul 23, or Apr 5 etc)

**URL**: the www address where you accessed the resource (if it was on the Internet)