

La Trobe University

Academic Development Unit

www.latrobe.edu.au/adu/

Acknowledgment and referencing terms and their definitions

Acknowledgement, citation, paraphrase, attribution, reference, own work / original work, quotation / quote, bibliography / reference list, common knowledge, independent work / collaboration / collusion

Acknowledgment, Attribution : To acknowledge or attribute is to give recognition to an original author/creator for the ideas, concepts used in work by providing a reference or citation.

Citation: A citation is the written details of the original source for ideas, which may be cited within, or at the end of research.

Reference: The meaning of the term reference is the same as citation: the written details of the original source for ideas, which may be referenced / cited within, and at the end of the research/assignment.

Quotation: To quote directly is to use the *exact* words of an original author in written work. The quotation (exact words) should be placed in quotation marks and be accompanied by a citation or reference (thus giving acknowledgement or attribution to the work of the original author).

Bibliography: The term bibliography can mean the same as a reference list, that is, a list of the sources used for ideas etc in an assignment or research. The [Policy](#) stipulates clearly that a reference list or bibliography does not make detailed specific citations for individual debts to the work of others within the text of the paper unnecessary. The term bibliography can also refer to a list of works on a topic, or by an author, which are not used as sources. The latter definition is more likely to appear as *part* of an assignment (eg 'Develop an annotated bibliography of?') or in a unit guide as part of the teacher's collection of materials on topics. The definition of the term bibliography if used in any written guidelines should be made clear to students.

Paraphrase : To paraphrase is to rewrite completely another author's words or ideas *with the intention of presenting the author's ideas* and where the precise language used by the author is unimportant and/or perhaps inappropriate for the context. Paraphrasing is a valuable and sophisticated academic skill that students should be encouraged to acquire. The source must always be referenced.

Own work / original work: These concepts are difficult for many university students, especially students in their first year at University and those who

have studied overseas. Whilst students are expected to research and refer to the intellectual work of specialists in their fields, they are also expected to produce their own, or original work. Some students can misinterpret this as meaning something they must come up with something that has never been thought of before. At undergraduate level being original might involve students choosing, analysing, summarising and interpreting the (often competing) ideas of others, and developing arguments, drawing conclusions and adding their 'voices' to the intellectual 'conversation/s' in their fields.

For a useful resource see Chanock, Kate, (2003) [Using Sources in Your Writing](#) (Handout) Humanities Academic Skills Unit, La Trobe University, Bundoora.

Common knowledge: Facts or ideas that can be found in several places and are likely to be known by a broad range of people are understood to be common knowledge. It is difficult for students who are inexperienced in their fields of study at the University to know what is common knowledge and what is a concept or idea that is not common knowledge and therefore needs proper referencing. This is particularly so when students use text books which explain the basic principles of a field.

Independent work, collaboration or collusion: The Academic Misconduct Policy is clear about the ways in which students can collaborate during work for the purpose of assessment, and when work for this purpose should be done independently. Collusion occurs when students work together to produce the same piece of work while pretending it was done independently.

Students can

- discuss assignments with other students and their tutors;
- communicate with one another in constructive ways *about* the learning process;
- assist each other, eg by discussing the approaches that might be taken to assignment topics, or helping with the availability of reading materials.

Students should, however

- write their assignments independently;
- submit a joint report, as equal contributors, when they are asked to work on a project as a member of a group, which is to be assessed as a group. 'In this case, except where the final written work consists of sections for which particular individuals take sole responsibility, the group as a whole assumes responsibility for it and the proper acknowledgment of any use made of the words or ideas of people outside the group' ([La Trobe University Academic Policy On Misconduct](#)).