Vancouver Style: Overview

The Vancouver guidelines were developed as a result of a meeting of medical journal editors in Vancouver, BC. They became known as the Vancouver Group, and have since expanded into the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE). Vancouver style is also known as the Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals and is used by most biomedical journals and many scientific journals.

- **Vancouver Style 1** uses in-text citations represented consecutively by citation numbers written in superscript.
- **Vancouver Style 2** uses in-text citations represented consecutively by citation numbers in parenthesis.

This handout focuses on Vancouver Style 1, which is most often used in medical research papers. Be sure to check with your instructor for their specific referencing requirements.

Documentation

In academic writing, you must cite sources for all borrowed information, visuals, and ideas—including material you have paraphrased (put into your own words). However, you should not cite sources for generally known facts. If in doubt, cite your source.

Complete Vancouver documentation consists of two elements:

- an **in-text citation** consecutively numbered in order of occurrence in your paper. They denote where you are presenting information borrowed from a source or where you are referring to published research;
- a **reference list** giving complete publication information for all sources cited in the paper. The references must be presented in the order that they first appear in the text, disregarding alphabetical order.

Examples of in-text citations and reference list entries, along with formatting guidelines, are included below. While the examples are single-spaced, in Vancouver style, you must double space your entire paper, including inset quotations and your reference list.

In-text Citations

### Guidelines for a single reference

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXAMPLE 1</th>
<th>EXAMPLE 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Smith¹ argued that the high infant mortality rate in the U.S. may be attributed in part to the high cost of medical insurance.</td>
<td>Economic barriers to adequate prenatal care were found to be higher for some ethnic groups in Smith's study.¹</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• Each reference that is cited within the text is assigned a unique number in the order in which it appears in the text. This number should be denoted in superscript (see example 1).
• If a reference is used more than once in the same text, the same citation number is used.
  o If the citation is placed at the end of a sentence, citation numbers are placed after commas and periods, but before colons and semi-colons.
• When paraphrasing, do NOT use exact wording from the source. If it is necessary to take wording directly from a source, use double quotation marks around the borrowed wording. State the page number corresponding to the direct quotation in parenthesis with the citation number (see example 4, below).

Guidelines for citing multiple references

EXAMPLE 3

Several clinical trials\(^2-4,6,9\) have shown that there is a correlation between...

• When more than one reference needs to be cited at once, inclusive citation numbers are denoted using a hyphen, and non-inclusive citation numbers are separated using commas. For example, if you wanted to reference citation numbers 2, 3, 4, 6, and 9 it would be 2-4, 6, 9

In-text Citations for a Quoted Passage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXAMPLE 4</th>
<th>EXAMPLE 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In his research, Graham found that “there is no correlation between a person’s sleeping habits and the amount of time spent watching television”, (^6) ((p \text{ 23}))</td>
<td>In his concluding remarks, Frank(^9) ((p \text{ 62})) states that: “After much consideration, it was found that this method would not be successful in treating insomnia. What was first considered to be an effective plan of action has been disproved in the clinical trial … [B]y using the findings from this study, we hope to gain insight into other possible methods of treatment.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• When it is necessary to use a direct quotation from reference material, place double quotation marks around the borrowed words. Include the page number where the direct quotation was taken from in parenthesis along with the citation number (the page number will also be in superscript, as in example 4).
• For quotations that are longer than two lines (about 40 words), the borrowed text should be inserted as a distinct paragraph that is indented by about 5 spaces and enclosed by quotation marks (see example 5).
• Use an ellipsis (three spaced dots) to indicate that part of a quotation has been left out.
• It may be necessary to add words for clarity. Additional words, and substitutions can be indicated with the use of square brackets [like this].
• To introduce a long quotation effectively, try preceding it with what could be a complete sentence, followed by a colon (as in example 5).
Formatting a Vancouver Reference List

Page formatting: Full citations for all referenced material should be provided in a Reference List on a new page at the end of your document. The title of the reference list may vary so check with the expectations of your instructor.

Arranging entries: Provide full citations for all sources that were referenced in your text. Arrange the entries numerically in the order that they appeared in your work, disregarding alphabetization. As such, a referenced work by Wilson may appear first in the list, while Abbotsford appears sixth.

Authors’ names: List the names in the order that they appear in the reference material. Invert authors’ names (putting surname first) and change middle names and first names to initials (there should be a maximum of two initials after each surname). Write out all authors’ names up to six authors and separate each author’s name by a comma and a space (i.e., van Hooijdonk R, Winters T, Fischer JC, van Dongen-Lases EC, Krinsley JS, Preiser J, et al.) End the author information with a period.

Titles: Use normal type for all titles (book titles, journal titles, article titles, magazine titles, etc.). Capitalize only the first word of article titles and any proper nouns or abbreviations.

Page numbers: Give the inclusive page numbers of the reference materials when necessary. Do not repeat page numbers unless they are followed by a letter (i.e., 117-119 becomes 117-9 but 34A-37A is acceptable). End the page information with a period.

Web addresses: When using an online reference source, include a web address where the resource can be located. Follow the web address with a period only when the URL ends in a forward slash (/), otherwise omit following the address with punctuation.
## Sample CSE Reference List Entries


### GUIDELINES

| Article Title | Enter the title by capitalizing only the first word, or any proper nouns/abbreviations. Separate the title from the subtitle using a colon. End the article title with a period, unless the title already ends with a question mark or an exclamation mark. |
| Journal Title | Cite the journal name as it was published at the time (for example if a journal changed its name in 1995 but your article is from 1992, use the old title). Abbreviate all significant words in the title, omitting conjunctions and prepositions, and capitalize all remaining words. For guidelines on abbreviating titles see Citing Medicine: [http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK7282/box/A33351/?report=objectonly](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK7282/box/A33351/?report=objectonly) |
| Date of Publication | The date should be presented in the format: YYYY MMM DD. Abbreviate names of months to three letters (i.e., Jan, Aug). End the date of publication with a semi-colon, unless there is no volume or issue provided, then end with a colon. |
| Volume/Issue Number | Omit all abbreviations such as vol., iss., or no. Insert the volume number first using a hyphen to indicate multiple volumes if necessary (i.e., 5-6). Follow the volume number with the issue number in parenthesis, also using a hyphen to indicate multiple issues if necessary (i.e., (2-3)). End issue information with a colon. |
| Page | Follow the guidelines for page numbers as described in “Formatting a Vancouver Reference List.” If page numbers are not available for a digital document, include the approximate number of pages. |
| DOI | When possible, included the doi number of the digital articles. When not available you can included a general URL for the location (i.e., Available from: [http://www.annalsofintensivecare.com/content/4/1/8](http://www.annalsofintensivecare.com/content/4/1/8)) |
**GUIDELINES**

| Editor and Secondary Authors | The name of editors or other secondary authors come after the title of the book using the same format for author's names as described above. After the last listed editor insert a comma, a space, and the word “editor” or “editors” (e.g., Drake RL, Vogl AW, Mitchell AW, editors). |
| Name of the Part of the Book | Enter the name of the part of the book including Chapter, Table, etc. without abbreviating and including a number if applicable (i.e., Chapter 3). End the name with a comma and a space. |
| Title of the Part of the Book | Follow the name of the part of the book with the title. Capitalize only the first word or any proper nouns and abbreviations. End the title with a semi-colon and a space. |
| Type of Medium | After the title of the book, [Internet] is inserted to indicate that the resource was accessed online. |
| Place of Publication | Insert the city of publication, followed by the two letter abbreviation of U.S. states or Canadian provinces in parenthesis only for smaller cities or when location may be unclear (i.e., Charleston (SC) or Charleston (WV)). If there is more than one city of publication, use the first listed or the one in the largest or bold font type. If no place of publication can be found or inferred use [place unknown]. End place of publication with a colon. |
| Publisher | Insert the name of the publisher exactly as it appears on the text. End the publisher information with a semi-colon. |
| Date of Publication | It is only necessary to indicate the year of publication, but the month of publication may be included. If there is no date of publication but a copyright date is found, precede the year with a small letter c. If no date of publication or copyright can be found, use [date unknown]. End the date of publication with a period. For digital materials, follow the date of publication with a date of last update, as well as the date of citation in square followed by a period. These two dates are separated by a semi-colon. |
| Page Numbers | Follow the guidelines for page numbers as described in the section “Formatting a Vancouver Reference List” but begin with “p.” and a space. If the information appears in two different sections, list both, separated by the word “and” (i.e., p. 201 and p. 305-307). |
| Web Address | Include a web address where the book can be located. |

**BOOKS (ONLINE)**


**BOOKS (PRINT)**


GUIDELINES

Name of Author
If no author name is found, begin the citation with the name of the article.

Article Title
After the title of the article, insert [Internet] to indicate that the article is web-based.

Newspaper Title
Do not abbreviate or remove any words in the newspaper title. Keep any capitalization. If the newspaper has different editions, indicate the edition in parenthesis after the title, i.e., (2nd Ed.).

Date Cited
After the date of publication, include the date cited in square brackets.

Section
Abbreviate Section to Sect. and add the number or name of the section. If one cannot be found, end the date section with a colon and insert the page location (i.e., 2003 May 15:4).

Column Number
Abbreviate column to col. and follow it with the column in which the article begins. Put the information in parenthesis and follow with a period.

Page Count
If location or page count isn’t indicated, estimate the total length of the article in screens or paragraph numbers and surround it with square brackets.

Web Address
Include a web address where the article can be found.

ARTICLE IN A DAILY NEWSPAPER (ONLINE & PRINT)

GUIDELINES

Place of Publication
The place of publication is the city in which the institution granting the degree is located. As with books, two letter abbreviations of states and provinces should be included for smaller cities or ambiguous city names.

Publisher
The publisher is the name of the institution that is granting the degree.

Page Numbers
Provide the total number of pages in the thesis or dissertation, not including the appendices or indices unless included in the page count. Follow with a space and the letter p.

DISSERTATION AND THESSES
**ENCyclopedia OR REFERENCE WORK**


**Guidelines:**

- If the encyclopedia/dictionary/etc. is in print form, [Internet] is omitted. The edition (if applicable) is inserted after the source title and followed by a period (i.e., a dictionary of modern English usage. 1st ed.). The date cited, estimated length, and web address are also omitted, and are replaced with a page location (i.e., c2006. Cancer; p. 50).
- If the reference material has one or more author, the author’s/authors’ name(s) will appear before the reference title (see general guidelines for authors’ names).

**TECHNICAL AND RESEARCH REPORTS**


**Guidelines:**

There are three referencing possibilities for technical or research reports:

- The first is that the report was written by and published by the sponsoring organization. In this case, the citation will be written in the same form as above.
- The second is that the report was written by the performing organization and published by the sponsoring organization. In this case, the performing organization is written after the author name(s) in brackets. For example, if the University of Calgary was the performing organization it may read: (Department of Chemistry, University of Calgary, Calgary, AB). Additionally, Contract No.: will be inserted after Report No.
- The last is that the report was written by and published by the performing organization. Contract No. will be inserted after Report No., no note will be made after the author name(s), but a note is added at the end of the citation. If the report was supported by Statistics Canada, the note would read: Supported by Statistics Canada.
- If the technical or research report is in print, omit [Internet], the date cited, and the web address. If applicable, insert the edition after the report title, followed by a period.
References

8. Weidner J. Saturday’s walk for organ transplants celebrates life. The Waterloo Region Record [Internet]. 2012 May 2 [cited 2012 May 2]; Local:[about 2 screens]. Available from: http://www.therecord