

Referencing Parliamentary Material

*A Guide for Lecturers and
Students*



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This guide is intended to be used by lecturers and students for the purposes of appropriately referencing parliamentary sources.

This guide is complemented by two other documents:

- *Parliament as a Teaching Resource: a Guide for Lecturers*
- *Case Study Portfolio: Applying Parliamentary Resources to Teaching*

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An Introduction to Parliamentary Referencing

Students often wish to make use of parliamentary resources in their assessed work, but are **unsure of precisely *how* to reference this material**. If students are unsure about how to reference parliamentary sources accurately they may be reluctant to make use of them for fear of being penalised in their dissertations and other assessed work. It is important that students are aware of the need to reference primary parliamentary sources accurately so that others are able to locate them easily. Parliamentary material often requires a longer and more detailed reference and **does not follow the usual referencing norms that students are familiar with**. Some of the information required is specific to parliament, but is crucial for clear and precise referencing.

There is **no one official way of referencing parliamentary sources** and this can cause further confusion for students who may notice for example that parliamentary debates are referenced differently by parliamentary services and institutions such as Hansard and Select Committees. Nor is this type of referencing usually discussed in the style guides accompanying the submission advice for journal articles and other publications. Thus, journals across political science may also reference this material in very different ways. **The referencing used in this guide conforms to the style of referencing used by the House of Commons Library and has been completed in consultation with its staff**. It has been chosen for its simplicity and ease of use. It is important to note that punctuation is used more sparingly here than in traditional referencing (particularly commas and capital letters).

The Key Elements of Referencing

There are several key parliamentary referencing which are specific to Parliament:

Bills and Acts

Students are **often unaware of the difference between a Bill and an Act of Parliament**. A Bill is a proposal for a new law and is scrutinised by Parliament. MPs and Lords may submit amendments to change the text of bills and so the content may change. Only when a bill has completed its passage through Parliament and has been presented to the monarch for approval or Royal Assent does a Bill become an Act. When referencing the text of a bill it is important to distinguish between a 'bill' and an 'act'.

TOP TIP
Make a note of all your references details (including column numbers etc) right from the start, rather than leaving it to the end. It becomes a much bigger job later on

Every bill has its own unique reference number and this changes each time a bill is amended during its parliamentary scrutiny. Including this number in a reference is crucial. For instance, a reference to the text of the [Defamation Bill](#) (2012-13 session) could refer to one of several versions of the bill during its parliamentary scrutiny. It is thus **important to give the specific bill number** (e.g. [HL Bill 75](#)) or an indication as to which version you are referring to

TOP TIP
Always give the years of the relevant parliamentary session rather than a single year in references

(e.g. as amended in grand committee). Whilst an Act of Parliament is the final version of a bill which has received the assent of both Houses of Parliament and of the monarch, it may have the same title as a previous Act and so the year is usually also given. This prevents confusion and enables one to distinguish between the [Energy Act 2011](#), the [Energy Act 2010](#) and the [Energy Act 2008](#) and so on. The component parts of bills can be referred to by clause (e.g. clause 3) whilst the components of Acts can be referred to by section (e.g. section 30). Acts are numbered sequentially in the year

that they are enacted and are listed with chapter numbers on the [legislation.gov.uk](#) website. For instance, the first Act of the 2012-13 parliamentary session, the Trusts (Capital and Income) Act will be referred to as 2013 c.1 whilst the second Act, the Statute Law (Repeals) Act will be listed as 2013 c.2.

Column numbers

These are **important when referencing comments made by MPs or Lords during debates in the chamber or in bill committees**. The text of Hansard runs to many hundreds of pages every day and so providing the column number provides an easy means of locating a particular quote or speech. Column numbers also apply to transcripts of the sittings of bill committees. Select committee evidence sessions do not use column numbers, though

here a question number (the question asked by a member of the committee to a witness) can be used instead to guide the reader to the appropriate place in the text.

Dates of parliamentary session

Parliamentary material such as select committee reports and the Official Report of proceedings in the House of Commons and House of Lords chambers, Westminster Hall and in committees are organised by parliamentary session rather than by calendar year. **It is important to note the details of this session so that the source can be found easily.** For instance, the Culture Media and Sport Select Committee's report into [phone hacking](#) (May 2012) should be referenced as being published in the 2010-12 parliamentary session. If the reference was given simply as 2012 it would be unclear whether the report had been published in the 2010-12 or the 2012-13 parliamentary session.

HC/HL document number

Each document produced by a parliamentary select committee has a unique identification number. This number starts with 'HC' for House of Commons documents and 'HL' for House of Lords documents. It can be found on the front page of a report and should be quoted in all references. Sometimes a committee report will run into more than one volume (with the oral and written evidence published in the second volume) and so the referencing should additionally specify the volume number. Therefore, references to the Education Committee's report on Careers Guidance for Young People should distinguish between [HC 632-I](#) and [HC 632-II](#).

TOP TIP
*Be sure to distinguish
between the House of
Commons and House of
Lords in your
references*

Other abbreviations

A series of other abbreviations are used to reference parliamentary material. These include abbreviations for Standing Orders (SO) and Statutory Instruments (SI).

Specific Examples of Referencing

Some specific examples of how to reference parliamentary sources are listed below. Although this format is consistent with that being used by the House of Commons Library in its documents and research papers, it is presented here as a guide for students. **So long as the key information is given and the referencing style is consistent, references do not have to adhere rigidly to this format.** Examples are given for use in the Oxford and Harvard referencing systems.

Acts of Parliament

All Acts passed after 1962 are dated by calendar year. The name of the Act is italicised, but the definitive article ('the') is not. Section numbers can be given to refer to specific places in an Act. The first time an Act is specified the full name must be given. Thereafter it can be referred to simply by the year (e.g. the 2013 Act). When referring to a specific Act of Parliament, a capital 'A' should always be used.

Oxford: The *Antarctic Act 2013*,
 (section 3).

Harvard: This can be seen in the
 Antarctic Act 2013 (s.3).

Citing an Act of Parliament passed before 1962 is more complicated as acts were collected in volumes which correspond to the years of reigns. The format of references to pre-1962 Acts is thus slightly different.

Oxford: The *Baptismal Fees Abolition Act 1872* (35 & 36 Vict chapter 36)

Harvard: This can be seen in the *Baptismal Fees Abolition Act 1872* (35 & 36 Vict, c.36)

NB: 'Chapter' in this reference refers to the position of the Act in the sequence of Acts passed in the regnal year.

Bills

Bills are always dated by parliamentary session **not** by calendar year. Referencing follows a similar pattern to Acts of Parliament, with the same italicisation. As mentioned earlier, the bill number must be given, as bills are reprinted following each stage of scrutiny to include any amendments which have been made.

Oxford: The *Company Remuneration Bill* [HL], Bill 6, 2012-13

TOP TIP

Be very precise with references. Always list the information specific to Parliament such as column numbers, years or parliamentary sessions

Harvard: As specified in the *Company Remuneration Bill* [HL] (Bill 6, 2012-13)

As before, references to a specific bill should have a capital 'B'. When referred to in footnotes, bills do not need a definitive article (e.g. *Company Remuneration Bill* [HL] rather than *The Company Remuneration Bill* [HL]).

Command Papers

[Command papers](#) are documents which have been written or prepared by the Government and then presented to Parliament such as White Papers and Green Papers. They are listed by calendar year. A title and number and abbreviation should be given where possible.

Oxford: *Wild Animals in Circuses 2013* Cm 8538

Harvard: *Wild Animals in Circuses 2013* (Cm 8538)

The abbreviation used to denote a command paper changes depending on the year of the document. The abbreviations used are listed below.

Period	Abbreviation
1833 – 1869	None
1870 – 1899	C
1900-1918	Cd
1919-1956	Cmd
1956 – October 1986	Cmnd
November 1986 – present	Cm

Debates (House of Commons)

When referencing House of Commons debates the 'HC Deb' abbreviation is used. The date, and column number should always be given. It is helpful to provide a volume number for debates which have taken place over a year ago and this can also be included for recent debates should you wish to do so.

Oxford: HC Deb 15 April 2013 vol 561 c8

Harvard: Russell Brown MP asked for confirmation of the phrase 'conventional arms' (HC Deb 15 April 2013, c8)

When referring to more than one column use 'cc' rather than 'c'. You do not need to include the MP's name in the reference. Simply refer to them directly in the preceding sentence.

Debates (House of Lords)

When referencing House of Lords debates the 'HL Deb' abbreviation is used. The date, volume and column number should be given.

Oxford: HL Deb 30 January 2013 vol 742 c1535

Harvard: Lord Soley asked for evidence of economic growth (HL Deb 30 January 2013, c1535)

When referring to more than one column use 'cc' rather than 'c'. You do not need to include the Peer's name in the reference. Simply refer to them directly in the preceding sentence.

Debates (Westminster Hall)

When referencing Westminster Hall debates a 'WH' abbreviation is used after the column number. The date, volume and column number should be given in the same way as is used when referencing other parliamentary debates.

Oxford: HC Deb 29 January 2013 vol 557 cc 179-205WH

Harvard: During the adjournment debate on RSPCA (Prosecutions) (HC Deb 29 January 2013, cc 179-205WH) ...

As before, you do not need to include the MP's name in the reference. Simply refer to them directly in the preceding sentence.

Early Day Motions

Early Day Motions use the standard 'EDM' abbreviation followed by a reference number. The parliamentary session must also be given.

Oxford: EDM 1255 *Help for Home Buyers*, 2012-13

Harvard: John Leech tabled EDM 1255 (2012-13) welcoming the government's housing announcement.

Library Research Papers

Research papers produced by the House of Commons should be listed by the names of the author/(s) rather than simply as 'House of Commons Library'. The year of publication and the number of the research paper should be written in the YY/NN format.

Oxford: N Johnston, *The History of the Parliamentary Franchise*, House of

Harvard: Parliamentary franchises were not unified until 1884 (Johnston 2013)

Lords Library Notes

Referencing of Lords Library Notes follows the same principles as House of Commons Library Research Papers.

Oxford: I Cruse and R Taylor, *Budget 2013: Reaction*, House of Lords Library Note 13/06, 21 March 2013.

Harvard: Reaction to the budget was discussed in a Lords Library Note (Cruse and Taylor 2013).

POST Notes and Reports

Notes produced by the [Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology](#) (POST) do not have specific authors listed. Both types of POST document do have an identification number and this should always be given.

Oxford: *Environmental Limits*, 1 March 2011, Post Report 9.

Harvard: The report discusses environmental limits (POST Report 9, 2011)

Oxford: *Preventing Diabetes*, POST PN415, 16 July 2012, p.2.

Harvard: A note written by the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology lists deprivation as a risk factor for the development of diabetes (PN 415, 2011: 2).

Public Bill Committee Debates

Public bill committee debates are referenced in a similar way to debates on the floor of the House of Commons with column numbers (where printed) given in the same way as for other parliamentary debates.

Oxford: Children and Families Bill Deb 12 March 2013 c467

Harvard: The amendment was withdrawn (Children and Families Bill Deb 12 March 2013 c467).

If the bill being referred to is clear from the text, it is acceptable to refer to 'PBC Deb' rather than giving the full name of the bill. If the title of the bill is very long, the bill number can be referred to instead:

Oxford: PBC Deb (Bill 131) 12 March 2013 c467

Harvard: The amendment was withdrawn (PBC Deb Bill 131 12 March 2013 c467).

Grand Committee debates in the House of Lords is referred to as follows:

Oxford: HL Deb 27 June 2012 c126GC

Harvard: Lord Bradshaw moved amendment 1 during committee stage in the House of Lords (HL Deb 27 June 2012 c126GC)

Those taking place prior to the 2002-03 parliamentary session should be written with CWH (Committee of the Whole House) after the column number.

TOP TIP
Always give the column number. This will help others (and you!) to find quotes again quickly

Select Committee Reports

Here the name of the select committee should be written first, as the author of the document, followed by the document title (title of inquiry) and date. The unique identification (HC/HL) number should be given, followed by the parliamentary session in which the report has been published.

If referring to a quote within a report the paragraph number and page number should be used. References to oral evidence should refer to the question number as well as the page number. Written evidence can be quoted with the page number.

Oxford: Communications Committee, *Media Convergence*, 27 March 2013, HL 154 2012-13, para 3.

Harvard: As described by the Communications Committee (27 March 2013, HL 154: para 3) in its report on Media Convergence ...

Oxford: Defence Committee, *Securing the Future of Afghanistan*, 10 April 2013, HC 413 2012-13, Ev 82.

Harvard: In its written evidence to the committee's inquiry the Ministry of Defence (10 April 2013, HC 413 Ev 82) noted that Afghanistan was one of the poorest countries in the world.

Standard Notes

The author should always be given when referencing Standard Notes written by the House of Commons Library, followed by the year and reference number.

Oxford: R Harker, *Health Expenditure: Social Indicators*, House of Commons Library Standard Note 13/2640, 16 April 2013.

Harvard: This can be seen in the Standard Note on Health Expenditure (Harker 2013).

Standing Orders

Standing Orders concern the processes of Parliament and the way that it conducts its business. There are different types of standing orders; they may refer to the [House of Commons](#) or to the [House of Lords](#) and may govern [public](#) or [private](#) business.

The abbreviation 'No' (as in number) is used when referencing Standing Orders relating to public business but this is omitted for Standing Orders relating to private business.

Oxford: HC SO No 9.

Harvard: The Standing Orders (SO No 9) state that the House of Commons sits at half past two on Mondays.

Statutory Instruments

Also known as secondary or delegated legislation, Statutory Instruments enable provisions contained within Acts of Parliament to be brought into force without the need for a new Act. The SI abbreviation and a corresponding number are used when referencing them.

Oxford: *The Renewable Transport Fuel Obligations (Amendment) Order 2013*
SI 2013/816

Harvard: The Renewable Transport Fuel Obligations (Amendment) Order (SI 2013/816) concerned sustainable and renewable fuels.

Written Ministerial Statements

Written ministerial statements are referenced in the same way as parliamentary debates, but the WS abbreviation is used to show that it is a written rather than an oral statement. For statements in the House of Commons this is placed *after* the column number (e.g. c 18WS) but for statements in the House of Lords this is placed *before* the column number (e.g. c WS18).

Oxford: HC Deb 15 April 2013 vol 561 c 18WS

Harvard: In a written statement to the House Chris Grayling discussed the government's consultation on the Code of Practice for victims of crime (HC Deb 15 April 2013, c 18WS).

Oxford: HL Deb 21 May 2013 vol 745 c WS75

Harvard: Baroness Hanham gave details of the government's planning consultation in a written statement in the House (HL Deb 21 May 2013, c WS75).

Written Questions and Answers

Written answers are referenced in the same manner as written statements, with the use of the 'W' abbreviation in the House of Commons and 'WA' in the House of Lords.

Oxford: HC Deb 10 April 2013 vol 560 c 1184W

Harvard: The Secretary of State for Education listed the local authorities who had signed up to the Foster Care Charter (HC Deb 10 April 2013 c 1184W).

Oxford: HL Deb 21 May 2013 vol 745 c WA39

Harvard: The Government gave details regarding the number of apprenticeships created in Greater Manchester since 2010 (HL Deb 21 May 2013 vol 745 c WA39)

Compiling a Bibliography

It is not always clear how to refer to parliamentary sources when compiling a bibliography. In particular, **students are often unsure of who the ‘author’ of this material is**. Examples of bibliographies are listed below.

Oxford Style Bibliography

Communications Committee, *Media Convergence*, 27 March 2013, HL 154 2012-13.

Cruse, I and Taylor, R, *Budget 2013: Reaction*, House of Lords Library Note 13/06, 21 March 2013.

Defence Committee, *Securing the Future of Afghanistan*, 10 April 2013, HC 413, 2012-13.

Defence Committee, *Securing the Future of Afghanistan*, 10 April 2013, HC 413, 2013-13, EV 82.

Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, *Wild Animals in Circuses 2013* (Cm 8538)

Harker, R, *Health Expenditure: Social Indicators*, House of Commons Library Standard Note 13/2640, 16 April 2013.

HM Government, *The Antarctic Act 2013*.

Johnston, N, *The History of the Parliamentary Franchise*, House of Commons Library Research Paper 13/14, 1 March 2013.

Leech, J, *Help for Home Buyers*, EDM 1255, 2012-13.

Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (POST), *Preventing Diabetes*, Post Note 415, 16 July 2012.

Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (POST), *Environmental Limits*, Post Report 9, 1 March 2011.

UK Parliament, *The Company Remuneration Bill* [HL], Bill 6, 2012-13.

UK Parliament, *The Renewable Transport Fuel Obligations (Amendment) Order* SI 2013/816.

Harvard Style Bibliography

Communications Committee. (2013) *Media Convergence*, 27 March 2013, HL 154 2012-13.

Cruse, I and Taylor, R. (2013) *Budget 2013: Reaction*, House of Lords Library Note 13/06, 21 March 2013.

Defence Committee. (2013) *Securing the Future of Afghanistan*, 10 April 2013, HC 413, 2013-13, EV 82.

Defence Committee. (2013b) *Securing the Future of Afghanistan*, 10 April 2013, HC 413, 2013-13, EV 82.

Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. (2013) *Wild Animals in Circuses 2013* (Cm 8538)

Harker, R. (2013) *Health Expenditure: Social Indicators*, House of Commons Library Standard Note 13/2640, 16 April 2013.

HM Government. (2013) *The Antarctic Act 2013*.

Johnston, N. (2013) *The History of the Parliamentary Franchise*, House of Commons Library Research Paper 13/14, 1 March 2013.

Leech, J. (2012-13) *Help for Home Buyers*, EDM 1255.

Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology. (2012) *Preventing Diabetes*, POST PN415, 16 July 2012.

Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology. (2011) *Environmental Limits*, POST Report 9, 1 March 2011.

UK Parliament. (2012) *The Company Remuneration Bill* [HL], Bill 6, 2012-13.

UK Parliament. (2013) *The Renewable Transport Fuel Obligations (Amendment) Order* SI 2013/816.