

Guidelines for citation or referencing

Time and time again, some students do not grasp the idea and need for correctly referencing their work. When you want to refer to an author's writing in your own writing, you have various choices available. Generally it is a good idea to use a variety of citation styles, but the following is intended to give you some idea of when to use which style.

A point to note is that citing a person's words or ideas does not necessarily mean that you believe these words or ideas to be true. The way you use citations should make clear the extent to which you believe the facts, or share the views, that are presented by the author.

For every sentence in your work you should always aim to make clear:

- Who owns the words or ideas – you or another author
- The place these words or ideas have in your argument and the extent to which you believe in them.

1. Non-integrated, direct quotation

Here you quote the very words used by that author. This can be a single sentence or several sentences. The term 'non-integrated' implies that the quotation is completely separate from other text, and not incorporated in a sentence containing words of your own. For example:

'The visual presentation of information has long been accepted as a superior alternative to, say, lists of figures.....Experience seems to indicate that icons work better than spoken or written language to convey many kinds of information' (Maddix 1990: 153).

And:

'The main disadvantage of diagrammatic representation is that it tends to require a large amount of memory' (Reid 1984).

Use this when you feel it is important to use the exact words of the author – when, for example, there is a danger that you might change the meaning if you combine the author's words with your own. Non-integrated direct quotations are useful when you want either to contrast the opinion of the author with your own or to reinforce your own opinion.

2. Integrated, direct quotation

This is where you use the very words of the author, but as part of a sentence of your own, for example:

Maddix (1990:154) emphasises the importance of the use of icons, claiming that 'experience seems to indicate that icons work better than spoken or written language'.

And:

Maddix (1990:154) later qualifies this view by pointing out that the use of icons does not work 'quite so well if more complex operations are to be performed.'

Use this when there are a few critical words that need to be quoted directly. This may simply be because you cannot think of an alternative way of expressing the idea, or because you want to emphasise the importance of these few words.

3. Use of non-integrated indirect quotations

Here you acknowledge the fact that you are using an author's ideas by putting a reference at the end of the appropriate sentence or section. The quoted author's name is not part of the sentence itself.

There is evidence that a significant disadvantage of the use of icons is the large amount of memory required (Reid 1984).

This is appropriate if you want to suggest that the information in the citation is a matter of fact. The problem with this form of citation is that it is not always clear where the citation starts.

You may be more likely to see citations of this type in scientific or technical writing.

4. Use of integrated indirect quotations

This is where the author of the cited text is referred to in the sentence.

Reid (1984) believes that a significant disadvantage of the use of icons is the large amount of memory required.

Use this if you want to suggest that the information in the citation is not necessarily a matter of fact. In the above example, it is Reid's belief – rather than fact – that a significant disadvantage of the use of icons is the large amount of memory required.

Citations of this type are more likely to be found in social scientific writing.

Different verbs to use in integrated indirect quotations

Your choice of verb is important.

It can suggest that you share the author's view. For example:

Reid (1984) demonstrates clearly that a significant disadvantage of the use of icons is the large amount of memory required.

And

Reid (1984) proves that a significant disadvantage of the use of icons is the large amount of memory required.

**It can suggest that there is room for doubting the validity of the author's view.
For example:**

Reid (1984) claims that a significant disadvantage of the use of icons is the large amount of memory required.

And

Reid (1984) argues that a significant disadvantage of the use of icons is the large amount of memory required.

Other formulations are:

Reid (1984) points out that...
Reid (1984) explains that...
Reid (1984) suggests that...
Reid (1984) is of the view that...

You can also contrast one author's view with that of another:

Reid (1984) suggests that....; however Maddix (1990) argues that...
Although Reid (1984) convincingly argues that..., Maddix demonstrates that....
Reid (1984) puts forward the view that.... On the other hand, Maddix (1990) writing several years later, claims that....
From a technical perspective, Reid points out that....; however Maddix puts forward the sociotechnical point of view, explaining that....