

# HISTORY STYLE GUIDE

For essay writing and referencing

History Program  
School of Humanities & Social Inquiry  
University of Wollongong  
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## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the History Program.

This guide will assist students undertaking history subjects in two key areas: essay writing and appropriate referencing. The guide explains the elements of an effective essay and the accurate way of referencing the sources you use.

There are many different styles of referencing used in academic writing and this guide applies only to history subjects. Students submitting written work in other disciplines in the Faculty of Law, Humanities and the Arts or other Faculties at UOW should seek direction on how to reference from relevant academic staff or consult the appropriate style guides.

If you have any questions about anything covered in this guide, be sure to consult with your tutor or lecturer.

History Program Staff  
School of Humanities and Social Inquiry  
LHA, University of Wollongong

### *NOTE:*

*This style guide is a revised version of the History Program 'Green Guide'. It has been prepared with close reference to the Politics Program Style Guide (4th edn 2009). Special thanks to Dr Charles Hawksley for permission to reproduce excerpts from the latter.*

*This version replaces the second revised edition of Feb 2011.*

*Frances Steel  
February 2016*

# ESSAY WRITING

An essay

- is an exercise in presenting an argument, within a prescribed length;
- requires you to assess and weigh evidence;
- should present a case;
- must express its argument in your own words;
- is neither a narrative, nor a chronology;
- should not consist of a series of quotations or paraphrased passages from various sources.

## 1. Question and Sources

Read the question carefully. What exactly is it asking you? Do any terms within the question need definition?

Analysing the question is the first step in essay writing, but you may find your initial response has to be modified or changed after you have done some reading. It is therefore important to continually ask yourself if you have defined the topic correctly, and if you really understand what you are being required to do. Misinterpreting the question is frequently the reason for a poor essay. This usually indicates that the student has not given sufficient thought to what was being asked.

As you write your essay, remember that you are being asked to do specific things with a specific topic. You are being asked, for instance, to **explain**, or **assess**, or **evaluate**, or **account for**, or **discuss** particular events, developments, or phenomena. You are **not** being asked to describe what happened in a particular historic period, or merely to demonstrate how many facts you can collect about a certain topic.

You are usually expected to construct your own bibliography (or reading list) for an essay. Most essay questions are based, in part, on tutorial topics. The reading lists contained in the subject outlines or posted on the subject websites provide a good start, but they are not exhaustive.

Relevant material in other books and articles can be found by consulting:

- footnotes in books and articles listed in the reading guides
- bibliographies
- library databases

Remember, the Library staff are always available to help you, so ask them.

Undergraduate essays are primarily based on secondary sources. Where relevant, primary sources may also be used.

- *Primary* sources are those produced by participants and personal observers of events being studied, or are unpublished manuscripts. These include official records and private

observations written at the time, newspaper articles, parliamentary debates and papers, contemporary statistics, etc.

- *Secondary* sources are those written by people after the event, usually other historians. So, for most subjects in the History Program, secondary sources will consist of books, book chapters, journal articles and substantial academic websites.

It is easier to approach an essay topic by reading the more general secondary texts before the more specific texts.

## **2. Note taking**

When taking notes from different sources for an essay, try to keep them succinct. This especially applies to the use of secondary sources.

- Do not transcribe whole passages from a secondary source or paraphrase secondary sources too closely by merely changing one or two words. You may inadvertently reproduce these passages in your essay without the proper acknowledgement.
- Read and summarise what your source is saying in your own words. This helps you understand what the arguments and ideas are actually about. Occasionally, a source will summarise exactly what you want to say. If this is the case, copy the material word-for-word and place quotation marks at the beginning and end of the transcription.

All essays require you to cite source material using footnotes. This requires you to identify both the source used and the page number from which the information was taken. The principles governing footnoting are discussed below, but there is a simple technique which will make the task easier. When taking notes for an essay, head the page with the full bibliographical information needed (see below); whenever you note down a direct quote or proceed to paraphrase a section from the source, be sure to note the page number(s).

By following this note-taking method, you will hopefully eliminate the last-minute frustrations of chasing up missing page numbers as you finalise your essay for submission, as well as protecting yourself from the possible charge of plagiarism (see page 19).

## **3. Structure**

An essay has four major components:

- introduction
- main body
- conclusion
- bibliography (following the conventions listed on pages 16-17)

### *Introduction*

The introduction sets out the problem to be discussed and includes relevant definitions of terms used in the essay question. As a good rule of thumb, start with an opening sentence or two that restates the question as a statement. Then present the definitions and explain the scope of the essay. In another sentence or two, give a summary of the main points that will be discussed, stating clearly 'In this essay I discuss ...' or 'In this essay I argue ...'. Be as direct as possible.

### *Main body:*

The main body argues your case, using evidence to support your line of argument. In making an argument it is useful to think of yourself demonstrating a point in a way that shows you are in control of your information, that is, you understand it and its implications. Remember to link main sections and paragraphs with a transition sentence (usually the first or last sentence of a paragraph). Try to restrict yourself to one main point/idea/issue per paragraph.

### *Conclusion:*

The conclusion draws together the threads of your argument. Here you summarise the major issues, not adding any new material. The conclusion places the topic in a wider context: what could be the implications of your findings? Do they raise further issues to be addressed?

### *Bibliography:*

Please see the detailed advice on pages 16 and 17

The essay itself should be written in clear, concise and grammatical prose. Plan the essay with care. And remember that you may require more than one draft before the essay is ready for submission.

# CITING SOURCES

## 1. When to Footnote?

Footnotes are simply used to indicate to the reader where you obtained the information and arguments that make up your essay. Yet, for many students, footnoting is one of the more difficult essay skills to master.

What do you footnote?

- a) direct *and* paraphrased quotations
- b) statistical information
- c) controversial 'facts' where scholars disagree
- d) detail or information not generally known
- e) an interpretation offered by an individual historian.

The fact that the European settlement of Australia began with the arrival of the First Fleet in 1788 is hardly the subject of any historical dispute and therefore does not need footnoting. However, the reasons for the British government's choice of Botany Bay as the site for a penal settlement are subject to various interpretations. In any essay dealing with the settlement at Botany Bay, you would need to footnote the interpretations offered by different historians.

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*For example:*

Geoffrey Blainey argues that many historians have tended to overlook the attraction of raw materials in influencing the decision to launch convict transportation to Australia. Yet flax and timber were vital to Britain's shipbuilding industry and their abundance in the islands neighbouring Australia would have surely shaped the decision to choose Botany Bay, rather than somewhere closer.<sup>1</sup>

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With time, and practice, the decision to 'foot or not to foot' will become easier. You will find abundant examples of these conventions in any of the books and articles listed for reading in the subject outlines.

As a rough guide, an essay of 2,000 words should contain between 15 and 20 footnotes.

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<sup>1</sup> Geoffrey Blainey, *The Tyranny of Distance: How Distance Shaped Australia's History* (Sydney: Macmillan, 1975), p. 16.

## 2. Quotations

Quotations should be used only

- when they state pithily some point you want to make
- to show a point of view you support, or wish to critique
- in the case of primary source material, provide evidence for your argument

Use direct quotations sparingly. Remember, we are interested in what you have to say, not what other historians have to say. Excessive use of quotations, especially from secondary sources, is a sign that you are not thinking for yourself. Even when you agree completely with an author's argument, it is better to put the argument in your own words. After all, most authors have the luxury of several thousand words at their disposal to argue a case. You do not.

When quoting directly, place the quotation within single quotation marks ( ' ' ) and for quotations within a quotation use double quotation marks ( " " ). If you wish to use a quotation longer than a couple of sentences, indent the material quoted. When indenting, you do not need to use inverted commas. The fact that the material is indented shows the reader that you are quoting directly from a source. Quotes never appear in italicised font.

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*For example:*

Discussing the racial politics of Federation in 1901, Stuart Macintyre argues,

Above all, White Australia was a denial of the country's original inhabitants. They were absent from the ceremonies that marked the advent of the Commonwealth. They were eliminated from the art and literature that served the new national sentiment ... Aborigines were even deprived of their indigeneity by the members of the Australian Natives Association, who appropriated that term for the locally born Europeans.<sup>2</sup>

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As in the above example, any words you omit or edit out from a quotation should be indicated by three consecutive dots (i.e. ... ).

Square brackets [ ] should be used to indicate words that have been added to the original quotation, often done to provide context, and words which have been altered within a quotation.

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<sup>2</sup> Stuart Macintyre, *A Concise History of Australia* 2nd edn (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 144.

### 3. Paraphrasing

*Paraphrasing*, or summarising in your own words what an author is saying, is usually preferable to quoting. You need to keep in mind where the idea comes from but try to put this idea into your own words.

Paraphrasing is a skill that is learned over time. It is an important part of essay writing as you are trying to condense an argument. It also prevents your essay from looking like a string of quotes stuck together with no argument of your own.

PLEASE NOTE: paraphrasing is not simply changing a word here or there, but providing a summary of the argument of another author. A common problem is a half-hearted attempt to change merely a few words, which leaves the passage essentially as an unacknowledged quote. This is known as plagiarism and strict penalties apply (see page 19).

Here are two examples which attempt to paraphrase the following quotation from Hobden and Jones:

Given that Marx was an enormously prolific writer, and given also that his ideas developed and changed over time in significant ways, it is not surprising that his legacy has been open to numerous — and often contradictory — interpretations.<sup>3</sup>

#### *a) A poor effort at paraphrasing:*

Marx was an enormously prolific writer, but his ideas developed and changed over time in significant ways, so it is not surprising that his legacy has been open to many — and sometimes contradictory — interpretations.<sup>4</sup>

#### *b) A better effort at paraphrasing*

Hobden and Jones argue that due to the fact Marx wrote so much over an extended period of time, scholars have different views about what his ideas mean, and sometimes these scholars will disagree with, or even contradict, each other.<sup>5</sup>

The problem with the first attempt is that while a few words have been changed, the syntax (sentence construction) and even the expression remain largely the same. This is effectively a quote, but it has not been acknowledged as such. Instead the student is attempting to

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<sup>3</sup> Stephen Hobden & Richard Wyn Jones, 'Marxist theories of international relations', in John Baylis and Steve Smith (eds), *The Globalisation of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations*, 3rd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 229.

<sup>4</sup> Hobden and Jones, 'Marxist theories', p. 229.

<sup>5</sup> Hobden and Jones, 'Marxist theories', p. 229.

claim as their own the work of two other authors. This is both intellectually dishonest and a form of plagiarism — the use of the work of others as your own.

The second attempt is clearly reworked in the student's own words, but remains faithful to the sense of the original quotation and is acknowledged carefully.

Paraphrasing problems, if not deliberate, come from trying to write essays quickly and without adequate research. You always need to have some distance between your sources (from which you take notes) and your final essay (which is compiled from your notes). You should have your argument clear in your head and in a draft plan before you begin writing.

## FOOTNOTE CONVENTIONS

Footnotes should be

- numbered consecutively throughout the essay: e.g. 1, 2, 3 .... 24.
- inserted *after* punctuation (such as a full stop), and preferably at the end of a sentence to reduce visual ‘clutter’ in the middle of a sentence
- located at the base of each page

One of the challenges of academic research and writing is getting familiar with the difference between a finding aid or database and the source itself. Most of your subject readings (journal articles and books) and other sources such as newspapers are found online. But the internet is the **finding aid**, not the source. When citing these sources in footnotes and bibliographies you do not need to provide a weblink (URL).

As another way of thinking about this, a book, journal or newspaper once stood on a bookshelf or a magazine rack in the library – it has (or had) a physical existence. Before the internet became the first port of call for research, students did not record in their footnotes the location of the library shelf or the catalogue number on the spine of the book – finding the material was simply part of the research process. So, imagine that the online database you use to locate your reading material is simply a virtual ‘shelf’ in the library.

Just to make it even more challenging, some sources *are* only online and you *do* need to provide a URL in your footnotes. See below for more on this.

### 1. Book

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For the first footnote reference to a book, your citation should be set out as follows:

First name Last name, *Title of the Book* (Place of publication: Publisher, year), p. relevant page number (or pp. page numbers).

*For example:*

Margaret Kiddle, *Men of Yesterday: A Social History of the Western District of Victoria, 1834-1890* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1961), p. 64.

Robin Briggs, *Witches and Neighbours: The Social and Cultural Context of European Witchcraft* (London: Fontana, 1997), pp. 67-71.

NOTE: When a book is a reprinted or revised version of an earlier edition, it pays to note this, or to include the original publication date in square brackets directly after the new publication date. This indicates that you recognise the book is the product of an earlier intellectual context and debate.

*For example:*

Myra Willard, *The History of the White Australia Policy to 1920*, 2nd edn (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1967), p. 25.

*Or*

Myra Willard, *The History of the White Australia Policy to 1920* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1967 [1923]), p. 25.

## **2. Book chapter**

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A single chapter from a book that has an editor is cited as follows:

First name Last name, 'Title of the chapter', in First name Last name (ed.) [or (eds) for more than one editor], *Book Title* (Place of publication: Publisher, year), p. relevant page number(s).

*For example:*

Richard Waterhouse, 'Settling the Land', in Deryck Schreuder and Stuart Ward (eds), *Australia's Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 56-7.

Peter Read, 'Shelley's Mistake: The Parramatta Native Institution and the Stolen Generations', in Martin Crotty and David Andrew Roberts (eds), *The Great Mistakes of Australian History* (Kensington: UNSW Press, 2006), p. 16.

## **3. Journal article**

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First name Last name, 'Title of article', *Journal Title*, vol. number, no. issue number (year), p. relevant page number(s).

*For example:*

A. E. Dingle, "'The truly magnificent thirst": An Historical Survey of Australian Drinking Habits', *Historical Studies*, vol. 19, no. 75 (1980), pp. 227-30.

Bain Attwood, 'Whose Dreaming? Reviewing the Review of the National Museum of Australia', *History Australia*, vol. 1, no. 2 (2004), p.279.

## **4. Newspaper article**

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First name Last name, 'Title of article', *Name of Newspaper*, date, p. relevant pages.

*For example:*

'Australian American Trade,' *The Queenslander*, 5 July 1913, p. 35.

Michael Gawenda, 'It takes more than reality to destroy national myths,' *Sydney Morning Herald*, 13 June 2005.

Note: sometimes there is no author, article title or obvious page numbers. In these cases, simply provide as much detail as you can:

*The Australian*, 12 July 2000, p.3.

## 5. Internet Source

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An internet source is only published online; you cannot get your hands physically on it (unlike, for instance, a book that is digitised or an academic journal article downloadable as a PDF). Such sources include government websites (that provide information on policy, legislation or statistics, for example), an academic blog, or essays on sites such as the Australian Dictionary of Biography.

If your source is an article on a web page then it must be cited in the following way:

First name Last name [or name of organisation], 'Title of article', *Title of Main Report or Online Journal* [where relevant], date of publication [if provided], URL of the actual web page [not just the main index or home page], (accessed: date).

*For example:*

Barbara Dawson, 'Colonial women in the Australian Dictionary of Biography,' *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (30 August 2012), <http://adb.anu.edu.au/essay/4/text26712>, (accessed 23 February 2016).

Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, *The People of Australia: Statistics from the 2001 Census* (2003), [www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/research/\\_pdf/poa-2008.pdf](http://www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/research/_pdf/poa-2008.pdf) (accessed 20 January 2009).

NOTE: Websites are updated and change frequently, so it is important to include the date you viewed information as it may have changed by the time a source is checked.

## 6. Film or Documentary

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First name Last name (dir.). *Film Title* (Place of Production [if known]: Name of Production Company, year), (length) min.

*For example:*

Trevor Graham (dir.), *Sugar Slaves: The Secret History of Australia's Slave Trade* (Lindfield NSW: Film Australia, 1995), 56 min.

Vincente Diaz (dir.), *Sacred Vessels: Navigating Tradition and Identity in Micronesia* (A Moving Islands Production, 1997), 26 min.

## 7. Thesis/Dissertation

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First name Last name, 'Title of manuscript', (PhD [or MA or BA Honours] dissertation, university name, year), p. page number.

Note that the title is not italicised, but placed in quotation marks.

*For example:*

Kerry White, 'Founded on Compromise: Australian Girls' Family Stories, 1894-1982' (PhD dissertation, University of Wollongong, 1985), pp. 15-35.

Shirley Nixon, 'The Illawarra Trades and Labour Council in Depression, Recovery, and War, 1926-1945' (BA Honours dissertation, University of Wollongong, 1984), p. 10.

## 8. Other

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For **institutional publications**, treat the name of the institution as the author.

*For example:*

Royal Commission on State Banking, 'Report', *Victorian Parliamentary Papers* vol. 4 (1895-6), p. 10.

**Primary sources** are often found in compilations edited by individual authors. If you quote from a primary source contained in a secondary source, the correct method of citation is as follows:

Description of document, in First name Last name (ed.), *Book Title*, vol. volume number [where relevant] (Place of publication: Publisher, year), p. page number(s).

*For example:*

'Heads of a plan' (1786) in Manning Clark (ed.), *Sources of Australian History* (London: Oxford University Press, 1957), pp. 72-5.

E. Marsden to Mrs Stokes in Frank Crowley (ed.), *A Documentary History of Australia*, vol. 1 (Melbourne: Nelson, 1978), p. 64.

For **unpublished primary material**, the general rule is to cite the document first, followed by the name of the collection and any essential file number, and then the name and place of the archive. If you have found the primary document on a web site, include the URL details.

*For example:*

Pacific Islanders Association Petition 1906, Department of External Affairs, 1906/6324, A1/15, National Archives of Australia, Canberra

A. W. Jose to Director War Staff, 19 March 1919, C. E. W. Bean Papers, Folder 115, Australian War Memorial, Canberra.

## Repeated references

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For the second and all subsequent references to the same source you need only give the author's surname, an abbreviated version of the title, and the relevant page number(s).

*For example:*

<sup>1</sup> David W. Lloyd, *Battlefield Tourism: Pilgrimage and Commemoration of the Great War in Britain, Australia and Canada* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 83.

<sup>2</sup> Bain Attwood, 'Whose Dreaming? Reviewing the Review of the National Museum of Australia', *History Australia*, vol. 1, no. 2 (2004), p. 279.

<sup>3</sup> Lloyd, *Battlefield Tourism*, p. 84.

<sup>4</sup> Attwood, 'Whose Dreaming?', p. 280.

## Use of *ibid*

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Where a footnote reference is exactly the same as the one *directly before it*, it is sufficient to write *ibid.* (Latin, *ibidem*, 'in the same place'). Where the reference is exactly the same, except for the page number, use *ibid.* and the page number.

*For example:*

<sup>1</sup> Margaret Kiddle, *Men of Yesterday: A Social History of the Western District of Victoria, 1834-1890* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1961), p. 193.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*, p. 206.

**NOTE:** when drafting your essay it is best to avoid the use of *ibid* until the final version. When you change the order of paragraphs or sentences in your essay, footnotes move too, and this creates mistakes in your referencing.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

The bibliography should include all works consulted for the essay. List them in alphabetical order by author surname. Do not separate sources under different headings for books, journal articles etc., but list them together.

**For books:** The citation style differs only slightly from footnotes. Note that the author's surname comes first and the parentheses around place of publication and date are removed. Commas after author names and book titles are also replaced by full stops.

*For example:*

Briggs, Robin. *Witches and Neighbours: The Social and Cultural Context of European Witchcraft*. London: Fontana, 1997.

Crowley, Frank (ed.). *A New History of Australia*. Melbourne: William Heinemann, 1980.

Kiddle, Margaret. *Men of Yesterday: A Social History of the Western District of Victoria, 1834-1890*. Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1961.

**For chapters in edited books:**

Put author's surname first, change commas to full stops, and include page numbers (pp) for the **complete chapter**.

*For example:*

Read, Peter. 'Shelley's Mistake: The Parramatta Native Institution and the Stolen Generations'. In Martin Crotty and David Andrew Roberts (eds). *The Great Mistakes of Australian History*. Kensington: UNSW Press, 2006, pp. 14-31.

**For journal articles:**

Again, put author's surname first, and include page numbers (pp) for the **complete article**. For multi-authored articles, only the *first author* is listed with the surname first.

*For example:*

Delacroix, J. and F. Nielsen. 'The Beloved Myth: Protestantism and the Rise of Industrial capitalism in Nineteenth Century Europe'. *Social Forces*, vol. 80, no. 2 (2001), pp. 509-53.

Dingle, A. E. "'The truly magnificent thirst": An Historical Survey of Australian Drinking Habits'. *Historical Studies*, vol. 19, no. 75 (1980), pp. 227-49.

**For internet sources:**

You need only put the author's surname first. Everything else stays the same.

For example:

Dawson, Barbara. 'Colonial women in the Australian Dictionary of Biography,' *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (30 August 2012), <http://adb.anu.edu.au/essay/4/text26712>, (accessed 23 February 2016).

The finished bibliography would look something like this.

Bremer, Francis J. *The Puritan Experiment: New England Society from Bradford to Edwards*. University Press of New England, Hanover New Hampshire, 1995.

Briggs, Robin. *Witches and Neighbours: The Social and Cultural Context of European Witchcraft*. Fontana, London, 1997.

Crowley, Frank. (ed.). *A Documentary History of Australia: Colonial Australia 1788-1840*, vol. 1. Nelson, West Melbourne, 1980.

Delacroix, J. and F. Nielsen. 'The Beloved Myth: Protestantism and the Rise of Industrial capitalism in Nineteenth Century Europe'. *Social Forces*, vol. 80, no. 2, (2001), pp. 509-53.

Dingle, A. E. "'The truly magnificent thirst": An Historical Survey of Australian Drinking Habits', *Historical Studies*, vol. 19, no. 75 (1980), pp. 227-49.

Kiddle, Margaret. *Men of Yesterday: A Social History of the Western District of Victoria, 1834-1890*. Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1961.

Lloyd, David. W. *Battlefield Tourism: Pilgrimage and Commemoration of the Great War in Britain, Australia and Canada*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1998.

Nixon, Shirley. 'The Illawarra Trades and Labour Council in Depression, Recovery, and War, 1926-1945'. BA Honours dissertation, University of Wollongong, 1984.

## PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is the use of someone else's work without proper acknowledgment. It may consist of

- copying another's argument
- reproducing significant portions of material from a source that is not properly acknowledged
- copying material submitted by another student

Sometimes students may unintentionally plagiarise material. For example, if you quote the actual words of an author without indicating that the passage is a direct quotation by using indentation or inverted commas, yet footnote the passage, it is still plagiarism.

Plagiarism is often the result of poor study methods. The practice of writing notes copied word-for-word (verbatim) from a source as you read is a dangerous one. It is easy to forget that the notes are verbatim and to use them as your own. The only parts that you should copy verbatim are those absolutely delightful, pithy, witty, or incisive turns of phrase that cannot be bettered. When transcribing, always put them in quotation marks and note the relevant page number(s).

As a rough rule of thumb, when writing your essay or tutorial paper, it is better to over footnote than run the risk of unintentional plagiarism.

The minimum penalty for obvious plagiarism is failure of the submitted piece of work. If the case is serious enough, plagiarism can mean a failure in the subject and even expulsion from the University.

Ignorance is not an adequate excuse, neither is the claim that you have provided a reference. You must make sure that you always use your own words (except when quoting directly), that you acknowledge when you use the work of others, and that you avoid plagiarism at all times.

Please take the time to read the university policy on plagiarism. Further information can be obtained from: <http://www.uow.edu.au/about/policy/UOW058648.html>

If you do not understand what plagiarism is, or what you may be doing wrong, then arrange to see your tutor or lecturer in consultation times.