

HARVARD REFERENCING BASICS

In text citations

- Basic Format:
Always cite author(s) + year + page number inside brackets.
Example: (Smith 2022: 45)
- More than one author:
arrange alphabetically
- Direct Quotes:
If quoting directly, always include the page number.
Example: 'Quoted text' (Jones 2021: 15).
- No Comma Between Author and Year:
✗ Incorrect: (Smith, 2022)
✓ Correct: (Smith 2022)
- Paraphrasing:
When paraphrasing, a page number is recommended but not always mandatory.

Common mistakes to avoid

- Forgetting the page number for quotes.
- Adding a comma between author and year (don't!).
- Forgetting to italicise titles.
- Mixing up en dashes (–) and hyphens (-) for page ranges (use an en dash).
- Missing full stops at the end of each reference entry.

Reference list formatting

- Arrange entries alphabetically by author surname.
- Italicise titles for:
 - Book titles
 - Journal titles
 - Newspaper names
 - TV programmes or films
- Do not italicise:
 - Laws, Acts, government documents (use only plain text)

Example reference formats

Book:

Smith, J. (2022) *Media and Democracy*. London: Routledge.

Journal Article:

Brown, A. (2020) 'Freedom of speech in modern media', *Journal of Media Studies*, 15(2): 123–140.

Online article:

Taylor, R. (2023) 'The impact of digital journalism', *BBC News*, 21 May. Available at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/digital> (Accessed: 23 April 2025).

Act of law:

According to the Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998, employers must ensure...

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Final note

Always check if your department has slight variations on Harvard style.
Minor local adaptations are common.

Need a professional edit to polish your thesis or proposal?
Contact Lara Hierro, Accredited Text Editor (ATE). Reliable, ethical academic editing.

Source acknowledgment

This quick guide to Harvard Referencing Basics is based on conventions adapted from:

- University of Sheffield Library, Harvard Referencing Quick Guide
- University of Leeds Library, Harvard Referencing Guide
- University of Manchester Library, Cite Them Right: Harvard Style Guidance

Minor adaptations were made for consistency with UK/SA English and *New Hart's Rules* (NHR) style preferences.