1. RSC style: Background and further help

Many journals use the RSC approved style, and it is the standard format used by Chemists at Nottingham Trent University. The RSC provide some guidance for authors using the style: http://www.rsc.org/images/Author_guidelines_tcm18-186308.pdf however, this guidance does not detail every aspect of citation and referencing in the style.

The following guide has been developed to help you identify the key components and conventions of the RSC Style, as well as providing some examples demonstrating how these can be used for a range of commonly-used sources.

Many practical examples of this style can be found by looking at RSC publications and further help and support is available from your Liaison Librarian.

Please note this is an advisory guide so please check with your lecturers if you have any questions.

2. Essential components of the RSC style

This system can be summarised as follows:

- **Citations** are indicated by superscript numbers and are put into the body of your text to indicate the reference you are referring to.

- **Consecutively numbered references** (i.e. the bibliographic details of the superscript citations) are listed with all necessary information at the end of your work.

References

2.1 Citations and superscript numbers

Superscript numbers are ‘hovering numbers’, e.g.: 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, etc. In Microsoft Word 2010, these can be produced by highlighting a number and holding down (Ctrl + Shift + +) or using the icon below.

Superscript numbers should appear immediately after the word or phrase they relate to and should be placed after punctuation marks, when these occur. Once a superscript number is used for a particular source, you must continue to use the same number all the way through your work to refer to that source.

The convention for using multiple references to illustrate the same point should also be noted - several references can be referred to at once, with two or more references being separated by commas and a consecutive range of three or more separated by a hyphen. This can be illustrated as follows:

...conforming to requirements for practical applications.\(^1\)
...useful materials in developing such applications\(^2,3\)
...this reacts at room temperature\(^{10-15}\) or higher...
...such processes are very expensive\(^{1-3, 10-15}\)

Citation example

Detection of nucleic acids using homogenous assays involving fluorophore-modified oligonucleotides forms the basis of many important applications in molecular biology, genetics and medical diagnostics\(^1,2\) including detection of microorganisms,\(^3\) real-time PCR monitoring,\(^4\) detection of single nucleotide polymorphisms (SNPs),\(^5\) fluorescence in situ hybridization (FISH),\(^6\) and in vivo RNA imaging.\(^7,8\)


Paraphrasing and quoting

Paraphrasing is the method you should use when presenting in your own words the key ideas and information from a source. The source must be appropriately referenced, as you are using the work of another author(s).

The RSC style uses direct quotes sparingly and it is best to apply this in your own work. Quotes must be accompanied by a page number(s), so that others can trace your evidence – these should be put into the superscript, as in the following examples:
I shall discuss Smith’s assumption that “Chemistry is vital”\(^1\)\((p.9)\) for the future of mankind...

As is often noted, “safety goggles are a vital part of Health and Safety practice...they should always be worn...when carrying out lab work”.\(^2\)\((pp.39-40)\)

### 2.2 References at the end of a work

In order to add references to your superscript citations, you will need to create a reference list, containing the full details of all of the sources you have mentioned, at the end of your work. This should be in numerical order.

**Reference list example**


### 3. RSC Style conventions

#### 3.1 Authors

An author’s first name(s) should be given using initials.

*e.g.* John Smith would be J. Smith

**Corporate authors**

For items written by corporate authors (e.g. ICI), the company name should be given. Use an abbreviation if one is commonly given and would be internationally recognisable (e.g. ICI); the full title can be used if not (e.g. Health and Safety Executive).

**Multiple authors**

All authors (or editors) must be listed in the order they appear in the document, and *et al.* (or other abbreviations) **must not be used**.

#### 3.2 Journal title abbreviations

Journal titles should be given in the abbreviated form, as defined in Chemical Abstracts Service Source Index (CASSI) [http://cassi.cas.org/search.jsp](http://cassi.cas.org/search.jsp). If you cannot find an abbreviation for a journal, cite the title in full.
3.3 Consistency

This is one of the key aspects of referencing - a consistent style should be used throughout your work.

3.4 Page numbers

When referring to the pages of articles or chapters within books, use either “p.” (page) or “pp.” (pages).

3.5 Citing works referred to in other works

If you want to refer to a work which you have not read (e.g. you have only read a synopsis), you can mention the work and reference the place where you have read about it.

For example, the work of Colin Barrett has been referred to by Gibbs and Carroll in their book 1001 aspects of laboratory work (2005). You could reference this as follows:

The pioneering work of Colin Barrett (see Gibbs and Carroll) \(^1\) laid the ground for...

4. Reference examples

Below are some examples of the more common sources you may want to reference.

4.1 Books

INITIALS. Author’s surname, *Title*, Publisher, Place of publication, Edition (only if not the first), Year, Pages.


Books with editor(s) instead of author(s)

INITIALS. Editor’s surname, (ed. or eds.) Title, Publisher, Place of publication, Edition (only if not the first), Year, Pages.

4.2 Journal articles

Note that you do not include the title of the journal article in your references, just the abbreviated version of the journal’s title. Journal title abbreviations can be searched for via the Chemical Abstracts Service Source Index; where no abbreviation exists, cite the title in full.

Print journals

INITIALS. Author’s surname, Title of journal (abbreviated), Year, Volume number (issue number), Pages.


E-journals

Follow the style above using either the DOI (Digital Object Identifier) or a URL (if no DOI is available).

INITIALS. Author’s surname. Title of journal (abbreviated), Year, Volume number (issue number), DOI:, Pages.


OR

Articles from databases with full-text PDFs (e.g. the RSC and ACS databases or Science Direct) should be referenced as though they came from print journals – this is because the content will be reproduced in the same way as it would be inside the paper journal.

**Journal articles published online but without page numbers**

INITIALS. Author’s surname. *Title of journal* (abbreviated), Year, DOI:


**Journal articles not yet published**

INITIALS. Author’s surname. *Title of journal* (abbreviated), in press.


**Journal articles submitted for publication but not yet accepted.**

INITIALS. Author’s surname. *Title of journal* (abbreviated), submitted.


### 4.3 Patents


### 4.4 Theses

INITIALS. Author’s surname, Type of thesis, Name of Institution, Year.


J. Smith, MSc Dissertation, Nottingham Trent University, 2013.

### 4.5 Reports

INITIALS. Author’s surname, *Title*, Report number (if available), Publisher, Place of publication, Year.

4.6 Conference proceedings

INITIALS. Author of the paper’s surname, *Title of conference proceedings*, Publisher, Place of publication, Year, Pages.


4.7 Newspaper articles

Print

INITIALS. Author’s surname, Title of article, *Title of the newspaper*, Year, Date, Pages.


If a newspaper has a generic title and may be published in more than one location, you should write the location in square brackets to avoid ambiguity (see this amended example):

T. Macalister, Green energy is the modern gold rush, *The Star* [Boston, Ma.], 2008, 2nd July, 27.

Online

INITIALS. Author’s surname, Title of article, *Title of the newspaper*, Year, Date, Pages (if available), URL, accessed Date.


If an online newspaper is from a database (e.g. Nexis UK) which has no page numbers and does not reproduce the article as it would look in print format, make reference to the database but ignore the page numbers and any URLs or access dates.

T. Macalister, Green energy is the modern gold rush, *The Star* [Boston, Ma.], Nexis UK, 2008, 2nd July.

4.8 Websites

Corporate author, Title, URL, Year, accessed Date.

5. Using RefWorks

RefWorks is the bibliographic software used by NTU which allows you gather, manage and automatically format your references. You can access RefWorks here, along with further guidance on how to customise your account so you can use the ‘Royal Society of Chemistry’ output style.

Please contact your Liaison Librarian for more information.

**NB:** Some aspects of the RSC style are not strictly outlined and can be open to interpretation. References displayed in RefWorks may differ from the guidance produced here and may require editing.

For further advice and help:

**Click on Support in** NOW and access the [Student Learning Room](http://www.ntu.ac.uk/library)

**In Person:** via the Library Information Desks

**Telephone:** 0115 848 2175

**Email:** libinfodirect@ntu.ac.uk

**Online chat:** via the library website [http://www.ntu.ac.uk/library](http://www.ntu.ac.uk/library) look out for the chat buttons: