How and When to Cite References

References are needed to:

- give credit for language you quote from another author or source
- support your facts with a reliable scientific source
- give credit for language you paraphrase from another author or source

Citations are given an abbreviated form within the body or text of your paper by including the author’s name and date contained in parentheses. See the examples below.

References are compiled in a reference page or bibliography at the end of the paper. A sample bibliography is given on page 2.

Examples of citing references within a text:

(1) Direct quotation

"From a genetic perspective, races are groups within species that are distinguished by different allele frequencies" (Lewis, 2001, p.127).

Include the author’s last name, date of publication, and page number in the citation. If you quote a large body of text, generally three sentences or more, indent the quoted material and omit the quotation marks:

The definition of race based on skin color is more a social construct than a biological term. From a genetic perspective, races are groups within species that are distinguished by different allele frequencies. Technically, then, races could be defined by any trait, such as the ability to digest lactose in milk.

(Lewis, 2001, p.127)

(2) Support for facts

During the industrial revolution in Britain, a new race of the moth *Biston betularia*, which had very dark wings and could blend in with soot-covered trees, quickly evolved. This phenomenon was called industrial melanism (Hart and Clark, 1997).

In example (2) I have described industrial melanism in moths and cited the reference from which I took the facts. It is important to cite a reference for the source of any scientific fact that is not common knowledge. If you use your own language to describe these facts, as in example (2), quotation marks are not needed.
In genetics, a race is defined as a group of individuals of the same species which has allele frequencies that are different from other groups of the same species (Lewis, 2001).

Example (3) is a paraphrase of the quote from Ricki Lewis given in example (1). Here is the quotation again: "From a genetic perspective, races are groups within species that are distinguished by different allele frequencies" (Lewis, 2001, p.127). When you paraphrase, you are using your own words to restate the language of another person. The citation gives credit for the source and ideas used in the definition. Quotation marks are not used for a paraphrase.

Example of a Reference Page for the GN 301 paper:


Fisler, John, Vichinsky, Eric and Walters, Martha. 2001. Stem cell transplantation for sickle cell disease: can we reduce the toxicity? *Pediatric Pathology and Molecular Medicine*. 20(1):73-86.


McKenzie, Wendell. March 21, 2003. Personal interview at Department of Genetics, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC.


( NOTE: Many web sites, including OMIM, give a preferential format for citing that particular site. Use it. The above is the preferred way to cite OMIM as a whole.)


The examples above are, in order: a chapter in a book, a journal article, a book, an interview, a web site and a web article with no author. If you are comfortable with another standardized method for citing references (e.g., Endnotes), you may use it. The overall point is to be consistent and to provide all information necessary for a reader to find the reference you are citing.

Re-read the first set of instructions for the GN 301 paper that you received early in the semester! Remember to have two sections for your references, one for Part A and one for Part B of your paper.
• Use complete sentences!

• Pluralize nouns correctly. For example:

  My kidneys are diseased. NOT: My kidney’s are diseased.

• To use an apostrophe to specify ownership, use ‘s unless the subject ends in an s. For example:

  Dr. McKenzie’s pedigree is sound at the beginning of the course pack.
  We may have an opportunity to see Prince Charles’ pedigree.

• Italicize scientific (Latin binomial) names. For example, humans are *Homo sapiens*. The scientific name for the round worm that is a model organism for genetic experiments is *Caenorhabditis elegans*, also abbreviated *C. elegans*. You may also encounter the fruit fly as another model organism; its Latin binomial name is *Drosophila melanogaster*.

• Don’t assume that the reader knows what every acronym stands for! When discussing a disease or gene with a long, multi-word name, the FIRST mention of the disease or name should be given in full, followed by its (NOT it’s) acronym in parentheses. After this first mention, you may use the acronym only. For example:

  I am interested in the genetics of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) because ADHD occurs in my family.

  OR

  My sister has multiple sclerosis (MS). I understand that certain human leukocyte antigens (HLA) are associated with some diseases, such as MS. I would like to be tested for my HLA type, and talk to a genetic counselor about my risk for MS.

• For purposes of the summary reports (SRs), when you quote directly from your chosen article within the text of your report, please use quotation marks and follow with the author’s name in parentheses. For example, here is a quote from a New York Times article about the death of Dolly, the cloned sheep, by Gina Kolata on February 15, 2003: (www.nytimes.com/2003/02/15/science/15DOLL)

  “Because of the patent application on the cloning process that produced her, Dolly’s birth was kept secret for months” (Kolata).