Guidelines for References

The purpose of a reference list is to give readers a document that they can use to retrieve information from the same sources the authors used. To that end, the reference list must contain accurate information about material that is readily available. In short, if the information is not readily available from a recognized print or electronic source, it should not be included in the reference list.

Standard Print Sources. In ASA—CSSA—SSSA publications, only literature available through libraries or other readily accessible public media may be cited. All other material, such as personal communications (information from someone other than the authors) or unpublished data (information from one or more author named in the byline), is cited in the text as parenthetical matter. Placing "unpublished data" or "personal communication" between the name and year clearly distinguishes these citations from those keyed to the reference list.

The terms in review and in press are not synonymous. Material that is in press has been accepted for publication but has not yet appeared in print. This material may be cited in reference sections because the reader will eventually be able to locate it. Material submitted for publication but not yet accepted may be included in the reference list of your paper during the review process, but upon your paper's acceptance these entries must be converted to citations of unpublished data or personal communication. If the change from review status to in press status occurs before or by the proof stage, the citation can be restored and completed.

Citation Style. The name—year system (e.g., Smith, 1997; ICRISAT, 1998) for giving references is strongly preferred in all ASA—CSSA—SSSA publications, especially books, if only for the simple fact that if references are added or deleted they do not affect the order of other references.

For within—text citations of papers with two authors, name both: Jones and Johnson (1998). With three or more authors, use 'et al.:' Smith et al. (1997) or Smith et al. (9). For two or more articles using the same within—text citation, add a distinguishing letter to the year in both text and list. These citations take the form “Brown (1996a, 1996b)” or “(Smith et al., 1997b).”

If specific pages of a book are cited (rather than an entire chapter), the page or page range follows the text citation and does not appear in the reference entry. Example: Weisman (1998, p. 75).

Preparing the Reference List. References are subject to at least two sources of error. The first involves inaccurate copying of the bibliographic information and/or inaccurate compilation of the reference section after the paper is written (including inconsistency in spelling or year between text and list, as well as sheer errors in the list entry, as when authorship, title, or publication details are mismeasured). The second source of error arises when references are added or dropped from the list (or text) without the matching change in the text (or list). Keep both possibilities in mind when preparing and checking references.

Preparing the Reference Entry. Each reference to a periodical publication must include, in order, the authors, year of publication, full title of the article, publication in which it appears, and volume and inclusive page numbers. (See examples.)

The entry for a chapter or article within a larger work such as a book or proceedings volume must give the authors, year, chapter title, pages, the italicized word 'in', any editors, and the publication title, followed by the volume (for multivolume works) and edition (when more than one has been published). Last comes the publisher and city of publication.

An entry for conference proceedings requires all of the above, and two more pieces of information: the place of the meeting, immediately after the title and ending in a period, then the date. For numbered conferences, the ordinal comes at the end of the conference name (to standardize alphabetization). Be sure to give the publisher and city of publication, even if the place is the same as the conference location. (See examples, below.)

For different articles by the same author or authors published within a single year, distinguish them by adding lowercase letters to the year. Do not use ‘ibid.’ or ‘op cit.’ (See also Alphabetization, below.)

Journal titles are abbreviated according to an international standard, as given in Chemical Abstracts Service Source Index (CASSI, updated yearly). CASSI is available in most research libraries.

For publications without consecutive pagination (i.e., each issue within the volume begins with page 1), include the issue number. Example: 11(2):5–10.

Use acronyms or commonly understood abbreviations (e.g., SSSA, TVA, ICRISAT, U.S. Govt. Print. Office) for publishers in the reference list and in the text citation. For institutional authors, spell out acronyms and abbreviations. As an exception, acronyms are used for the following international agricultural research centers of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) system: CIAT; CIMMYT; CIP; IBPGR; ICARDA; ICRISAT; IFPRI; IITA; IRRI; ISNAR; and WARDA.

For dissertations that are available on microfilm or in abstract form, give the numbers and publication data. If available, please supply the dissertation abstract number or the University Microfilm number; titles and numbers can be searched on-line at http://www.umi.com/hp/Products/Dissertations.htm.

Electronic Sources. As with any reference, the idea is to make it possible for the reader to locate the exact source cited. Give all the usual information as for print publications—author, year, and title—but then provide also the entire uniform resource locator (URL) address, and a date. This date should be the date when the information had last been updated (e.g., from the date-posted line on a Web page) or when the information was accessed (either by the author citing the work or the editor checking the reference). When in doubt, include more information rather than less.

Since the types of electronic resources cited are likely to change with changes in technology, only a few examples are given below. Consult Li and Crane (1996) or their Web page (http://www.uvm.edu/~nrcane/estyles/) for the basic principles and many detailed examples. Li and Crane give examples in both APA (American Psychological Association) and MLA (Modern Language Association) styles; the APA style is the easier one to convert to ASA—CSSA—SSSA style.

Alphabetization. Arrange the list alphabetically by the surnames of authors. Two or more articles by the same author (or authors) are listed chronologically; two or more articles with the same in—text citation are indicated by the letters a, b, c, etc. All single—authored articles of a given individual should precede multiple—author articles of which the individual is senior author. Alphabetize entries with the same first author according to surnames of succeeding coauthors and then by year, when the names are repeated exactly. Example:


Some common types of references are shown below. For more examples, consult the ASA Publications Handbook and Style Manual (1998).


Published April 19, 2013