What is a Reference List in Oxford?

Your Reference List should be located on a separate page at the end of your essay and titled: Reference List. It should include the details of all your footnotes, arranged alphabetically A-Z by author surname, see sample Reference List below. The terms ‘Bibliography’ and ‘Reference List’ are often used interchangeably, however a Reference List only includes items you have cited in your assignment whereas a Bibliography also includes items used to prepare your assignment. Check with your lecturer or tutor which one they require.

Other points to note:

- In your footnotes, the author's given name precedes the surname i.e. P. Grimshaw, while in the Reference List the surname comes first i.e. Grimshaw, P.,
- If the work has no author use the first substantive word of the title (not The or A) to insert it into the alphabetical sequence.
- In the Reference List include the full page range of a journal article or book chapter, e.g. pp. 165-217. Page numbers are not required for entire books in the Reference List.
- If you have cited more than one work by the same author, you should arrange them by date with the earliest first. If the dates are the same add a lower case letter after the date to differentiate between two such publications, e.g. 1996a, 1996b. See ‘Flannery’ in the Reference List example below. Use this convention in your footnotes as well.
- Some lecturers or tutors require your Reference List to be divided into Primary and Secondary Sources. See the second sample Reference List below for an explanation of this layout.

Oxford sample Reference List:

Reference List


Alexander, S., 'Peace March in Melbourne' [letter to W.R. Gibson], 1 November 1911, Professor W.R. Gibson Collection, University of Melbourne Archives, Melbourne, VIC, Box 2/1/1.


*The Red Badge of Courage* [dvd], Director J. Huston, Burbank, CA, MGM, 1951.


**Oxford sample Reference List: Primary and Secondary Sources:**

Some lecturers or tutors prefer your Reference List to be divided into Primary and Secondary Sources:

A **Primary Source** is an original work or document, i.e. the raw material or first-hand information used in research. Primary sources include historical and legal documents, archival material, eyewitness accounts, autobiographies, diaries, letters, photographs, novels, poems, plays, films, newsreels, statistical data and original research published in a journal article or book, or produced as a thesis.

A **Secondary Source** is something written about a primary source. Secondary sources include comments on, interpretations of, evaluations or discussions about the original material. Secondary source materials can be articles in newspapers or scholarly journals, documentaries, or books or chapters written about events or about original research.
Reference List

Primary Sources

Alexander, S., 'Peace March in Melbourne' [letter to W.R. Gibson], 1 November 1911, Professor W.R. Gibson Collection, University of Melbourne Archives, Melbourne, VIC, Box 2/1/1.


The Red Badge of Courage [dvd], Director J. Huston, Burbank, CA, MGM, 1951.


Secondary Sources


