

Compiling a working bibliography

1. Start from day one

Including a full bibliography and appropriate references is an essential part of any dissertation or long essay project. It is important to keep notes of what you read and the material you find useful as you go along. This prevents you having to trace information about your sources at the last minute. It is very easy to forget key information: for example, which edition was used?

2. Collect all the relevant information

Remembering to make a clear note of the sources you use and the information they contain is central to being able to produce any assignment. For a dissertation it is even more important because you will probably be consulting more sources than usual due to the length of the project.

In addition to the bibliographic information you need to note, it can also be helpful to note the location of your source. For example:

- Was it recommended by a tutor?
- Did you find a reference to it in another source, either in the bibliography or mentioned in the text?
- If you located it in a library, what classmark is given? – This can be helpful for identifying whereabouts in the library you found it (to save time going to the different floors).

3. Have a system

Develop a system of storage that works for you. Additionally, be consistent with the details you note down and if you are uncertain whether some information will be useful or not, make a note of it anyway. If perhaps the date is missing or unclear, note this in full rather than just omitting that piece of information from your records. Try and get used to using the format of the referencing system you are required to use (i.e. Chicago; Harvard; MHRA; MLA).