Referencing – At a Glance

You need to use references

- be transparent about where you found the information you are presenting in your text.
- allow your readers to go and look up this information.

Note:

Readers have to be able to trace back your reference to the exact source. That is also true if you use your own words for telling what you found in a source. Always stick to one format of referencing throughout your text.

How to reference:

Correct references are, first and foremost, transparent and consistent.

If you are unsure what format to use:

- check if your teacher or supervisor prefers a particular format. They might have an info sheet on their homepage.
- if they don’t have a preference, search your institutes’ or study programme’s homepage for a style sheet or guidelines on how to format assignments¹. In case your institution doesn’t have one, look at the referencing styles in publications you are reading for your assignment. Find one that seems common and replicate it in your text.

¹ The Schreibberatung Sozialwissenschaften compiled a list of citation guidelines put out by the different departments of the Faculty of Social Sciences: https://www.uni-goettingen.de/de/123160.html
What if there are guidelines but I don’t understand them?

You can visit the Schreibberatung Sozialwissenschaften (if you study at the Faculty of Social Sciences) or the International Writing Lab (IWL), (for all students) to discuss your questions with a writing tutor. Please make an appointment for a writing consultation or, if possible, come during the open hours and remember to bring the guidelines you found.

Schreibberatung Sozialwissenschaften:
https://www.uni-goettingen.de/de/123160.html (deutsch)
Schreibberatung Sozialwissenschaften:
https://www.uni-goettingen.de/en/123160.html (English)

Schreibberatung des Internationalen Schreiblabors:
https://www.uni-goettingen.de/de/578710.html (deutsch)
Schreibberatung des Internationalen Schreiblabors:
https://www.uni-goettingen.de/en/578710.html (English)

I have an unusual source that’s not covered by the guidelines. What do I do?

First, try looking up your case in a more comprehensive guideline. You can try the one by the University of Sheffield linked below. Chances are, they got you covered. If not, remember transparency and consistency and try to come up with your own solution that meets those criteria. If this doesn’t work out, you can contact a writing tutor, as described above.
More information on how to reference:

Many universities have published open access resources on references online, for example: Video by London Southbank University explaining Harvard Referencing: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=prETpsgBU4w

Thorough online reference book by the University of Sheffield laying out the specific standards for many different kinds of sources in all common referencing styles (including unusual cases) (+ interactive plagiarism quiz): https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/library/idlt/referencing

Tip:
If you work with literature management software, it can help you generate correct references in different styles. The SUB Göttingen offers courses on how to use such tools.

SUB Göttingen:
https://www.sub.uni-goettingen.de/lernen-lehren/wissenschaftlich-arbeiten-tools-und-techniken/literatur-verwalten/ (deutsch)

SUB Göttingen:
https://www.sub.uni-goettingen.de/en/learning-teaching/academic-work-tools-and-methods/reference-management/ (English)