A quick guide to referencing

Reinforce why referencing is important
Explain that whilst tutors often ask students to reference their sources to avoid being accused of plagiarism, referencing also, and more importantly, demonstrates wider reading and thorough research, and positively illustrates this to whoever is reading the piece of work in hand. Students should therefore be familiar with the concept of attributing and acknowledging sources.

Paraphrasing
Paraphrasing is a key skill and not just a case of replacing a few words with synonyms, which students may need to practice to get right. What students may however not realise is that paraphrases also need to be referenced with an in-text citation and an entry in the reference list or bibliography.

Different referencing styles
A number of referencing standards exist which have been developed over the years, some of which are particular to certain subjects or disciplines. Students need clear guidance on which style should be used in their particular subject area. Whichever style is used, generally a complete reference should include an in-text citation in the body of the work along with a bibliography or reference list at the very end with full details of all the sources used.

Building a complete reference
- The author, year of publication, the book title, the chapter title
- Name and place of publisher, volume or edition number, page numbers of article
- URL of website and the date online information was accessed
- Bill numbers, SI numbers and map sheet number

Good research techniques
Keeping track of sources and references can be daunting, especially for a lengthy piece of work. Bookmarking web pages, manually taking notes on cards, or highlighting text in different colours all can help to differentiate between someone else’s words and those of your own. Specialised software tools can also be used to effectively manage references.

Patchworking sources
Some students think that patchworking quotes from various different sources, even if correctly referenced is good writing practice. Turnitin is an excellent tool for demonstrating visually to students this patchworking technique and why it is important to also add your own thoughts and opinions on what you have read.

Plagiarismadvice.org