

The Citation of Bibliographic References in Biochemical Journals

Recommendations 1971¹

IUB COMMISSION OF EDITORS OF BIOCHEMICAL JOURNALS (CEBJ)

These Recommendations were reviewed by the Commission in August 1972, when it was decided to publish them.

PREAMBLE

Two basic systems for the citation of references are at present used: the so-called Harvard System (where names of authors and the date are cited in the text, and the reference list is in alphabetical order) and the Numbering System (where numbers, but not necessarily names of authors, are cited in the text, and the reference list is in order of citation in the text). Several ways of quoting references in the list are in current use.

The Commission is of the opinion, arrived at as a result of much consultation between many senior editors, that it is unlikely that all journals would accept a recommendation to use either the Harvard or the Numbering System to the exclusion of the other. It believes, however, that most biochemists will accept the need for, and indeed welcome, a substantial degree of unification of practices, there being no strong case for the individuality of each journal on this issue. Accordingly, the Commission makes the following Recommendations to all biochemical journals; the reasons for some of them are given. The Recommendations deal first with the way in which references should be cited in the list; the proposal is suitable for journals adopting either the Harvard or the Numbering System. Secondly, there are Recommendations about the way in which each of these systems is used. Thirdly, abbreviations for titles of journals and a few other points are considered. Implementation of the Recommendations would mean that any very small differences between journals in their practices would be of the type that can be attended to at the redactory stage of preparation for press. The Commission recognizes that it cannot deal with a number of smaller problems concerning citations that arise from time to time.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Citations of References in the List of References Should Be as Follows:

Braun, A., Brown, B. & LeBrun, C. (1971) *Journal*, 11, 111—113.

Notes

- a) This form can be used by both systems.
- b) Journals using the Numbering System should arrange the references in numerical order beside the number (which can be italicized or in brackets according to the house custom of the journal).

¹ Reprints may be obtained from Waldo E. Cohn, Director, NRC Office of Biochemical Nomenclature, Oak Ridge National Laboratory, P.O. Box Y, Oak Ridge, Tennessee, U.S.A. 37830, as well as from the Editorial Office of this Journal.

c) Journals using the Harvard System should arrange the references in alphabetical order, whatever the language, except in certain situations (see Recommendation 4a below).

d) This recommendation incorporates the following points:

i) Initials after surnames (full first names are not given in the list).

ii) The use of the symbol "&" is recommended if at all possible because of its widespread usage and the fact that it is independent of the language. No comma before "&".

iii) Year in parentheses (this follows immediately after the authors' names because it is essential to the Harvard System).

iv) Journal title (abbreviated); this can be in italics according to house practice (see Point 7 below concerning journal title abbreviations).

v) Volume number. This can be in heavy type or italics according to house practice.

vi) A few journals do not have volume numbers in which case the page numbers should follow immediately after the abbreviated journal title.

If it is necessary to quote both a volume and a part number, the reference should read:

Brown, B. (1971) *Journal*, 11, pt 1, 121—123.

vii) First and last pages should be given. The Commission decided to make this Recommendation mainly on the basis of evidence that the additional information provided by quoting the last page was being required increasingly in many types of library and information retrieval services. Citation of the last page (as well as the first) has been requested for some time by the secondary and abstracting journals. Citation of both first and last pages is also an aid in the prevention of errors.

viii) The number of stops and commas is kept as small as possible.

e) Authors' names and the abbreviated name of the journal when repeated in the next reference should be spelt out in full; *ibid.* and similar terms should not be used.

f) Recommendations of the IUPAC-IUB Commission on Biochemical Nomenclature (CBN) and similar documents should be referred to as: Commission on Biochemical Nomenclature (1970) followed by a journal reference.

g) Junior should be abbreviated to "Jr", not "jun."

2. Numbering System in the Text

The use of authors' names is permissible as authors wish; only the initial letter of the name should be in capital type. Numbers can be inserted in parentheses or as superscripts according to house custom. The printing of references at the foot of the page on which they are first quoted is considered to be helpful with the Numbering System but is not part of the Recommendation because the extra cost is generally considered to be prohibitive.

3. Harvard System in the Text

For multi-author papers, it is recommended that:

- a) not more than two authors to be named either on the first or any subsequent occasion;
- b) *et al.* should be used for three or more authors on every occasion;
- c) each name to have the initial letter in capital type only.

Examples (Harvard System style)

Braun *et al.* (1969) did some work that was confirmed by LeBrun (1970).

These results (Braun *et al.*, 1969; LeBrun, 1970) have been discussed by Brown & Braun (1971).

The same Recommendation (without the year) applies when authors are quoted in the text in the Numbering System.

4. Harvard System in the List of References

a) A special problem arises in the list when there are several papers by *e.g.* Green *et al.* in the same or over several years. While the list could be in strict alphabetical order of the full reference, the reader will find no clue in the text to the alphabetical status of the names of the second and subsequent authors (see Recommendations 3a and b). It is therefore recommended that all the papers by Green *et al.* (that is by Green and more than one co-author) should be arranged, irrespective of the names of the other authors, in chronological order (over many years if necessary) and designate them a, b, c, *etc.*

Examples

Green, G. (1970) *etc.*

Green, G. & Brown, B. (1971) *etc.*

Green, G. & White, W. (1969) *etc.*

Green, G., White, W. & Black, B. (1968a) *etc.*

Green, G., Brown, B. & Black, B. (1968b) *etc.*

Green, G., White, W., Black, B. & Brown, B. (1969) *etc.*

Green, G., Black, B. & Brown, B. (1970) *etc.*

b) Names beginning with "Mc" should be listed under "Mc" and not under "Mac", to decide alphabetical order.

c) Names beginning with "De", "Van" or "von", *etc.* should be arranged under D or V/v, *etc.*

5. Reference to Books

These should appear in text like any reference to a journal paper. The reference in the list should read:

Brown, B. & Braun, A. (1971) in *Book Title* (LeBrun, C., ed.), pp. 1–20, Publisher, Town.

Notes

a) If a volume number has to be quoted, this would appear before the pp. as, *e.g.*, "vol. 2," with the number in Arabic numerals (even when Roman numerals are printed on the cover of the book).

b) Where an author wishes to refer to a specific page within a book reference, this should be given in the text.

Example (in text): "...discussed on p. 21 of Braun *et al.* (1971)."

6. Other Forms of References

a) *In the Press*. It is recommended that (i) this should mean that the paper has been finally accepted by a journal, (ii) it is quoted in the text (both systems) just as any other paper, (iii) the year quoted should be the best estimate revised if necessary at proof stage, and (iv) the full citation in the list to read:

Braun, A. & Brown, B. (1971) *Journal*, in the press.

b) *Submitted for publication* should be used in a typescript only when it is reasonable to expect that it will be possible to alter the quotation to a final form at a stage before publication; if such alteration cannot be made then the name of the journal involved should be stated.

c) The use of *in preparation* and *private communication* should not be allowed because they have no real value.

d) *Personal communication* and *unpublished work* should be permitted in the text only, *i.e.* not in the list of references. Editors may require to see written evidence of the former.

7. Abbreviations for Journal Titles

Most biochemical journals use the *Chemical Abstracts* system but a few use the World List, 4th Edition. The Commission noted that the latest information available (International List of Periodical Title Word Abbreviations prepared for the UNISIST/ICSU-AB Working Group on Bibliographical Descriptions) suggests that the abbreviations that will be recommended finally by ICSU will be very similar to those now used by *Chemical Abstracts*.

Believing that complete uniformity on this issue is highly desirable now and estimating that it may be a few more years before ICSU finally reports, the Commission recommends that all biochemical journals should now use the *Chemical Abstracts* (American Chemical Society) system. The Commission believes that any changes that will be required when ICSU eventually issues recommendations on this point will be comparatively minor ones.

8. Implementation of these Recommendations

The Commission at its meeting in Menton, May 7–8, 1971, has taken the view that the degree of uniformity envisaged in the Recommendations is highly desirable and therefore further recommends to all biochemical journals that the changes required should be made as soon as possible. The Commission recognizes that all journals will have to make some changes (in most cases these are minor) from their present established practices to implement these Recommendations in full. It considers that the possible objections of difficulties even for a commercial publisher with an established "house style" are outweighed by the advantage that conformity of style in the citation of references will prove to the authors, editors and readers upon whom all journals depend for their existence.

Note

The journal-title abbreviations in *Biological Abstracts* are essentially the same in *Chemical Abstracts*. A *List of Serials with Title Abbreviations* is available from BioSciences Information Service of Biological Abstracts, 2100 Arch Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, U.S.A. 19103.

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