University of Wolverhampton
Oxford Style Referencing
Full Guide

Based on OSCOLA (The Oxford Standard Citation of Legal Authorities)

July 2018

Skills for Learning
www.wlv.ac.uk/skills
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Why reference?

Referencing is an important academic skill that underpins your academic writing at university. You will be expected to acknowledge your sources of information by using the correct citations (quotations) and conventions – this means that you are required to cite (quote) the bibliographical references of all the cases, legislation, books, articles, etc. to which you have referred in your work. Referencing your work will show the marker/examiner that you have read widely around the subject and that your reading has informed and supported your work. Failure to reference your work properly will mean that your work lacks credibility and this will result in a lower mark and possibly even a fail grade. It may also result in an accusation of academic misconduct involving plagiarism or collusion.

The Oxford Standard Citation of Legal Authorities (OSCOLA) is the preferred referencing system for law and should be used by law students to cite legal materials, such as case law and Acts of Parliament. Students from other subject areas can use this guide to help them in law assessments but should not use the footnote system of referencing in other subject areas. A guide to Harvard referencing is available for help with citing non-legal materials.

This is intended as a quick guide to Oxford referencing, based on OSCOLA, with examples of how to reference the most commonly used law document formats. OSCOLA is produced by the Oxford Law Faculty and the full documentation is available from their website at https://www.law.ox.ac.uk/research-subject-groups/publications/oscola but please note that the 2012 version is 61 pages long.

The Oxford Law Faculty also maintain a Frequently Asked Questions webpage which discusses some more recent developments since OSCOLA was last updated – see https://www.law.ox.ac.uk/oscola-faqs. Please note that the suggestions listed may not yet have been approved by the OSCOLA Editorial Board.

In addition, there is a very useful tutorial on how to use OSCOLA at this address: https://lirb.cf.ac.uk/citingreferences/oscola/tutorial/

As a general point, very little punctuation is used in Oxford referencing. Full stops are only used at the end of a footnote.

You should cite references in two places:
- In the text of your work, using **footnotes**
- In a list at the end of your work (a **bibliography**)

Need help?

If you need help with the Oxford referencing system, please do not hesitate to ask the librarians within your campus library for assistance. You can also chat live online to a librarian using our 24/7 Assist service - http://www.wlv.ac.uk/lib/assist .

The University subscribes to Cite Them Right Online, a referencing support website that includes Oxford style – see https://www.citethemrightonline.com for more information.
Primary Sources

Statutes (Acts of Parliament)

A statute is cited by its short title (found in a section near the end of the statute) followed by its date, with no punctuation before the date and omitting ‘The’ at the start.

Example:

Human Rights Act 1998

You should refer to a statute by name and date in the text of your work and create a footnote (see 12 page of this guide).

Pinpoint (to identify a particular section and/or subsection)

There are various abbreviations used to indicate section/sub-section and paragraphs of the statute to be cited. The following example is a citation of section 47, sub-section 1, paragraph a of the Children Act 1989:

Children Act 1989, s 47(1)(a)

Statutory Instruments (SI)

Secondary or delegated legislation may take various forms, usually orders, rules or regulations.

A statutory instrument is cited by its short title and the year and serial number (where available). Do not use ‘The’ at the start or use any punctuation between the title and the date in the citation. A comma is given before the SI number.

Example:

Unfair Terms in Consumer Contracts Regulations 1999, SI 1999/2083

Bills in Parliament

Cite a Bill by its title, the House in which it originated, the Parliamentary session in brackets, and the running number assigned to it. Running numbers for House of Commons Bills are put in square brackets; those for House of Lords Bills are not.

Example:

Consolidated Fund HC Bill (2008–09) [5]
Academies HL Bill (2010-11) 1

References to Bills in progress should give particulars of the stage reached.

Example:

Second Reading, Lords, or as amended in Committee, Commons

Divisions of Bills are known as clauses (c.11). Once the Bill is enacted those clauses will be known as sections (s.11).
European Union legislation

Official notices of the EU are carried in the Official Journal of the European Union (abbreviated to OJ) so this should be referenced as the most authoritative source.

EU Treaties and Protocols
When citing EU treaties and protocols, give the title of the legislation, including amendments if necessary, followed by the year of publication [in square brackets], the OJ series and the issue /first page number.

Example:

EU Directives and Regulations
Cite Regulations and Directives by giving the legislation type, number and title, followed by the year [in square brackets], the OJ series and the issue /first page number.

Examples:

Case Law

You will need to refer to cases and cite them correctly as follows:

- The names of the parties in italics.
- Date of the case in brackets (see below).
- Volume number of Law Report (if applicable).
- Name or abbreviation of Law Report.
- Page number of the case.
- Abbreviation of the court where the case was decided.
- The page/paragraph number(s) of the passage you are referring to (often called the ‘pinpoint’) if applicable. Cite the first page of the article, comma, then the page(s) where information is to be found. Paragraph pinpoint numbers should go in square brackets.

Example:
\[R \text{ v Moloney} [1985] 1 \text{ All ER 1025}, \text{HL, 1026, 1028}\]

Criminal cases may be cited in either of the following ways:

\[R \text{ v Moloney} [1985] 1 \text{ All ER 1025, HL} \]
\[\text{Moloney} [1985] 1 \text{ All ER 1025, HL}\]

When referring to a case in the text of your work, use footnotes (full details can be found on page 12 of this guide).

Year (Brackets Rule)

You should note the importance of the distinction between square and round brackets. Where square brackets are used the year of the case is essential to locate the case in the relevant law report.

Example:
\[\text{Chapelton v Barry UDC} [1940] 1 \text{ KB 532}\]

Some law reports use round brackets. In this case the year is not relevant because the law reports (here the Law Times Reports) are numbered in consecutive volumes and, therefore, the year in which the case was heard is not necessary to find the report. You need only to look for the relevant volume.

Example:
\[\text{Whittington v Seale-Hayne} (1900) 82 \text{ LT 49}\]

Law Report Series

Use a standard abbreviation for the title of a law report series. Please see the end of this guide for a short list of the standard abbreviations. You can also use the Cardiff Index to Legal Abbreviations to check more obscure ones http://www.legalabbrevs.cardiff.ac.uk

No punctuation is needed, for example, use AC not A.C.

Wherever possible, references should be to the Official Law Reports, as it is the most authoritative series (Appeal Cases, Chancery, Family, King’s and Queen’s Bench, Probate). Second most authoritative is a reference to a report in the Weekly Law Reports (WLR) and third is to the All England Reports (All ER).

Where the case is one reported by a specialist report series, for example, employment law cases reported in the Industrial Cases Reports (ICR) or Industrial Relations Law Reports (IRLR) these may be used in preference to the more general report series.
Unreported Cases
The name of the case, the name of the court and the date of the judgment should be given. Do not use the term 'unreported'. That is obvious from the absence of reference to any report series.

Example:
   *R v Jacobs* (CA 12 May 1995)

Neutral Citations
Since 2001, the official neutral citation system is used where cases are reported electronically and identifies judgments independently of any law report series. This is a perfectly acceptable form of referencing and should be used where you have referred to cases accessed online, followed by details of the citation from the best available published report (if there is one) with a comma to separate.

Example:
   *Cable & Wireless Plc v Muscat* [2006] EWCA Civ 220, [2006] ICR 975

European Union Cases
Since 1989, EU cases have been numbered according to whether they were registered at the European Court of Justice (ECJ) or the General Court (GC), and given the prefix C– (for ECJ cases) or T– (for GC cases).

Wherever possible, refer to the official reports which are cited as ECR. ECJ cases are reported in volume one (ECR I–) and GC cases are reported in volume two (ECR II–). The volume number in roman numerals attaches to the first page number with a dash. If an ECR reference is not available, the second best report is usually the Common Market Law Reports (CMLR). Some cases are reported in the Law Reports, the Weekly Law Reports and/or the All England Law Reports (European Cases), which may be cited in preference to the CMLR.

The case citation should include the case registration number, the case name (in italics), the year [in square brackets] and the law report details.

Example:

When pinpointing, use 'para' or 'paras' after a comma.

Example:

Cases before 1989 would not include the volume numerals.

Example:
   *Case C-12/81 Garland v British Rail Engineering Limited* [1982] ECR 359

European Court of Human Rights Cases
Decisions from the European Court of Human Rights can be cited referring to the European Human Rights Reports (EHRR).

Example:
   *Young, James and Webster v UK* (1982) 4 EHRR 38

For guidance on citing material from other jurisdictions, please refer to the full OSCOLA guide.
Secondary Sources

Books

When referencing a book, you must include the following details:

- Author.
- Title (in italics and capitalise the first letter of the first word and all significant words following – not the/and/at/to/in, and so on).
- Edition, (only include where the book is in its second edition or beyond).
- Series title (where applicable).
- Publisher.
- Date of publication.

Publication information follows the title within brackets. Publication elements should always include the publisher and the year of publication, with a space but no punctuation between them. The place of publication need not be given. Add a page number to the footnote as necessary.

Note: In footnotes, the author’s first name(s) or initial(s) precede their surname – give the name exactly as it appears on the book. In bibliographies, the surname comes first, then the initial(s), followed by a comma

Examples:

**Single author**

As a footnote:


In the bibliography:

Thompson MP, Modern Land Law (3rd edn, OUP 2006)

**Multiple authors**

If there is more than one author insert ‘and’ before the last author’s name. If there are more than three authors, note the first author only, followed by ‘and others’.

Examples:


**Chapter from an Edited Book**

A book may be a collection of chapters written by different authors and edited by one or more authors. To identify any particular chapter within an edited book, you must use the word ‘in’ and put the title of the chapter in single inverted commas.

Example:

Secondary Referencing

It is always better to read the original source of information rather than someone else’s interpretation of it. There is no official guidance on this from OSCOLA, but if you do need to reference an author’s interpretation of another author’s book, case or journal article when you have not actually read the original work yourself, you can do this using the word ‘citing’.

Example:

Journal Articles (Print)

When referencing a journal article, you must include the following details, where available:

- Author, followed by a comma.
- ‘Article title’ (in single inverted commas but NOT in italics).
- Date.
- Volume number.
- Abbreviation for journal title.
- First page number.

Examples:

As a footnote:

In the bibliography:

References to the Official Journal of the European Communities should be as follows:


Use a standard abbreviation for the journal title, where this is available, but otherwise use the full title. To check these, use the Cardiff Index of Legal Abbreviations at [http://www.legalabbrevs.cardiff.ac.uk/](http://www.legalabbrevs.cardiff.ac.uk/). Dates are in square or round brackets according to the same rules which apply to Law Reports (see above). Only include the issue number if every issue starts with page 1.

Pinpoint

If citing information from a specific page, add a comma after the first page of the article and give the page where the information is to be found.

Example:
Journal Articles (Online)

If a journal article is also available in print, follow the guidelines above.

If a journal article is only available electronically, include the following details:

- Author, followed by comma.
- ‘Article title’ (in single inverted commas).
- Date (in square or round brackets, see brackets rule section for explanation)
- Volume number
- Abbreviation for journal title.
- <URL>
- Date of access.

Example:
Oliver Radley-Gardner, ‘Chargees and Family Property’ [2001] 1 Web JCLI

Journals that are only published online may not have page numbers, or may use a system of numbered paragraphs. You should give the paragraph numbers in square brackets.

Newspaper Articles

Cite as follows:

- Author, followed by comma.
- ‘Article title’ (in single inverted commas).
- Newspaper title (in italics).
- City of publication (add country if that is not obvious).
- Full date.
- Page number.

Example:
Gideon Rachman, ‘Respect for Law is in Russia’s Interest’ Financial Times (London, 10 June 2008) 13

Where there is no obvious author, insert two joined dashes (--) or use the word Editorial if that applies.

If you use an electronic version and there is no page number available, give the web address and date of access.

Example:

Parliamentary Debates (Hansard)

Hansard is the official report of the proceedings of Parliament. Cite first the relevant House - HC (House of Commons) or HL (House of Lords) - followed by ‘Deb’, then the full date, the volume and the column number(s).

Example:
HL Deb 27 October 1976, vol 376, cols 516-47
HC Deb 2 November 1976, vol 918, cols 1316-25
Command Papers

This is the title used for Green Papers and White Papers and other Government publications. Each series of Command Papers has its own unique abbreviation, as follows:

- Command Papers from 1836 - 1899 are cited: C
- Command Papers from 1900 - 1918 are cited: Cd
- Command Papers from 1919 - October 1956 are cited: Cmd
- Command Papers from November 1956 - 1986 are cited: Cmnd
- Command Papers from 1987 - present date are cited: Cm

When citing a command paper, begin the citation with the name of the department or other body that produced the paper, and then give the title of the paper in italics, followed in brackets by the command paper number and the year.

Example:
Home Office, Identity Cards (Cm 6019, 2003)

Law Commission Reports

Cite Law Commission reports by title in italics followed in brackets by the Law Com number and year. For Law Commission consultation papers, give the Law Com CP number.

Examples:
Law Commission, Renting Homes (Law Com No 284, 2003)
Law Commission, Protection of Official Data (Law Com CP No 230, 2017)

Websites

If you wish to cite material found on an electronic resource, for example from a database such as Westlaw, you do not need to state that the material was found online if it is also available in printed form. Cite the source using the examples given above for printed materials.

Cite information from a free website, such as a government department, charity or professional organisation as follows:

- Author – if no personal author is available, use a corporate author, such as the organisation responsible for the website, followed by a comma.
  If no author is obvious, begin the reference with two dashes (--).
- ‘Title of webpage’ (in single inverted commas).
- Name of the website that the webpage is part of (in italics) followed by a comma and the full date of publication if available (all in brackets)
- <URL>
- Date of access.

Example:
Sarah Cole, ‘Virtual Friend Fires Employee’ (Naked Law, 1 May 2009)
Footnotes

A footnote is placed at the bottom of a page in a document to reference sources in the text of your work. It enables the reader to check what your authority is for any proposition. There should be a footnote referring in detail to the exact source of your evidence for every reference or quotation you make (be it book, article, original document, case, statute, film, internet source or whatever). It is better to put in too many footnotes than too few.

Footnotes serve four main purposes:

**To indicate an authority which supports a proposition which you have made.** If you write something like "it has been claimed", "it has been argued", "it has been suggested", "it is often said", "Professor Jones said", "statistics show", or any other statement in which you are asserting a fact, supposition, argument or claim, then you must use a footnote to indicate who claimed or suggested or argued or said it and where that claim or argument or suggestion can be found if your readers want to look it up for themselves.

**To give the source of a quotation.** If you use someone else’s words then you must indicate that you are doing that by using a footnote to show where the quotation can be found in the original source. If you fail to indicate the use of someone else’s words with a footnote, you will be guilty of plagiarism.

**To give the source of an argument or explanation** which you have put into your own words but which is very heavily dependent on someone else’s ideas or writing. This is the hardest situation in which to avoid plagiarism. You obviously will be dependent to a large extent on other people’s views about the topic on which you are writing. If you simply paraphrase their views you will not get a good mark for your work because there is nothing in it of you. What you must do is to somehow take ownership of the other person’s views. The way you do this is to make some comment or criticism of the other person’s ideas. Explain what you think is right about their ideas and what is wrong or at least dubious. Bring in criticism of those ideas which has been made by other authors or judicial authorities as evidence to support your view.

**To make a cross-reference.** You should not need to do this very often because the text of your work should be so structured that the reader does not have to be constantly flying around different parts of it to find out what you are talking about.

It is essential to get your references right. You may assume that the examiner will check them. It is equally important to make references in the correct way, especially with statutes and cases - so make sure you know when square brackets are needed in case citations and when round brackets are used (see the previous section on Cases).

To create a footnote, insert a running number after the full stop at the end of the sentence or after the word or phrase to which it relates, then insert a numbered note at the foot of the page giving the full citation for the source. This is easily done using word-processing systems such as Microsoft Word, but will vary according to which version you have. Close the footnote with a full stop. If you give more than one citation in a footnote, list them chronologically and separate the citations with a semi-colon. The footnotes run consecutively throughout a piece of work.
Footnotes – Cases

When citing the case within your text, give the party names only in italics, but give the full citation in your footnote. You can also use ‘ibid’ meaning ‘in the same place’. This is used to repeat the information given in the footnote immediately previous, but this time at a different page number.

Example:

The view …threw some light on the controversial case of Stoke-on-Trent CC v Wass.¹
Nourse, L.J. concluded that, in the absence of proof of loss, a claimant would seldom be permitted to recover a sum linked to the defendant’s gain.²

Subsequent uses of that case in the immediately following text can be limited to an abbreviated version of the name, for example ‘the Wass case’, but this should be done only where the full name is quite long, or the case is well known by an abbreviated name.

If there is a large gap after the first use before the case is mentioned again, you should refer to it by the full name again unless it is a case which is very well known by a shortened name.

Where the reference is to a criminal case, it is acceptable to refer to a shortened version of the name as ‘in Clark’.³

If you are referring to, or quoting from, a specific page of a case you need to indicate that in the footnote as well.

Example:

With reference to page 171 of the report in the Ayerst case.⁴

If you want to indicate in the footnote the name of the judge whose opinion is being referred to, you add the name in round brackets following the page number.

Example:

With reference to the decision in the case of Beck v Hair.⁵

Footnotes – Legislation

If you refer to a piece of legislation such as a Statute (Act of Parliament) or Statutory Instrument in the text of your work.

Example:

Which made a parallel ruling in respect of adults convicted of murder, and declared s 29 of the Crime (Sentences) Act 1997 to be incompatible with the European Convention.⁶

Footnotes – Government Publications

Where the reference is to a government publication.

Example:

Nevertheless, the issue remains on the Home Office’s agenda.⁷

² ibid 1414.
³ R v Clark (Sally) EWCA Crim 1020, [2003] 2 FCR 447.
⁵ Beck v Hair [1999] AC 400 (HL) (Lord Widgery).
⁶ Crime (Sentences) Act 1997, s 29.
⁷ Home Office, Identity Cards (Cm 6019, 2003).
Footnotes – Quotations

If you want to make a direct quotation.

Example:
Lord Such says “the law is an ass”. 8

Footnotes – Books

In the text of your work you should give the name of the author of the book; the full reference should appear in both a footnote and the bibliography.

Example:
Could we, as Paul Robinson9 has suggested, define offences in the broadest of terms and leave the majority of work to be done at the sentencing stage?

Footnotes – Journal Articles

In the text of your work you should give the name of the author of the article referred to; the full reference should appear in both a footnote and the bibliography.

Example:
The following is giving a reference by an author called Finch to the journal Legal Studies (abbreviation is LS). The article begins on page 374 and the specific information is to be found on page 375.

The company will either be managed by its existing management with or without supervision by a qualified insolvency professional, or such a professional will assume control of the company (termed by Finch as “practitioner in possession” proceedings).10

Footnotes – Websites

Where a reference is made in the text of your work to a publicly-accessible website, such as a government department.

Example:
In 2003, the FSA carried out a survey into the labelling of chicken and concluded that such labelling had not improved over the preceding years.11

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8 From a speech made by Lord Such to the annual meeting of the Legal Society at the Café Royal in London on 13 July 1999. The speech can be found in Legal Society Notes (1999) Vol. 22 at p.13.
Bibliography

Your work must contain a bibliography which should start on a separate page at the end of your assignment. The best way to treat the bibliography is to include in it every work which is mentioned anywhere in the text or footnotes and any other work to which you referred in the course of your research. The examiner is going to take the bibliography as some evidence of how widely and deeply you have researched.

You can expect your examiner to check the entries in your bibliography for accuracy. Do not include in the bibliography materials that you have not used in your research. The grade for your work can be seriously affected if it is found that you have included items in the bibliography and there is no evidence in the work you submit that they informed your argument or conclusions.

Any bibliography in a law assignment should contain sections for books and articles and may contain other sections such as Government publications and websites. It must be arranged by alphabetical order of author in each section, for example:

- Books.
- Journal articles.
- Published sources (official) such as Law Commission Reports, Hansard, Journal of the House of Commons, Calendar of State Papers.
- Other published sources, for example newspapers.
- Unpublished sources, usually listed in alphabetical order, for example unpublished theses.
- Other sources, for example private communications.
- Electronic sources, for example material from websites.

Statutes and cases should be listed in separate tables immediately following the bibliography (see page 17 for examples).
Sample Bibliography

Books

Stewart A, *Rethinking Housing Law* (Sweet & Maxwell 1996)

Articles


Official Published Sources


Home Office, *Identity Cards* (Cm 6019, 2003)


Other Published Sources

Rachman G, ‘Respect for Law is in Russia’s Interest’ *Financial Times* (London, 10 June 2008)

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Electronic Sources


Tables of Statutes and Cases

Statutes should be listed in a separate Table of Statutes on a separate page either alphabetically by their full Short Title, followed by year; or by year followed by their full Short Title.

Cases should be listed in a separate Table of Cases on a separate page (alphabetically and using the same form as when citing the case in a footnote).

In law textbooks these Tables are always at the front. In essays they are always at the back. They must come immediately after the bibliography.

Treat the Tables as mere lists, with a full citation but no reference to the page of your paper on which they are mentioned.

Sample Tables of Statutes and Cases

Table of Statutes

Children Act 1989, c.41
Defective Premises Act 1972, c.35
Environmental Protection Act 1990, c.43
Housing Act 2004, c.34
Landlord and Tenant Act 1985, c.70
Protection from Eviction Act 1977, c.43

Table of Cases

European Court of Human Rights Cases

Powell and Rayner v UK (1990) 12 EHRR 355
Young, James and Webster v UK (1982) 4 EHRR 38

United Kingdom Cases

Ashbridge Investments Ltd v Minister of Housing and Local Government [1965] 3 All ER 371
Bishop Auckland Local Board v Bishop Auckland Iron and Steel Co (1882) 10 QBD 138
Donoghue v Poplar Housing and Regeneration Community Association [2001] 3 WLR 183
Great Western Rly Co v Bishop (1872) LR 7 QB 550
Lee v Leeds C; Ratcliffe v Sandwell MBC [2002] 1 WLR 1488
R (on the application of Vella) v Lambeth LBC [2005] EWHC 2473
Summers v Salford Corporation [1943] 1 All ER 68
Law Report Abbreviations

The following is a list for the most commonly-used series of law reports. The Cardiff Index of Legal Abbreviations at [http://www.legalabbrevs.cardiff.ac.uk/](http://www.legalabbrevs.cardiff.ac.uk/) is a useful searchable database covering an extensive range of abbreviations.

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<td>Commonwealth Law Reports</td>
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**Neutral Citations**

- Official neutral citation for judgments of the Court of Appeal (Civil Division) | EWCA Civ
- Official neutral citation for judgments of the Court of Appeal (Criminal Division) | EWCA Crim
- Official neutral citation for judgments of the High Court | EWHC
- Official neutral citation for judgments of the House of Lords | UKHL
- Official neutral citation for judgments of the Privy Council | UKPC
- Official neutral citation for judgments of the Supreme Court | UKSC