**CLT**
Center for Learning & Teaching

# Acknowledging & Referencing the Use of AI

Generally speaking, if you are using generative AI for **learning**, you are unlikely to need to acknowledge it. If you are using it to **create material for submission** (for example, as part of a paper or in the case of a student for assessment), you will most likely need to acknowledge and/or reference it.

For faculty it is still debated whether they should acknowledge use of AI. There are different views but most tend to agree that some tasks demand disclosure like grading students papers with the help of AI, while preparing course materials does not necessarily warrant it. Generally speaking, it depends "*on what kind of AI use is involved*". Institutional guidelines could clarify such points

> *It is important that the course faculty follow a strategy of AI use and referencing for themselves and their students. This is especially useful in case the institution has not developed a policy*

## Principles for referencing generative AI

We refer to '**referencing**' here as a way to bring content generated by generative AI into your work for submission, in a similar way you would reference an idea or text from a scholarly source.

We refer to '**acknowledging**' here as a way to describe how you have used generative AI in the *process* of creating a work for submission.

Currently, there are few guidelines around the rules of referencing/citing use of Generative AI. APA 7th has guidelines around referencing generative AI (American Psychological Association, 2023). Generally, the guidelines stated in the blog on generative AI in the APA 7th Style to acknowledge the use of AI is a good start.

> *Before you consider referencing generative AI, think about whether it is actually appropriate to do so. Generative AI is not a reliable or reproducible source of information, unlike a journal article or even webpage. Another person cannot obtain the same completion you did, even if they use the same prompt.*

## 1. How to reference direct quotes taken from AI-generated text

### a) When including a short piece of AI-generated text

**In the text itself,** include the AI-generated text within quotation marks and include information about how this was derived. Include an in-text citation to the 'author'/'communicator' of the tool (the company that made the tool). For example:

> When prompted with "Is the left brain right brain divide real or a metaphor?" the AI-generated text indicated that although the two brain hemispheres are somewhat

specialised, "the notation that people can be characterised as 'left-brained' or 'right-brained' is considered to be an oversimplification and a popular myth" (OpenAI, 2023).

*In your reference list, expand on the citation to include the 'author'/ communicator' of the tool, the year, the name of the tool, its version, and the URL. For example:*
*OpenAI. (2023). ChatGPT (Mar 14 version) [Large language model]. https://chat.openai.com/chat*

b) **When including a longer piece of AI-generated tex**t

When a longer response is used, this may also be included as part of an appendix. The APA style blog indicates that this should be referred to **in-text** if being used, as seen in the example below:

When given a follow-up prompt of "What is a more accurate representation?" the ChatGPT-generated text indicated that "different brain regions work together to support various cognitive processes" and "the functional specialisation of different regions can change in response to experience and environmental factors" (OpenAI, 2023)

*The reference in the **reference list** would be the same as before:*
*OpenAI. (2023). ChatGPT (Mar 14 version) [Large language model]. https://chat.openai.com/chat*

c) **Important considerations around referencing direct quotes**
- Include a comment that you have used a generative AI tool in the text.
- Specify what prompt you have used in quotation marks
- Indicate what the response was in quotation marks
- Reference the communicator (which is the company or creator of the generative AI tool). In this case, OpenAI (2023) follows communicator (year), or when written in narration, OpenAI (2023) follows communicator (year).
- Be mindful of all considerations and limitations of generative AI

d) **How to reference paraphrased information obtained from a generated text**
- There is currently no known specific guidance around this.
- Normal referencing guidelines will apply. This includes including the communicator and year as part of the in-text citation and reference list.
- If you have specifically studied through the sources provided in the output of a generative AI tool, then those sources can be referenced directly.
- If you did not thoroughly study the sources provided, or the sources were not provided by generative AI, then the above guidelines of including the prompt used, an in-text citation of communicator and year, and a reference entry is generally required.
- Be mindful of all limitations and considerations of using generative AI.

Using APA 7th style blog on referencing Generative AI and referencing manual the following referencing example on a paraphrased written task may be acceptable; the following referencing example on a paraphrased written task may be acceptable:

Specific parts of the neural system may function cohesively to support an overarching activity (Cheung, Bartlett, Armour, Laba, Saini, 2023), however these parts can adapt to various factors that may emanate from the external influences. (OpenAI, 2023)

In the reference list for the above example the following is to be done:

Cheung, J. M. Y., Bartlett, D. J., Armour, C. L., Laba, T. L., & Saini, B. (2018). To drug or not to drug: A qualitative study of patients' decision-making processes for managing insomnia. *Behavioral Sleep Medicine*, *16*(1), 1-26. https://doi.org/10.1080/15402002.2016.1163702

OpenAI. (2023). ChatGPT (Mar 14 version) [Large language model]. https://chat.openai.com/chat.

For generative AI tools that have generated non-written information including digital media, code, mathematical solution

- There is currently no known central governance around this
- Normal acknowledgement principles will apply - see below.

### e) Principles for acknowledging generative AI

Importantly, follow the guidance of your coordinator regarding how generative AI use needs to be acknowledged. Depending on the level of generative AI use allowed, you may need to acknowledge its use differently.

For a simple use of generative AI, you might consider the following structure:

I acknowledge the use of <tool> to <purpose of using generative AI>. On <date> I <actions taken>. The output was then <actions taken>. The links to my original work is <link here> and the AI output is <link here>.

For example

*I acknowledge the use of <ChatGPT (https://chat.openai.com/)> to <refine the academic language of my own work>. On <date> I submitted my entire essay (<link to original document here>) with the prompt to <"Improve the academic tone and accuracy of language, including grammatical structures, punctuation and vocabulary">. The output (<link here>) was then modified further to better represent my own tone and style of writing.*

*Monash University's LearnHQ has some other useful examples of acknowledging the use of generative AI. For another detailed document see Citation Style Guide. The crowdsourced sheet on 'Syllabii Policies for Use of Gen AI' offers examples from various educators across the world who have stated their own policies - Do see and use/modify for your courses. The APA and MLA both provide guidelines for citing generative AI work.*

**Developed by CLT 2023 from:**  Acknowledging and Referencing the Use of AI

**Also See:** [EdSurge ethics and policies](#) & AI [toolkit for schools](#) released by TeachAI &
[Disclosing AI Use](#)

**f) How to cite an AI generated image**

In APA style, citing an AI-generated image generally adheres to standard image citation guidelines, with the added requirement of including the prompt used and the name of the AI tool within the figure caption or note. When embedding the image within the text, a specific format should be followed to ensure proper attribution.

Figure #

Figure title

[image]

Note: this note contains the description of image, prompt and AI tool used.

**For example**

Figure Caption:
*Figure 1*
Michel Foucault in postmodern style.
AI-generated using DALL·E (OpenAI, 2025) based on the prompt: "Michel Foucault in a postmodern art style."

Reference Entry:
OpenAI. (2025). *Michel Foucault in postmodern style* [AI-generated image]. DALL·E. [https://openai.com/dall-](https://openai.com/dall-)

**References**

Grammarly. (2023, July 6). *How to cite AI-generated text in APA*.
https://www.grammarly.com/blog/citations/ai-citations-apa/