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Introduction

A fundamental part of academic study is reading the work of other people and using their ideas to develop your own. This book takes you through the process of using your reading (your source material) in your own essays, from deciding what to read to checking your work for mistakes. *How to Use your Reading in your Essays* explains things simply and clearly, gives you key points and practice activities, and uses real sources and student writing.

How to Use your Reading in your Essays shows you:

- how to decide on and search for suitable sources;
- how to understand and question what you read;
- how to stay focused and to know when you have read enough;
- how to know whether you have really understood what you have read;
- what notes to make to be able to use sources properly and effectively;
- why, when and how to use quotations;
- why, when and how to put what you read into your own words;
- how to compare and connect different sources in your writing;
- what words and phrases to use when discussing and referring to sources;
- which grammatical areas often cause problems in student writing;
- how to check your work for mistakes.

You can use this book in the way that suits you best, for example by reading it all through (with or without doing the practice activities) or by using the most relevant sections when you are reading for and writing an essay. Most of the advice and examples in this book also apply to reports and other types of written assignment.

An example of how to use your reading in your essays

Below are the first three paragraphs from an excellent undergraduate essay. Assignment types vary greatly, but the style of writing in this example essay will be common to many of them. We will look at different aspects of this essay throughout this book, and you can find the complete essay in Appendix 1, pp.173–178.

Introduction

Look at the essay section and notice how the student has used what they have read (their sources). The essay section is colour-coded as described below:

Black	= student	student's own ideas, information and words
Light blue	= source	source ideas and information, using either the exact words of the text (quotations) or the student's own words (paraphrase or summary)
Dark blue	= in-text reference or reference reminder phrase	citation or phrase indicating that a source is being used.

**Outline what business ethics is and discuss whether it is important.
(2,500 words)**

<p>Over the past couple of decades, the issue of the ethical stance of businesses appears to have become more explicitly an area of public debate and consumer awareness. Two illustrations of this are the number of publications that give consumers information about a company's ethics (for example the Ethispere and Good Shopping Guide annual lists), and the fact that many large organisations now have an 'our ethics' tab somewhere on their website. The UK ethical sales market is currently valued at over £38 billion, and has been expanding year on year over the past decade, with current growth at about 8.5% (Ethical Consumer Research Association and Triodos Bank 2017). In this essay I will briefly define business ethics, and then consider whether it does and should have value as an aspect of both business activity and business theory and training.</p>	<p>Student's point</p> <p>Sources used as evidence and support</p> <p>Student's aims</p>
<p>Defining what constitutes a business is contentious in itself, but for the purposes of this short essay I will define a business as any profit-making enterprise, including charities (who make profits to invest back into the enterprise). Similarly, there are numerous, overlapping definitions of business ethics. Shaw and Barry (2007) define it as 'what constitutes right and wrong (or good and bad) human conduct in a business context' (p. 25). This is a broad definition that needs some refining in two areas. One distinction to make is that ethics is not the same thing as general morality. Crane and Matten (2016) explain that although morals are a basic premise of ethics, ethics and</p>	<p>Student's points</p> <p>Sources used as evidence and support</p> <p>Student's point</p>

<p>ethical theory go a step further because they focus on how morals can be <i>applied</i> to produce explicit standards and rules for particular contexts, of which business is one. Ferrell, Fraedrich and Ferrell's definition of business ethics as the 'principles and standards that guide behaviour in the world of business' (Ferrell et al. 2002, p.6) is pertinent here, as it emphasises the application of morals to produce codes and guidelines. Codified ethical behaviour usually falls under what's called 'corporate social responsibility' (CSR), which in turn is usually seen as part of corporate governance, although there is overlap between the two areas of activity.</p>	Sources used as evidence and support
<p>The second aspect of defining business ethics which needs unpacking is that, as Crane and Matten point out, ethics is not synonymous with legality. They state that there is some overlap between law and ethics, but that legislation usually only regulates the lowest level of acceptable behaviour. In addition, as Trevino and Nelson (2010) state, the law is limited in what it can do to prevent unacceptable actions, because legislation follows rather than precedes trends in behaviour. Business ethics then, according to Crane and Matten, is mainly concerned with areas of conduct that are not specifically covered by law, and that are therefore open to different interpretations, a fact that means a particular behaviour may be legal albeit viewed by many as unethical.</p>	Student's point
<p>Combining all the perspectives outlined above, I define business ethics as . . .</p>	Student's point
<p>Combining all the perspectives outlined above, I define business ethics as . . .</p>	Sources used as evidence and support
<p>Combining all the perspectives outlined above, I define business ethics as . . .</p>	Student's definition

et al. = and other authors.

Comments on how the student has used their reading in their essay

The student's own points

In these first essay paragraphs the student gives six of their own points and their general essay aims, and starts to give their own definition of business ethics. In each of the first two paragraphs the student first introduces their own point, then uses what they have read (their sources) as evidence and support, and finally makes their own comment and/or moves on to their next point.

You can see this 'source wrapping' sequence by looking at the general colour pattern of the first two paragraphs – black, blue, black. This pattern shows that the student is using sources as support for their own points and comments, rather than letting the sources take over their essay. The third paragraph also does this source wrapping in a way, but with the comment given as the first line of the fourth paragraph to act as a link between the two.

Use of sources

Note that in this essay extract the student uses only two short quotations; those of the definitions given in the second paragraph. In their complete essay the student quotes only five short sentences or sentence phrases and a few key terms; most of the time the student puts the sources into their own words.

Use of in-text references and reference reminder phrases

Every sentence in which the student uses a source contains either an in-text reference or a phrase to remind the reader that the source is still being used (for example, *They state that ...*). The student does this not only when they give a quotation but also when they put a source into their own words. These in-text references and reference reminder phrases make clear to the reader which ideas and comments are the student's and which ones come from their sources.

The student has used an author and date system of referencing, and this system will be used throughout this book. The other main way to reference is to use a sequence of numbers and corresponding footnotes, called a numeric system. Examples of both referencing styles are given in Appendix 5, pp.203–205.

Vocabulary index

Bold page numbers indicate a word definition (the word will also be found in an example sentence in the relevant section).

Unbold page numbers indicate where an undefined word can be found in an example sentence.

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