APA Referencing Frequently Asked Questions

What is the difference between a reference list and a bibliography?

- A reference list is the detailed list of references that are cited in your work. Therefore, it includes the full bibliographical information on sources, so that the reader can identify and then locate the source. A bibliography is a detailed list of references but also includes background readings or other material that you may have read but not actually cited. Different courses may require just a reference list, just a bibliography, or even both. It is better to check with your tutor first. Both the reference list and the bibliography are located at the end of the work. When using the APA style of referencing, both the bibliography and the reference list are arranged in alphabetical order by the author’s surname, or title (for when there is no author).

What do I do if the publication has no date?

- You simply write ‘n.d.’ in brackets. For example, (Jones, n.d.). Take a look at a further example below;
  - In-text citation:
    - He was seen by many to be a great man (BBC History, n.d.).
  - Reference list:

Can I mix referencing styles?

- No, you should never mix referencing styles. Always be consistent.

When should I omit page numbers?

- If you are summarising what an author has argued in a book or article, you do not need to give page numbers.

Can I cite lots of sources in the same sentence?

- Yes, but only cite more than one author in the same sentence if they make similar points or use similar methods or evidence. If this cannot be avoided, put the sources in alphabetical order and separate each one with a comma. See the example below;

Your Subject Advisor will be able to assist you with any help, advice, or support you need. Go to http://libguides.bham.ac.uk/subjectsupport/index and locate your subject, and then subject advisor, for contact details.
Are my footnotes included in my word count?

- Yes, they are counted in your word count. However, your bibliography is not counted in your word count.

What are DOIs?

- DOIs are digital object identifiers – a character string used to uniquely identify a digital object.

What sources can I legally use?

- At present copyright law allows only small extracts of items to be copied legally provided that they are referenced. Only copy what is completely necessary, and only when the use falls into one or more of the following categories:
  - personal private study;
  - non-commercial research;
  - criticism and review;
  - illustration for instruction;
  - parody pastiche or caricature;
  - or quotation.

Students' use will fall under personal private study, criticism and review, illustration, and/or quotation. For further information, go to: https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/copyright