ART HISTORY: GUIDE TO ESSAY WRITING

Present your essays professionally. On the cover page give the title and number of the essay question you have chosen, the name and number of the course, and your name, student number, and tutorial time. An assignment cover sheet is available for you to use. Please type your essay. Excellent computer facilities are provided in the Student Information Commons to assist you. Use one side of the paper and leave wide margins. Number the pages and write your name on each page. Keep a copy for your own reference while the essay is marked, and as a safeguard against loss. Also keep your marked essay once it has been returned until your final grade has been published.

Allow plenty of time for both preparatory research and for writing. Be sure to write a first draft for careful reading and editing and leave time for more than one draft before final submission. The aim of formal essay writing is to engage your critical reading and writing skills to craft an articulate and polished essay. It provides an opportunity to consider a topic in depth, combining the synthesis of source materials with your own conclusions based on those materials. It follows that students are expected to show independent thinking and not simply re-hash the opinions of scholars. However, an essay should not be based on your opinions alone. Back up your ideas with the rigorous analysis of course materials, texts and articles. An essay is your dialogue with the scholarly community.

Begin by considering the question and the issues it raises. Plan your essay to present a coherent discussion that sticks to the point, and works towards a compelling conclusion. Be sure to take note of the required project length. In structuring your essay, begin with an introduction that draws the reader into the arguments of the essay and includes a clear statement of what you plan to do (but avoids just repeating the question). This should be followed by the development of this proposal through sustained analysis of specific ideas. Always support your ideas with the analysis of artworks. End with a conclusion that pulls the threads together, not just with a bland summary.

The style of your writing is as important for communicating your meaning as the style of a painting is for communicating an artist’s intentions. Originality can lie in the way you write about your topic, as well as in the ideas you develop. Use quotations sparingly: do not simply string together quotations or paraphrase other writers. When you do use the ideas of others, it is essential that you acknowledge them, even if you are not quoting them exactly. So be sure to reference other writers that you are drawing upon, whether verbatim or in précised form (see details on how to do so below). Plagiarism is tantamount to theft in an academic context and will be severely penalised.

Write complete sentences in good, clear English, using standard grammar. Organise material into paragraphs that group related points together and indicate to your reader when you are moving on to a new idea. Be sure to check your grammar and spelling, and proof read your final essay at least once. Use the computer’s Spell Check function but remember that it picks up letter groups that do not match real words, but will not find errors in sense that result from typographical mistakes (e.g. it would not pick up “but well not fund errors on cents than result form topographical miss steaks”). Consult a dictionary if you are unsure of spelling. Look out for common errors like misuse of the apostrophe. Its main function is to indicate possession, differentiating singular and plural, as in “one boy’s toys” or “two boys’ toys”. The apostrophe also indicates elision as in “can’t” in place of “cannot”, though such informality is rare in academic writing. A tricky example is “it’s” which means “it is”. In this case the possessive has no apostrophe and is written “its”. (e.g. It’s common for a tree to lose its leaves in winter.)
REFERENCES AND BIBLIOGRAPHIC STYLE

Your coursework and research must show you have found appropriate resources, evaluated them critically and used them to develop your arguments. When you quote a phrase, copy all or part of something you have read, or even paraphrase or summarise, you must acknowledge your source. However, you do not need to give a source for uncontested ‘common knowledge’, such as the dates of World War I or the birth of Picasso.

The most common style of referencing for Art History at the University of Auckland is the Chicago system with footnotes, but the MLA (Modern Language Association) system is also acceptable. You can find the essentials of providing referencing for these systems and APA at AU Student Learning Centre site www.cite.auckland.ac.nz Whatever you choose, be sure to be consistent – that is more important than the style itself.

For individual answers to particular queries go to http://www.cite.auckland.ac.nz/quick.php

Referencing works of art

It is standard practice to cite the title of a work of art in italics (or underlined if you don’t have a facility for italics). The work should also be identified with other information, as many works have the same title. Always give the location of the work in a city, building or museum. You should also try to give a date, the medium and the size of the work.

Raphael, *Madonna Foligno* (oil on panel, 320 x 194 cm) c.1511-12, Vatican Pinacoteca.

Particularly if you are referring to works that are not well known, it is very useful to your reader if you include images of works. The information as cited above forms the caption for each illustration. For a longer piece of work, it should also be given in your list of illustrations, where you should include the source of your illustration – from a book, from a gallery, taken by a photographer, whatever. (Copyright permission is not required as this is not a publication.) If you refer in your text to any work that you do not illustrate (and it’s not a good idea to do this too often), give a reference for where the image can be found.


Think carefully about how you are going to number your illustrations and the sequence in which you want to include them. This is particularly important for a longer piece of work such as a research essay or dissertation. It is customary for illustrations to follow the order in which they are discussed in the text but, if they are discussed in various places, you might prefer a different, internally logical order, such as a chronological arrangement, as long as you are sure always to give the figure number when you discuss the work.

Quotations

If you quote from another publication, you should indicate this by enclosing short quotations in double quotation marks “like this”.

A longer quotation (of three lines or more) is presented as an indented paragraph without quotation marks, and a space before and after it in the text like this. Some publications use a different typeface but this is overkill, as the indentation already makes it clear. That it is a quotation is also indicated by a reference (see below).
Any addition to a quotation is indicated with square brackets [thus], and an omission is indicated with three stops … If there is an obvious error such as a misspelling in a quotation, it is customary to insert (sic) so that the reader knows that it is not your error. Quotes already inside quotation marks are indicated with single quotation marks for clarity. “They would then look ‘like this’ in your text.”

REFERENCES/CITATIONS

MLA favours an abbreviated style of in-text citation which avoids footnotes. Simply the name of the author and the page number is given. So if you were citing


you would refer to it like this (Bassett 54). If you had already mentioned the author by name in the sentence, you would only give the page number, like this (54). If more than one work by the same author is cited, a short title is used to distinguish them (Bassett, Fix 54). MLA style is found on www.cite.auckland.ac.nz, which gives multiple examples of different forms. APA also uses in text citations but adds dates for identification.

References/citations in footnotes and endnotes

Many scholars still prefer to present their references as footnotes at the bottom of each page, now made easy by computer software, or occasionally endnotes at the end of an essay. This is the form preferred by the Chicago system. The references should be numbered consecutively throughout the essay, and indicated in the text by a number in superscript, as also in the notes. Note that reference numbers follow punctuation, like this,¹ or ‘this’² not this³. The reference number comes at the end of a quotation or, in the case of a sentence paraphrasing ideas, at the end of the sentence or occasionally directly after the author’s name. Occasionally numbers in parenthesis are used if computer software is not available, like this. (1)

These references have four main divisions: the author’s name (surname second), title, publication data in parentheses, and page reference, with commas used as dividers. Some examples of different types of references follow, and more can be found under Chicago style at www.cite.auckland.ac.nz. Note that italics are used for the titles of published works.

BOOKS (for references)

• A book by a single author

• A book with multiple authors

• An anthology or compilation

• An exhibition catalogue (without author)

• A paper in a collection or a chapter in a book

- Unpublished work, such as theses, photocopied conference papers, and other documents. Italicics are not used for the title, as they would indicate published material. The title is instead placed in quotation marks, and information added thereafter, as in this example
  
  Edward Hanfling, “Great Scott! Issues of Art Historical Value from the Works of Recent New Zealand Artists, particularly from those of Ian Scott.” (PhD, University of Auckland, 2005), 37.

**ARTICLES (for references)**

For bound serials, give volume and page numbers only. There is no need to include the issue number if pagination runs through the entire volume. For serials in which each issue has its own separate page numbers give the volume and issue number as well as the pages.

- An article in a serial with pagination running through the whole volume
  

- An article in a serial with separate page numbering for each issue
  

- An article, cartoon, letter, or advertisement in a newspaper or other periodical without volume numbers follows the pattern of author, title, source and date.
  

**ELECTRONIC SOURCES (for references)**

In the case of a reference from an electronic publication, you should give the same details of author and title, followed by the URL (Uniform Resource Locator) and, because websites are changed regularly, the date on which you consulted the site. Remember that websites are not all subject to painstaking checking like print publications, so are often not reliable. Beware particularly of sites without an individual or institutional author. It is not acceptable to use websites alone for your sources.

  
Subsequent references

If you have already given the complete reference, such as:

In subsequent notes use a shortened reference, giving the author’s last name, a short title and page number or numbers
Bell, *Colonial Constructs*, 34.

If two references to the same work follow immediately on each other, use Ibid. Only add the page reference if it is different from the first.
Ibid., 48.

Secondary references

If you cite a quotation by an author that you found in the work of another author, you must give both the full original reference and the source in which you found it, thus


It is very dangerous practice to omit a double reference and pretend that you have consulted the primary text, as you will not have seen the reference in its original context and will not be aware of any misquotations or idiosyncratic interpretations – which will then be assumed to be attributable to yourself! It follows that only works that you actually consulted should appear in your bibliography.

Content footnotes

Footnotes may also be used to supplement the content of your essay, as with additional supportive data, fuller evidence or further examples that you feel would clutter up your argument unnecessarily. They might also be used to acknowledge an alternative point of view, to show that you are aware of other interpretations even if you have not chosen to use them. Footnotes can be a very useful way of inserting relevant information that is not essential to your argument and would interrupt the flow. But do avoid excessive footnotes. If the material in the footnote is really important, ask yourself whether it should not be in the body of the essay. And if it is not important, do you need it at all? (Content footnotes may still be used in addition to in-text citations if you have preferred the MLA or APA styles of referencing.)

COMPILING A BIBLIOGRAPHY

As well as providing references which give the source of information you quote within the text of an essay or thesis, you must include a reading list of the books and articles consulted in writing the essay, and which you feel were significant for your work, even if they are not directly cited in footnotes. A bibliography for a thesis must list all the materials consulted. It is important for verification of your arguments and for future researchers in the area. It also enables the reader to assess the range and depth of your reading.

A bibliographic entry has three main divisions: the author’s name, reversed with the surname listed first for alphabetising, the title, and the publication data. For electronic resources include publication medium and date of access. The examples below are based on Chicago. MLA is similar, but APA gives date of publication after author’s name.
A single bibliography should be sufficient for an essay. For a thesis the simplest approach, both to construct and to use, is a single bibliography for the bulk of the material, differentiating only primary and secondary sources (or unpublished and published material). But if your bibliography is very large you may like to break the bibliography into different sections. Some writers do this according to the kind of material, such as: Books; Chapters in books; Theses; Exhibition Catalogues; Articles; Electronic Resources; Illustrations. Within each section authors will be arranged in alphabetical order. Or some create separate sections related to different chapters. However, the fewer the sections the easier it is for the reader to find titles, so a single list remains a good option.

**BOOKS (for Bibliographies)**

- A book by a single author:

- Two or more books by the same author:
  When citing two or more books by the same author, give the name in the first entry only. For subsequent entry or entries replace the name with a long dash and list titles in alphabetical order.

- An anthology or compilation:
  Begin the entry with the name of the editor(s) or compiler(s), followed by a comma and the abbreviation ed. or comp.

- A book by two or more authors:
  Give their names in the same order as on the title page, not necessarily in alphabetical order. Reverse the name of the first author, add a comma and give the other name or names in normal form.
  If there are more than three authors (and occasionally this form is used for only three), it is customary to cite the first author and follow with ‘et al’.

- An exhibition catalogue without author:

If the entire catalogue is single author, it may be listed by name as for a book. But in the case of a catalogue essay the usual practice is to add the name of the author:

• An article in a reference book:
If the article is signed, give the author first; if unsigned, the title. If the encyclopedia or dictionary
arranges articles alphabetically, you may omit volume and page numbers. When citing familiar
reference books, especially those that frequently appear in new editions, list only edition and year
of publication. When citing less familiar reference books, especially those that have appeared in
only one edition, give full publication information.

• A chapter in a book:
If you refer to chapters in different books by the same author, arrange them in alphabetical order of
the titles of the articles (ignoring ‘a’ and ‘the’).
Rankin, Elizabeth. “Between Modernism and Memory: the art of the !Xu and Khwe.” In
Identities: Contemporary Political and Social Challenges, eds. P. Ahluwalia and A. Zegeye,
Rankin, Elizabeth. “Facing difference: Casts as document and display.” In Fiona

ARTICLES  (for Bibliographies)
• An article in a journal:
Griffey, Erin. “Pro-Creativity: Art, Love and Conjugal Virtue in 17th-century Dutch Artists’

THESES  (for Bibliographies)
• An unpublished thesis or dissertation
Shand, Peter Neil. “Adrift on an Ocean of Affinities: Modernist Primitivism and the

ELECTRONIC SOURCES  (for Bibliographies)
• A website
Auckland Art Gallery, Portrait exhibition ‘Likeness and Character’
http://www.aucklandartgallery.govt.nz/exhibitions/0710likenessandcharacter.asp Consulted
4 January 2008

RefWorks
RefWorks is a type of reference management software that enables you to store and manage
references so that they can be reproduced in the form of footnotes, reference lists or bibliographies.
It imports records (bibliographic information about books or articles) into a ‘library’, or personal
bibliographic database. The records are transferred electronically from electronic catalogues and
databases or created manually. They are likely to be more accurate than your own compilations,
and can be converted into footnotes or varied formats for bibliographies. RefWorks training is
provided by the University of Auckland Library and Student Learning Centre.

Plagiarism
Plagiarism is the term used to describe the act of passing off information, ideas, or words from sources that are not your own as though they were your own. Plagiarism is therefore a form of cheating. All institutions of higher education regard plagiarism as a serious offence and in some instances it has resulted in prosecution. It is of course possible to refer to the ideas of others but only so long as these ideas are clearly referenced. Everything that is not your own must be acknowledged.

Incidents of plagiarism vary in seriousness and in circumstance. Occurrences of wholesale copying are relatively rare but more common is piecemeal or mosaic plagiarism where ideas and language from an unacknowledged source are mixed with the students’ own words or ideas. Make sure you know what plagiarism is and how to avoid it. For useful guidelines consult the following online:
http://www.cite.auckland.ac.nz/plag.php
http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/plagiarism.shtml

**Turnitin**

The University of Auckland now has a policy of using Turnitin which requires you to also submit your essay online so that it can be checked to ensure it does not contain unacknowledged quotations. For guidelines see
http://www.auckland.ac.nz/uoafms/default/uoabout/teaching/plagiarism/docs/Student%20Guidelines2.pdf