

How to reference images: Vancouver

Images can either be mentioned and described in your text (cited) or directly embedded as a figure (reproduced or adapted) in your work.

Referencing an image

If referring directly to an image included in a book, article or on a webpage, cite the source in which the image appears and include the number and caption of the image before the page number / location.

For example:

Image in an e-book:

1. Al-Tubaikh, JA. Internal Medicine An Illustrated Radiological Guide. [Internet] 3rd ed. Cham, Switzerland: Springer; 2023. Figure 2.3, Sequential axial brain MR illustrations demonstrate different vascular territories of the brain parenchyma; [cited 2025 Apr 28]; p.71. Available from: <https://doi-org.libproxy.ncl.ac.uk/10.1007/978-3-031-28575-2>

Image in a journal article:

2. Hyams C, Qian G, Nava G, Challen, R, Begier, E Southern, J, et al. Impact of SARS-CoV-2 infective exacerbation of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease on clinical outcomes in a prospective cohort study of hospitalised adults. JRSMB [Internet]. 2023;116(11):371-385. Figure 1, Admissions, positive pressure support, 30-day mortality and length of hospital stay over time, shown by three COPD groups (infective, SARS-CoV-2, non-infective); [cited 2025 Apr 28]; p.378. Available from: <https://doi-org.libproxy.ncl.ac.uk/10.1177/01410768231184>

Image on a webpage:

3. PubChem [Internet]. Bethesda (MD): National Library of Medicine (US), National Center for Biotechnology Information; 2004-. PubChem Compound Summary for CID 5202, Serotonin; [cited 2025 Apr 28]. Available from: <https://pubchem.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/compound/Serotonin>

See [Cite Them Right](#) for more examples.

Embedding an image

If you are embedding the image into your work, there are additional steps to take to ensure you format and reference it appropriately.

1. Captions

A caption should be provided, usually below the image, that includes a figure number, followed by a title or description of the image. An in-text citation as well as a page number (where relevant)

should also be included, following the order of existing citations. You may also need to include an acknowledgement of copyright.

For example:



Figure 1. Medicine chest with contents.² Licenced under [CC BY NC SA 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/).

2. Reference list

Place the corresponding full reference for the image in your reference list. As before, cite the source in which the image appears and include the number and caption of the image before the page number / location. For example:

2. Science Museum Group Collection [Internet]. Science Museum Group; 2025. Medicine chest with contents, A24557; [cited 2025 Apr 28]. Available from: <https://collection.sciencemuseumgroup.org.uk/objects/co197583/medicine-chest-with-contents>

3. In the main body of text:

All figures should be referred to within the text by their figure number and should have a corresponding in-text citation. According to the [Vancouver referencing guide from the Institute of Biomedical Science](https://www.instituteforbiomedicalscience.com/vancouver-referencing-guide-from-the-institute-of-biomedical-science/), these citations should be treated as direct quotes, with the author's name stated and a page number provided (where applicable).

For example:

As seen in Figure 1, an image from the Science Museum Group, medicine chests often contained a range of glass jars, a palate knife, a brush and boxes of weights.²

4. List of Figures

We would recommend including a list of figures if your work is substantial enough to include a table of contents and/or you have a lot of figures in the body of your text. Your School may also provide guidance in their style guide.

Essentially, a list of figures provides an overview of the images, illustrations, graphs, diagrams, maps etc. used throughout your work. In it is included a description of the figure and the page number the figure is located on. The list of figures will come after the contents page (on a separate page) and before the Introduction.

For example:

List of Figures

Figure 1: Description of figure	p.4
Figure 2: Description of figure	p.12
Figure 3: Description of figure	p.21

A note on copyright...

Before using images in your work make sure to check for any [copyright](#) limitations. Generally, using images in student work is acceptable if they are integral to your argument, referenced correctly and will not be used in any published work. This includes any kind of 'public sharing', e.g. public posters, online exhibitions or use at a conference. However, it is your responsibility to check the work can be used for educational purposes. We recommend using images from licenced collections such as [Bridgeman Education](#) or Open Access collections such as [Openverse](#), which provide images suitable for educational use.