

MA (Economics) II Semester
Paper- Statistical Inferences and Research Methods (203)
UNIT- V

Research Report

Meaning:

Mostly, research work is presented in a written form. The practical utility of research study depends heavily on the way it is presented to those who are expected to act on the basis of research findings. Research report is a written document containing key aspects of research project.

Research report is a medium to communicate research work with relevant people. It is also a good source of preservation of research work for the future reference. Many times, research findings are not followed because of improper presentation. Preparation of research report is not an easy task. It is an art. It requires a good deal of knowledge, imagination, experience, and expertise. It demands a considerable time and money.

A research report is a document prepared by an analyst or strategist who is a part of the investment research team in a stock brokerage or investment bank. A research report may focus on a specific stock or industry sector, a currency, commodity or fixed-income instrument, or on a geographic region or country. Research reports generally, but not always, have actionable recommendations such as investment ideas that investors can act upon.

Definitions:

1. In simple words:

Research report is the systematic, articulate, and orderly presentation of research work in a written form.

2. We can also define the term as:

Research report is a research document that contains basic aspects of the research project.

3. In the same way, we can say:

Research report involves relevant information on the research work carried out. It may be in form of hand-written, typed, or computerized.

Characteristics of a Good Report

This article throws light upon the top eleven characteristics of a good report. The characteristics are: 1. Simplicity 2. Clarity 3. Brevity 4. Positivity 5. Punctuation 6. Approach 7. Readability 8. Accuracy 9. Logical Sequence 10. Proper Form 11. Presentation.

1. Simplicity:

The language shall be as simple as possible so that a report is easily understandable. Jargons and technical words should be avoided. Even in a technical report there shall be restricted use of technical terms if it has to be presented to laymen.

2. Clarity:

The language shall be lucid and straight, clearly expressing what is intended to be expressed. For that the report has to be written in correct form and following correct steps.

3. Brevity:

A report shall not be unnecessarily long so that the patience of the reader is not lost and there is no confusion of ideas. But, at the same time, a report must be complete. A report is not an essay.

4. Positivity:

As far as possible positive statements should be made instead of negative ones. For example, it is better to say what should be done and not what should not be done.

5. Punctuation:

Punctuations have to be carefully and correctly used otherwise the meaning of sentences may be misunderstood or misrepresented.

6. Approach:

There are two types of approaches: (a) Person—When a report is written based on personal enquiry or observations, the approach shall be personal and the sentences shall be in the first person and in direct speech, (b) Impersonal—When a report is prepared as a source of information and when it is merely factual (e.g. a report on a meeting), the approach shall be impersonal and the sentences shall be in the third person and in indirect speech.

7. Readability:

The keynote of a report is readability. The style of presentation and the diction (use of words) shall be such that the readers find it attractive and he is compelled to read the report from the beginning to the end.' Then only a report serves its purpose. A report on the same subject matter can be written differently for different classes of readers.

8. Accuracy:

A report shall be accurate when facts are stated in it. It shall not be biased with personal feelings of the writer.

9. Logical Sequence:

The points in a report shall be arranged with a logical sequence, step by step and not in a haphazard manner. A planning is necessary before a report is prepared.

10. Proper Form:

A report must be in the proper form. Sometimes there are statutory forms to follow.

11. Presentation:

A report needs an attractive presentation. It depends on the quality of typing or printing as well as quality of paper used. Big companies make very attractive and colourful Annual Reports.

Principles of a Good Research Report

Report writing differs from person to person depending on personality, imaginative and creative abilities, experience, and training. However, most researchers agree that following general principles must be kept in mind to produce a better research report. These principles are often called as qualities or requirements of a good report.

1. Selectiveness:

It is important to exclude the matter, which is known to all. Only necessary contents should be included to save time, costs, and energy. However, care should be taken that the vital points should not be missed.

2. Comprehensiveness:

Report must be complete. It must include all the necessary contents. In short, it must contain enough detail to convey meaning.

3. Cost Consideration:

It must be prepared within the budgeted amount. It should not result into excessive costs.

4. Accuracy:

As far as possible, research report must be prepared carefully. It must be free from spelling mistakes and grammatical errors.

5. Objectivity:

Report must be free from personal bias, i.e., it must be free from one's personal liking and disliking. The report must be prepared for impersonal needs. The facts must be stated boldly. It must reveal the bitter truth. It must suit the objectives and must meet expectations of the relevant audience/readers.

6. Clarity:

Report must reveal the facts clearly. Contents and conclusions drawn must be free from ambiguities. In short, outcomes must convey clear-cut implications.

7. Preciseness:

Research report must not be unnecessarily lengthy. It must contain only necessary parts with adequate description.

8. Simplicity:

Report must be simple to understand. Unnecessary technical words or terminologies (jargons) should be avoided.

9. Proper Language:

Researcher must use a suitable language. Language should be selected as per its target users.

10. Reliability:

Research report must be reliable. Manager can trust on it. He can be convinced to decide on the basis of research reports.

11. Proper Format:

An ideal report is one, which must be prepared as per commonly used format. One must comply with the contemporary practices; completely a new format should not be used.

12. Attractive:

Report must be attractive in all the important regards like size, colour, paper quality, etc. Similarly, it should use liberally the charts, diagrams, figures, illustrations, pictures, and multiple colours.

Importance of Research Report

1. **Decision Making Tool:** Today's complex business organizations require thousands of information. Reports provide the required information a large number of important decisions in business or any other area are taken on the basis of information presented in the reports. This is one of the great importances of report.
2. **Investigation:** Whenever there is any problem, a committee or commission or study group investigates the problem to find out the reason behind the problem and present the findings with or without the recommendation in the form of a report. It is another importance of report.
3. **Evaluation:** Large scale organizations are engaged in multidimensional activities. It is not possible for a single top executive to keep personal watch on what others are doing. So, the executive depends on reports to evaluate the performance of various departments or units.
4. **Quick Location:** There is no denying the fact that business executives need information for quick decision-making. As top executives are found to be busy for various purposes, they need vital sources of information. Such sources can be business reports.
5. **Development of skill:** Report writing skill develops the power of designing, organization coordination, judgment and communication.
6. **Neutral presentation of facts:** Facts are required to be presented in a neutral way; such presentation is ensured through a report as it investigates, explains and evaluates any fact independently.
7. **Professional Advancement:** Report also plays a major role in professional achievement. For promotion to the rank and file position, satisfactory job performance is enough to help a person. But for promotion to high level position, intellectual ability is highly required. Such ability can be expressed through the report submitted to higher authority.
8. **Proper Control:** Whether activities are happening according to plan or not is expressed through a report. So, controlling activities are implemented based on the information of a report.

9. **A managerial Tool:** Various reports make activities easy for the managers. For planning, organizing, coordinating, motivating and controlling, manager needs help from a report which acts as a source of information.
10. **Encountering Advance and Complex Situation:** In a large business organization, there is always some sort of labor problems which may bring complex situations. To tackle that situation, managers take the help of a report.

Procedure of Research Report Writing

Researchers can prepare report at their ease as there are no such set rules or procedure of writing reports. However, following general guidelines can help for writing research reports:

1. Revising expectation

Before starting report writing, researcher should revisit the purpose of research and expectation from the researcher. If the researcher is intended to submit academic reports, minimum steps and format are well designed. But, funded research expects analytical reports in most of the situations. So, researcher should identify the answer of some questions as what is the objective of research? Is there any format of reports? Is there word limit? Who will read the report? What is the process of report evaluation? etc. Answers of such questions help to make a good report.

2. Preparing outline

On the basis of nature of data, objective of research, and requirement of the evaluating agency, researcher need to prepare outline i.e. roadmap to the research report. This helps to decide in how many chapters, in how many topics, whether descriptive or analytical report is required to prepare. In simple words, outline helps to arrange the idea before starting write up. It is the planning phase for the content of report for making it more effective. During this phase, researcher should also plan the time frame within which a report is to be completed and submitted. Remember, academic report i.e. Thesis, GRP or Project work need to be submitted within specific time period. At the same time, funded research also demands to submit at the stipulated time.

3. Arranging data

On the basis of objectives, population and sample for the research, researcher collects the data from different sources. Different types of data are collected for the purpose. Such different data from different sources need to be processed and tabulated. Only relevant data are sequentially arranged so that right information will be obtained at the right time for the right purpose. For this different tables of data need to be prepared and named properly.

4. Start writing

Now, researcher should start writing the report. Report should started within introduction and proceed with the content and topic arranged on the outline. Each topic or section consists of specific feature and way of writing. Thus, instead writing haphazardly, researcher should follow the sections.

5. Preparing the first draft

The report completed with a single effort may not be excellent. Thus, researcher should update and upgrade the report with series of revisions. For this purpose, the first draft is to be prepared and revisit the whole draft carefully. Add or remove the necessary descriptions, interpretations, and analysis. After completing the first draft, it is better to keep the report aside for a day or two so that it will be easy to divert effort to other essential task.

6. Review and rewrite

Every report consists of scope of some improvement. It is true that in each reading, you can find something to rewrite or rearrange. This makes the report more interesting and excellent. Thus, researcher must read and reread the draft again and again. During this course of action, you need to compare the report with format (if any specific format is required), methodological conformation, values and data revisit as there may be some misprints, if possible language expert need to be consulted. After rewriting the drafts, the final draft will be prepared which can be submitted to the concern authority.

Types of Research Report

"Research report can vary differently in its length, type and purpose. Kerlinger (2004) states that the results of a research investigation can be presented in number of ways via a technical report, a popular report, a monograph or at times even in the form of oral presentation." Some typology of research reports are more popular for business purposes can be as:

Long Report and Short Report:

These kinds of reports are quite clear, as the name suggests. A two-page report or sometimes referred to as a memorandum is short, and a thirty-page report is absolutely long. But what makes a clear division of short reports or long reports? Well, usually, notice that longer reports are generally written in a formal manner.

Internal and External Report:

As the name suggests, an internal report stays within a certain organization or group of people. In the case of office settings, internal reports are for within the organization.

We prepare external reports, such as a news report in the newspaper about an incident or the annual reports of companies for distribution outside the organization. We call these as public reports.

Vertical and Lateral Report:

This is about the hierarchy of the reports' ultimate target. If the report is for your management or for your mentees, it's a vertical report. Wherever a direction of upwards or downwards comes into motion, we call it a vertical report.

Lateral reports, on the other hand, assist in coordination in the organization. A report traveling between units of the same organization level (for example, a report among the administration and finance departments) is lateral.

Periodic Report:

Periodic reports are sent out on regularly pre-scheduled dates. In most cases, their direction is upward and serves as management control. Some, like annual reports, is not vertical but is a Government mandate to be periodic in nature.

That is why we have annual or quarterly or half-yearly reports. If they are this frequent, it only makes sense to pre-set the structure of these reports and just fill in the data every period. That's exactly what happens in most cases too.

Formal and Informal Reports:

Formal reports are meticulously structured. They focus on objectivity and organization, contain deeper detail, and the writer must write them in a style that eliminates factors like personal pronouns.

Informal reports are usually short messages with free-flowing, casual use of language. We generally describe the internal report/memorandum as an informal report. For example, a report among your peers, or a report for your small group or team, etc.

Informational Report:

Informational reports (attendance reports, annual budget reports, monthly financial reports, and such) carry objective information from one area of an organization to maybe a larger system.

Proposal Report:

These kinds of reports are like an extension to the analytical/problem-solving reports. A proposal is a document one prepares to describe how one organization can provide a solution to a problem they are facing.

There's usually always a need to prepare a report in a business set-up. The end goal is usually very solution-oriented. We call such kinds of reports as proposal reports.

Functional Report:

These kinds of reports include marketing reports, financial reports, accounting reports, and a spectrum of other reports that provide a function specifically. By and large, we can include

almost all reports in most of these categories. Furthermore, we can include a single report in several kinds of reports.

Descriptive Report:

In descriptive report, researcher describes the facts, trends or opinions experienced or gathered during the research work. In such reports, data presentation and analysis are more importantly presented. Such reports are more suitable in case of describing current situations, etc. It is more popular method of report writing.

Analytical Report:

As name given analytical, such reports are prepared with analyzing and interpretation of the facts or trends or situations. This means analytical report is one step ahead than descriptive reports. Such reports follow the scientific investigation and reporting. Analytical reports also recommend some measures to improve the situation with stating different problems on the situation. Policy research and managerial research which are normally funded by any agencies seeking solution of prevailing problems demand analytical report.

Technical Report:

In the technical report the main emphasis is on

- i. the methods employed,
- ii. assumptions made in the course of the study,
- iii. the detailed presentation of the findings including their limitations and supporting data.

A general outline of a technical report can be as follows:

1. *Summary of results:* A brief review of the main findings just in two or three pages.
2. *Nature of the study:* Description of the general objectives of study, formulation of the problem in operational terms, the working hypothesis, the type of analysis and data required, etc.
3. *Methods employed:* Specific methods used in the study and their limitations. For instance, in sampling studies we should give details of sample design viz., sample size, sample selection, etc.
4. *Data:* Discussion of data collected, their sources, characteristics and limitations. If secondary data are used, their suitability to the problem at hand be fully assessed. In case of a survey, the manner in which data were collected should be fully described.
5. *Analysis of data and presentation of findings:* The analysis of data and presentation of the findings of the study with supporting data in the form of tables and charts be fully narrated. This, in fact, happens to be the main body of the report usually extending over several chapters.
6. *Conclusions:* A detailed summary of the findings and the policy implications drawn from the results be explained.
7. *Bibliography:* Bibliography of various sources consulted be prepared and attached.

8. *Technical appendices:* Appendices be given for all technical matters relating to questionnaire, mathematical derivations, elaboration on particular technique of analysis and the like ones.
9. *Index:* Index must be prepared and be given invariably in the report at the end.

The order presented above only gives a general idea of the nature of a technical report; the order of presentation may not necessarily be the same in all the technical reports. This, in other words, means that the presentation may vary in different reports; even the different sections outlined above will not always be the same, nor will all these sections appear in any particular report. It should, however, be remembered that even in a technical report, simple presentation and ready availability of the findings remain an important consideration and as such the liberal use of charts and diagrams is considered desirable.

Popular Report:

The popular report is one which gives emphasis on simplicity and attractiveness. The simplification should be sought through clear writing, minimization of technical, particularly mathematical, details and liberal use of charts and diagrams. Attractive layout along with large print, many subheadings, even an occasional cartoon now and then is another characteristic feature of the popular report. Besides, in such a report emphasis is given on practical aspects and policy implications. We give below a general outline of a popular report.

1. *The findings and their implications:* Emphasis in the report is given on the findings of most practical interest and on the implications of these findings.
2. *Recommendations for action:* Recommendations for action on the basis of the findings of the study is made in this section of the report.
3. *Objective of the study:* A general review of how the problem arise is presented along with the specific objectives of the project under study.
4. *Methods employed:* A brief and non-technical description of the methods and techniques used, including a short review of the data on which the study is based, is given in this part of the report.
5. *Results:* This section constitutes the main body of the report wherein the results of the study are presented in clear and non-technical terms with liberal use of all sorts of illustrations such as charts, diagrams and the like ones.
6. *Technical appendices:* More detailed information on methods used, forms, etc. is presented in the form of appendices. But the appendices are often not detailed if the report is entirely meant for general public.

Report Format:

There is no one best format for all reports. Format depends on several relevant variables. One must employ a suitable format to create desirable impression with clarity. Report must be attractive. It should be written systematically and bound carefully. A report must use the format (often called structure) that best fit the needs and wants of its readers. Normally, following format is suggested as a basic outline, which has sufficient flexibility to meet the most situations.

Research report is divided into three parts as:

I. First Part (Formality Part):

- (i) Cover page
- (ii) Title page
- (iii) Certificate or statement
- (iv) Index (brief contents)
- (v) Table of contents (detailed index)
- (vi) Acknowledgement
- (vii) List of tables and figures used
- (viii) Preface/forwarding/introduction
- (ix) Summary report

II. Main Report (Central Part of Report):

- (i) Statement of objectives
- (ii) Methodology and research design
- (iii) Types of data and its sources
- (iv) Sampling decisions
- (v) Data collection methods
- (vi) Data collection tools
- (vii) Fieldwork
- (viii) Analysis and interpretation (including tables, charts, figures, etc.)
- (ix) Findings
- (x) Limitations

(xi) Conclusions and recommendations

(xii) Any other relevant detail

III. Appendix (Additional Details):

(i) Copies of forms used

(ii) Tables not included in findings

(iii) A copy of questionnaire

(iv) Detail of sampling and rate of response

(v) Statement of expenses

(vi) Bibliography – list of books, magazines, journals, and other reports

(vii) Any other relevant information

Key Considerations/Factors of Research Report

While preparing research report, following issues must be considered:

(i) Objectives

(ii) Type of problem/subject

(iii) Nature and type of research

(iv) Audience or users of research work

(v) Size of report

(vi) Form of writing – handwritten, typed, or computerized.

(vii) Time and cost

(viii) Language

(ix) Contents of report

(x) Order of contents

(xi) Number of copies

(xii) Format – type and size of paper; lengths width, and depth of report; and pattern of writing including paragraph, indent, numbering, font size and type, colouring, etc.

(xiii) Binding (for soft, and, particularly, for hard copy) – type, quality of material, colour, etc., related issues.

Limitations in research report

1. **Sample size/sample bias.** For example, let's say 100 hundred people should participate in your survey. Each person may give you individual results, but it does not mean that the same results belong to the whole population.
2. **Access to data.** You will not always be able to go through all the resources. You can't gather all the data you want for your research since it will take a lot of time. Because of it, your work might not cover each aspect.
3. **Lack of time.** Often deadlines are the reason why your study and research might not be complete. When we get a task, we have a limited amount of time to do it. To get a good grade, we need to submit the assignment prior to the deadline.
4. **Financial resources.** Sometimes we need some equipment or additional software to conduct the research. This might be a problem since we don't always have the sum we need.
5. **Data collection.** There are different ways to collect data: interviews, surveys, questionnaire, etc. The way you collect data might be a real limitation since the answers and the results vary.
6. **Method.** When you are finding new information, you use a specific research method. Different methods give you various opportunities. Quality of the datum you get often depends on the method you choose.

Footnote

Footnote is notes placed at the bottom of a page. They cite references or comment on a designated part of the text above it. For example, say you want to add an interesting comment to a sentence you have written, but the comment is not directly related to the argument of your paragraph. In this case, you could add the symbol for a footnote. Then, at the bottom of the page you could reprint the symbol and insert your comment.

A footnote is a reference, explanation, or comment placed below the main text on a printed page. Footnotes are identified in the text by a numeral or a symbol.

In research papers and reports, footnotes commonly acknowledge the sources of facts and quotations that appear in the text.

A few footnote usage rules:

- Footnotes are numbered consecutively throughout the research paper, not restarting numbering on each page.
- Each quotation requires a footnote.
- Footnotes are always double-spaced.
- Footnotes are referenced using a superscript number.

Footnotes in Research

- Footnotes can be found on the bottom of the same page as the original quote to which it is referring, or at the end of the paper or book entirely, after the page of References.
- Entire citations are not necessary in footnotes; instead, the footnote should merely refer to the name of the publication and date as listed on the reference page.
- If a copyright permission footnote is added, the original letter regarding copyright permission must be attached to the paper.

Types of Footnote

There are six different types of footnotes:

- Normal – contain the text of any footnote in the document.
- Separator – define the separator used to separate the footnote from the document text.
- Continuation separator – define the separator used to separate the footnote from the document text when the footnote or endnote is a continuation from the previous page.
- Continuation notice – define the notice text to let readers know that the footnote has continued on the next page.
- A **content footnote** is used to provide additional information or reference that simplifies or supplements information in the text.
- A **copyright permission footnote** is used to give credit to the source for long quotations, tables or graphs, and other lengthy information within a text. Both types of footnotes will appear at the bottom of the printed page and the text that has a footnote will have a small letter or number following it. This same number or letter will appear at the bottom of the page beside the footnote.

Footnote Style Formatting

There are three main styles for footnotes used in writing today, and each has a slightly different way of making a footnote: APA (American Psychological Association), MLA (Modern Language Association), and Chicago Manual.

APA: Content notes should use a superscript number that is also used at the bottom of the page with the note. APA does not recommend the use of footnotes unless it is necessary for explanation because it is expensive to reproduce.

MLA: MLA format for footnotes is very similar to APA style. MLA recommends limited use of footnotes and if they are needed, to use endnotes in place of footnotes. The reason for this is because footnotes can often take up too much space at the bottom of the page whereas the endnotes don't take up any room because they are on a separate page at the end of the piece of writing.

Footnote Format Examples

Sample Footnote #1

Text within the research paper:

It is well known that patients who suffer from Crohn's and Colitis can have many debilitating symptoms.¹

Footnote:

¹See the CCFA.org website for more information about the symptoms that Crohn's and Colitis patients may experience.

Sample Footnote #2

Text within the research paper:

A variety of research suggests that developing basic literacy skills in early childhood can contribute to greater success in acquiring strong comprehension skills later in school.²

Footnote:

²A variety of research based articles and ideas for developing early learning skills can be found at www.readingrockets.org.

Sample Footnote #3

Text within the research paper:

While it is generally assumed that all large dogs are in need of copious amounts of exercise that would prevent them from being suitable pets for smaller residences, recent research has suggested this is a fallacy.³

Footnote:

³See Smith (2013) to see more information specific to large dogs and exercise needs.

Sample Footnote #4

Text within the research paper:

In many states, malpractice lawsuit filings have limitations that may prevent the injured from pursuing the route necessary to receive compensation for injuries due to negligence by doctors, nurses, or other hospital staff.⁴

Footnote:

⁴Refer to Johannsen (2007) to access information about limitations by state.

Sample Footnote #5

Text within the research paper:

While most candy and sweet treats are believed to have a negative effect on those with, or susceptible to getting, diabetes, more research is supporting the idea that chocolate, when consumed in moderation, can have positive effects on the body.⁵

Footnote:

⁵Refer to Braunshweig (2011) for specific benefits of chocolate consumption.

Sample Footnote #6

Text within the research paper:

The development of aptitude with technology in young children should not overshadow the necessity of play which is crucial to building important gross and fine motor skills in early childhood.⁶

Footnote:

⁶See Harsenwusen (2014) for research demonstrating the lack of motor skill development in young children using tablets for more than an hour each day.

Sample Footnote #7

Text within the research paper:

Interstitial cystitis is a condition that can cause pain and embarrassment for women of any age, and affects many aspects of her life.⁷

Footnote:

⁷See www.urologyhealth.org for more information on the debilitating effects interstitial cystitis can have.

Bibliography

A bibliography is a list of all of the sources researcher have used (whether referenced or not) in the process of researching research work. In general, a bibliography should include:

- the authors' names
- the titles of the works
- the names and locations of the companies that published your copies of the sources
- the dates your copies were published
- the page numbers of your sources (if they are part of multi-source volumes)

Bibliography can be defined as,

“A list of reference materials (involving any kind of content ; text, music, paintings, video etc.) elucidating the type, nature and other detailed information on the basis of name, date, place and genre of the materials.”

“A complete categorical compilation of any type of content based on its creator(s), editors and time (of production, distribution).”

Bibliography, also known as works cited, reference list is basically an orderly study and referencing of books and source materials used in academic research. It might or might not include any information on the literary analysis or criticism of the materials cited.

Types of Bibliographies

There are many types of bibliographies and the leading bibliographies defer slightly in the names they assign to its various branches. There are primarily-

Annotated Bibliography

This provides a brief description or annotation of the cited sources. The annotation comprises of a brief summary of content along with a short analysis or evaluation.

Current Bibliography

It provides a list of published material and sources which are recently published or currently recorded material. The purpose of a current bibliography is to report recent literature as soon as it is published.

Retrospective Bibliography

It provides a lists of documents or parts of documents (articles) published in previous years, as distinct from a current bibliography.

Serial Bibliography

It is published over a period of known and pre-defined time slots. Time intervals for serial bibliographies normally range from weekly to annual basis and informs on the updates of book and research article titles.

National Bibliography

This provides a list of documents and sources published in a particular country and are produced in the national or local language of a country.

International Bibliography

This provides a list of works, sources, publications, manuals, books, notes, articles and websites collected from worldwide sources.

Subject Bibliography

This provides a list of works and sources relates to a specific subject.

Period Bibliography

It provides a list of works and publications produced within a specific period range.

Analytical Bibliography

It refers to the collection of sources and material for the purpose of critical study and evaluation and refers to the following categories:

Descriptive (Physical) Bibliography

This provides a list of detailed facts for a book analysis by listing its size, format, binding, and publication details.

Historical Bibliography

It provides a list of contextual factors related to the production of a book i.e. printing details, publishing, bookselling and binding etc.

Textual Bibliography

It provides a list of literary materials, concerned with identification and editing of transcription errors from manuals, manuscripts, transcripts, scribes and inscriptions.

Enumerative (Systematic) Bibliography

It provides a list of the list of books according to some system, common theme or reference plan and includes information on by author, by subject, or by date. Contrary to a descriptive style, an enumerative one only provides minute details on books and sources.

Importance and Use of Bibliographies

A mandatory requirement of copyright laws and academic conventions is that whenever a research paper is written, there should be a section at the end of it where you acknowledge the sources used.

So, bibliography means listing all the sources which you have consulted while writing your essay or research article.

The sources may be in the form of printed and online books, websites, web documents, web blogs, newspaper articles, journals, pod casts, wikis, unpublished material, maps etc.

Citation ensures that the information contained in the research paper is based on logic, truth and facts. Absence of references or bibliography indicates that the paper may be a piece of plagiarism.

Standard Citation Styles Used in Bibliographies

There are various formats used in the creation of bibliographies such as the **American Psychological Association (APA)**, **Modern Language Association of America (MLA)** and **Chicago Manual of Style** and **Council of Biology Editors (CBE)**.

The APA style of referencing is common in the papers written on topics of social sciences; MLA style is used in field of humanities; and CBE is a popular citation style in the natural sciences.

APA Bibliography Format Definition and Examples

APA style referred by American Psychological Association uses both in-text citations and a list of references to document the sources. This style is used in social sciences. For Example,

American Psychological Association. (2010). *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

Follow this format while citing book with one author using APA style:

1. **Author:** Include author's last name and only the initials of the first name.
2. **Year:** Year of publication will be included in parenthesis.
3. **Title:** Title should be in italics and only the first word of title should be capitalized or any proper noun.
4. **Place of Publication:** Mention city name followed by country name separated by a comma.
5. **Publisher:** include the name of publisher.

Author's Last name, Initials . (Year) . *Title (italicized)* . Place of publication : Publisher.

Spielberg, S. (2010). *Creative Writing*. Boston, MA: Bedford/St.Martin's.

MLA Bibliography Format Definition and Examples

MLA style is used in English and humanities. MLA bibliography uses in-text citation to list sources within the text of your research document and a list of works cited at the end of research document.

You can easily find the MLA citation from book's title page and copyright page. Follow this format while citing book with one author:

1. **Author:** Last name should come before the first name.
2. **Title:** Title should be in full and it should be capitalized and italicized.

3. **Publisher:** Use the full name of publisher.
4. **Date:** Use most recent publication date mentioned in book's copyright page.

Author's last, First Name . *Title(italicized)* . Publisher , Date.

Hall,Thomas A. *Court Cases*. FT Press, 2010.

Standard Bibliography Format

Bibliography Format for a Book

A standard bibliography for a book typically consists of the following information:

- Author(s)
- Title
- Publisher
- Date of Publication

Bibliography Format for a Periodical & Journal Article

An entry for a journal or periodical article contains the following information:

- Author(s)
- Article Title
- Journal Title
- Volume Number
- Pages
- Date of Publication

Bibliography Format for Internet Sources

Format for internet sources usually includes the following information:

- Author (Website)
- Article Title
- Publication Information
- Version
- Date of Publication
- Location (Digital Object Identifier – DOI or URL)

Reference

A **references** page is the last page of an essay or **research** paper that's been written in APA style. It lists all the sources you've used in your project so readers can easily find what you've cited.

References can be described as giving credit, with citation, to the source of information used in one's work. Research is a buildup on what other people have previously done thus referencing helps to relate your own work to previous work.

References are a way to provide evidence to support the assertions and claims in your own assignments.

References are also a way to give credit to the writers from whom you have borrowed words and ideas.

References should always be accurate, allowing your readers to trace the sources of information you have used. The best way to make sure you reference accurately is to keep a record of all the sources you used when reading and researching for an assignment.

Importance of References

Referencing is important for a number of reasons, some of which include:

- It allows for acknowledgement of the use of other people's opinions, ideas, theories and inventions.
- Helps readers understand what influenced the writer's thinking and how their ideas were formulated.
- Helps the readers evaluate the extent of the writer's reading.
- Enables readers to visit source materials for themselves and verify the information.

What kind of information do I need to reference

Printed books are not the only sources that require acknowledgement. ANY words, ideas or information taken from ANY source requires a reference.

Reference when you are using words or ideas from:

- books and journal articles
- newspapers and magazines
- pamphlets or brochures
- films, documentaries, television programs or advertisements
- websites or electronic resources
- letters, emails, online discussion forums

- personal interviews
- lecturers or tutors. (Not always necessary but check with your lecturer or tutor about their preferences before you draw on their ideas.)

You also need to reference when you reprint any diagrams, illustrations, charts or pictures.

No need to reference when you are:

- writing your own observations or experiment results, for example, a report on a field trip
- writing about your own experiences, for example, a reflective journal
- writing your own thoughts, comments or conclusions in an assignment
- evaluating or offering your own analysis
- using 'common knowledge' (facts that can be found in numerous places and are likely to be known by a lot of people) or folklore
- using generally accepted facts or information. This will vary in different disciplines of study. If in doubt, ask your tutor.

Reference Styles

Reference styles are standardised rules for presenting information about the sources used in a text. Typically, a style will describe how to organise information about author(s), publication year, title and page numbers.

There are many different ways to organise the references of a text. Some reference styles follow the author-year format, while others are based on footnotes and/or numerical references. Some of the most commonly used reference styles in academic writing are:

- American Psychological Association (APA6th) – author-year, commonly used in psychology, economics, educational sciences and health sciences (see the free guide at Purdue University)
- The Chicago styles (see the free guide at Purdue University or the licensed *Quick guide*):
 - Chicago 16 A – footnote system
 - Chicago 16 B – author-year, commonly used in the humanities
- Harvard – author-year, a general reference system used in many disciplines (and used here at Søk & Skriv). See for example *Quote, Unquote*.
- Modern Language Association (MLA) – author -page number, widely used in linguistics and literature (see, e.g., the description at Cornell University).
- Vancouver – numbered system, commonly used in medicine, health sciences and natural sciences.

- IEEE (Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers) – used in, e.g., engineering and computer science (cf. the Citation Compass).

Different academic journals use different reference styles.