

## School of English Literature Style Guide - MHRA

Making sure that you follow recognised conventions in critical writing will assist you in presenting your work clearly, accurately and convincingly. As you develop your writing, you will become more fluent in critical idiom (appropriate style and tone), and in structuring an argument. Your seminars—especially in the first-year module QXE1013 Reading, Thinking and Writing—as well as assignment feedback and the Writing Centre can all assist with these aspects of writing.

There are also conventions for presenting your work on the page, including citations (references). For these aspects of presentation you should follow the guidelines in this document; if in doubt, consult your module co-ordinator.

### Presentation basics

Use an appropriate font: Times New Roman or Calibri are recommended.

The font of both your text and your footnotes should be in size 12.

All assignments must be double-spaced: to change the line spacing in Microsoft Word, click on Format → Paragraph → Line spacing.

You must insert page numbers into your document (Microsoft Word does not usually do this by default): click on Insert → Page numbers.

In the body of your essay and in your footnotes and bibliography, the titles of novels, books, plays, films, collections of works (e.g. of essays or poems), and long-form poems (e.g. *Paradise Lost*) must be presented in italics; titles of shorter works (essays, individual poems, short stories) must be presented in single inverted commas.

## Referencing your essays

When writing a critical essay, you need to provide a reference to a source in all of the following cases:

- when you quote from any source (literary or critical)
- when you paraphrase any source
- when you refer directly to a source (even if you do not actually quote it).

If you do not do so, you open yourself up to the charge of plagiarism, which is taken very seriously, and can result in expulsion from the course.

### **The Harvard System**

Some Schools at Bangor University use the 'Harvard' (author-date) referencing system. The School of English Literature (SoEL) does not use Harvard and does not recommend it, but if you are a Joint Honours student or take English Literature as a minor component (one-third) of your degree scheme, and if your other School requires you to use Harvard, you may if you wish also use it for your essays in SoEL. Otherwise, you should always use footnotes.

### **Footnotes**

One of the most authoritative guides to this system is produced by the Modern Humanities Research Association (MHRA). The complete MHRA guide can be accessed and downloaded by cutting and pasting the following URL into your browser:

<http://www.mhra.org.uk/pdf/MHRA-Style-Guide-3rd-Edn.pdf>

The SoEL's guide summarises the main points. The more you use it, the easier it gets! Our guide will tell you how to:

1. insert references into the body of an essay (p. 3)
2. write footnotes (p. 5)
3. compile a bibliography (p. 8)

# How to Insert References into the Body of an Essay

A paragraph from an essay looks like this:

In 'The Patriot', a short story placed in the October 1909 issue of the Cardiff-based journal, *Nationalist*, Edward Thomas describes the last moments of an anonymous soldier, fighting in the British Army in an unnamed war in a distant 'foreign land'.<sup>1</sup> The final minutes of this soldier's life are juxtaposed against his memories of a childhood journey with his father from their home in London back to Wales. When they reach their destination, father and son discover the 'country of their souls', while the 'strange tongue' spoken by the inhabitants is miraculously identified as 'the boy's own'.<sup>2</sup> The soldier then dies and the narrative is brought to an abrupt halt. 'The Patriot' raises issues that will be explored in this essay. It forcefully suggests its author's Welsh allegiance, whose interests, it implies, are not served by fighting imperialist battles for the British. The story raises the question of whether his literary work can be read in the light of his intention to do something for 'the Welsh cause'.<sup>3</sup> Certainly, in anticipating Thomas's own death, eight years later, in a British army uniform in the First World War, the tale offers a counter to Edna Longley's view that Thomas is a central figure in an English literary tradition.<sup>4</sup> However, 'The Patriot' also challenges Welsh critics of Thomas, one of whom bitterly comments that 'if Anglo-Welsh writing represents a pilgrim's progress towards the New Jerusalem of the blue-blooded English, then Edward Thomas is the success story'.<sup>5</sup>

As you can see, a small number (called a superscript number, or a supernumeral) is placed in the text itself at the relevant point, like this.<sup>6</sup> It should usually be placed at the end of the sentence in which the reference occurs, after the full stop. Once you insert a supernumeral into the text, a footnote will open up at the bottom of the page. To do this in Microsoft Word, place the cursor in

---

<sup>1</sup> Edward Thomas, 'The Patriot', *Nationalist*, 3.29 (1909), 34–43 (p. 34).

<sup>2</sup> Thomas, p. 38.

<sup>3</sup> Hazel Davies, 'Edward Thomas: Twelve Unpublished Letters to O.M. Edwards', *National Library of Wales Journal*, 28.3 (1994), 335–45 (p. 343).

<sup>4</sup> Edna Longley, 'The Great War, History, and the English Lyric', in *The Cambridge Companion to the Literature of the First World War*, ed. by Vincent Sherry (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 57–84 (p. 74).

<sup>5</sup> Tony Conran, *Frontiers in Anglo-Welsh Poetry* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1997), p. 30.

the correct position and click on Insert → Insert Footnote. In each footnote, you need to provide accurate information about your source. The next section (p. 5) shows you how to do this.

### Longer quotations

If you are quoting a longer piece of prose—as a guideline, longer than 50 words, or three lines of text in your essay—do not use inverted commas. Instead, offset the quotation from the margin, and insert a line break before and after the offset material. If you omit words from the quotation (an ellipsis), indicate this by inserting three dots within square brackets, like this: [...]. For example:

Spade's thick fingers made a cigarette with deliberate care, sifting a measured quantity of tan flakes down into curved paper [...], thumbs rolling the paper's inner edge down and up under the outer edge as forefingers pressed it over, thumbs and fingers sliding to the paper cylinder's ends to hold it even while tongue licked the flap, left forefinger and thumb pinching their end while right forefinger and thumb smoothed the damp seam, right forefinger and thumb twisting their end and lifting the other to Spade's mouth.<sup>7</sup>

For more information, especially regarding quotations from other kinds of text, consult the online MHRA, pp. 50-54; and for ellipses, pp. 36-37.

---

<sup>7</sup> James M. Cain, *The Maltese Falcon* [1929], in *The Five Great Novels of James M. Cain* (London: Picador, 1985), p. 72.

# How to Write Footnotes

## Footnoting a Source for the First Time

The first time a source is mentioned, you need to give a complete reference, as follows.

### If your Source is a Book:

#### A book written by a single author:

**Author's Name, *Book Title* (Place of Publication: Publisher, Year of Publication), page number referred to, e.g.:**

Tony Conran, *Frontiers in Anglo-Welsh Poetry* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1997), p. 30.

#### A book written by multiple authors

**Authors' Names, *Book Title* (Place of Publication: Publisher, Year of Publication), page number referred to, e.g.:**

Andrew Bennett and Nicholas Royle, *Introduction to Literature, Criticism and Theory* (Harlow: Pearson, 1995), p. 35.

#### A chapter in a book edited by someone else

**Author's Name, 'Chapter Title', in *Book Title*, ed. by Editor's name (Place of Publication: Publisher, Year of Publication), page numbers of chapter (page number referred to), e.g.:**

Edna Longley, 'The Great War, History, and the English Lyric', in *The Cambridge Companion to the Literature of the First World War*, ed. Vincent Sherry (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 57–84 (p. 74).

### If your Source is a Journal Article:

**Author's Name, 'Article Title', *Journal Title*, Volume Number.Edition Number (Year of Publication), page numbers of article (page number of source quoted), e.g.:**

Hazel Davies, 'Edward Thomas: Twelve Unpublished Letters to O.M. Edwards', *National Library of Wales Journal*, 28.3 (1994), 335–45 (p. 343).

### **Online Materials:**

#### **Electronic and print editions**

The content, page numbers and general presentation of the text in most, but not all, ebooks and electronic editions of journals that you will be using as an English Literature student will be identical to the print versions. Look at any of the *Cambridge Companions* online to see an example. In such cases, there is no need to indicate that you have used an online source: simply follow the same referencing conventions as for print sources.

#### **Online-only sources**

Some e-books and articles exist only in electronic form, or differ from their equivalent print versions. In such cases, or if in doubt whether or not your online source differs from a print edition, you should:

- follow the reference conventions given above (author, publisher, date, etc);
- add (by copying and pasting) the URL of the web page to your reference;
- conclude your reference by indicating in square brackets the date on which you consulted the online source: e.g. [Accessed 24 September 2016]

There are other kinds of source not mentioned here (e.g. newspaper articles, radio programmes, TV programmes, interviews), and to footnote these correctly, consult the online MHRA Style Guide.

#### **Footnoting a Source on Subsequent Occasions**

If a source is referred to more than once, give a shortened reference in subsequent citations by supplying the author's name and page reference. For example:

<sup>3</sup> Hazel Davies, 'Edward Thomas: Twelve Unpublished Letters to O.M. Edwards', *National Library of Wales Journal*, 28.3 (1994), 335–45 (p. 343).

<sup>4</sup> Davies, p. 37.

Sometimes you will be referring to more than one work by the same author. For example, if footnote 1 or 2 of our essay had already cited another, different work by Hazel Davies, then footnote 4 above would cause confusion, because 'Davies, p. 37' does not indicate which of these two works is being cited. In such cases, insert an abbreviated version of the title between the author's name and the page reference, like this:

<sup>4</sup> Davies, 'Edward Thomas', p. 37.

**Ibid.**

'Ibid.' indicates that the source is the same as the source in the preceding footnote. In our example above (p. 3), our first two footnotes could have looked like this:

<sup>1</sup> Edward Thomas, 'The Patriot', *Nationalist*, 3.29 (1909), 34–43 (p. 34).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 38.

However, the problem with using 'Ibid.' is that in writing and editing your essay you will be cutting and pasting material from one part of the essay to another on many occasions. This makes it hard to keep track of whether an 'Ibid.' note is still referring to the same source as in the immediately preceding footnote. It is safer and easier to use the surname + page number method outlined above.

## How to Compile a Bibliography

At the end of your essay, you need to write a bibliography, a list of all the sources you have used. For this, you need to put the author's surname before the first name or initial. You do not need to include the page number referred to. The list must be in alphabetical order of surname. You can achieve the layout below by typing it all in normally, then selecting all the text, and finally clicking on Paragraph → Special → Hanging. For example:

- Bennett, Andrew, and Nicholas Royle, *Introduction to Literature, Criticism and Theory* (Harlow: Pearson, 1995)
- Conran, Tony, *Frontiers in Anglo-Welsh Poetry* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1997)
- Davies, Hazel, 'Edward Thomas: Twelve Unpublished Letters to O.M. Edwards', *National Library of Wales Journal*, 28.3 (1994), 335–45
- Longley, Edna, 'The Great War, History, and the English Lyric', *The Cambridge Companion to the Literature of the First World War*, ed. by Vincent Sherry (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 57-84
- Norquay, Glenda, 'Robert Louis Stevenson and Stanley J. Weyman: Reviving Romancers or Aging Adventurers?', *English Literature in Transition, 1880-1920*, 55.2 (2012), 176-194