

Vancouver citation quick reference

Reference patterns, the six-author rule and the strict ICMJE online forms. Checked against the ICMJE Recommendations and NLM Citing Medicine.

REFERENCE PATTERNS

Journal article
Author AA, Author BB, Author CC, Author DD, Author EE, Author FF, et al. Title of article. Journal Abbrev. YYYY;12(3):100-10. doi:10.xxxx/xxxxx

Article with no DOI
Author AA, Author BB. Title of article. Journal Abbrev. YYYY;12(3):100-10.

Book
Author AA. Title of book. 3rd ed. City: Publisher; YYYY.

Edited book
Editor AA, Editor BB, editors. Title of book. 3rd ed. City: Publisher; YYYY.

Chapter
Author AA. Title of chapter. In: Editor AA, editor. Title of book. City: Publisher; YYYY. p. 100-25.

Website
Name of Organisation. Title of page [Internet]. City: Publisher; YYYY [cited YYYY Mon DD]. Available from: https://example.com/page

Report
Author AA. Title of report. City: Name of Agency; YYYY. Report No.: NNNN.

Thesis
Author AA. Title of dissertation [dissertation]. City: University Name; YYYY.

IN-TEXT CITATIONS

On the line	...was effective (1).
In brackets	...was effective [1].
Superscript	...was effective. ¹
A run of sources	...was effective (1–3).
Separate sources	...was effective (1,4).
Which one to use	Whatever the target journal specifies.

AUTHOR NAMES

Order	Surname then initials, run together: Doudna JA.
No punctuation	No comma after the surname, no full stops in the initials.
Up to six	Name every author.
Over six	Name the first six, then et al. AMA stops at three.
Organisation	Printed in full as the author.

ONLINE SOURCE MARKERS

- [Internet] follows the title of any online source.
- [cited YYYY Mon DD] records when you consulted it.
- "Available from:" precedes the URL, with no full stop after it.
- [updated YYYY Mon DD] is added when the page says it was revised.

VANCOUVER AGAINST AMA

Authors before et al.	Six vs three
Place in a book reference	Kept vs dropped
Journal name	Plain vs italic
In-text marker	Journal choice vs superscript
Closing page number	Shortened: 100-10

SIX MISTAKES THAT COST MARKS

- Using the AMA three-author rule.
- Dropping the city from a book reference.
- Spelling journal names out in full.
- Writing the full closing page number.
- Alphabetising the reference list.
- Omitting [Internet] and the cited date.