

HOW TO USE FOOTNOTES AND ENDNOTES

Footnotes and endnotes are a way of:

- ▶ including additional information
- ▶ expanding a thought
- ▶ providing background information
- ▶ giving your reader further sources they can explore

This doesn't mean that you should use them as a way of shirking properly editing your work – you shouldn't incorporate too many. It also depends on what referencing style you decide to use. Here, only APA and MLA styles will be referred to. For more guidance on referencing styles, check out “**How to reference**” in this series.

It's important to note that foot- and endnotes can also be used **instead of in-text citations**, i.e., instead of placing the author(s) and publication year in parenthesis for a reference. This means that if you used footnotes, you wouldn't include a reference list at the end of your work because you included the references within the writing. And with endnotes, you would have an “Endnotes” (or “Notes”) page instead. Not all referencing styles use foot- and endnotes for this reason, however. For example, the referencing styles highlighted here – APA and MLA – don't. But, Chicago Manual Style, for instance, does. So, make sure to check with the regulations of the referencing style you choose.

■ Differences and similarities

The main difference between footnotes and endnotes is:

- ▶ **footnotes** appear at the **bottom (or foot)** of the page in which the reference was made;
- ▶ whereas **endnotes** appear at the **end** of a piece of work, or a chapter, on a separate page entitled “Endnotes” or simply “Notes”. This section is included before your references or bibliography page.

In terms of similarities, both are signified in the text by a **superscript Arabic number**, and the numbers are **ordered sequentially**, e.g.,

If you wanted to add some additional information at the end of this sentence, this foot- or endnote would be numbered as one.¹ Then, you might want to add some more supplementary information here,² so the next foot- or endnote would be numbered two. The foot- or endnote number corresponds to the relevant content.

■ Advantages and disadvantages

Choose between either footnotes *or* endnotes: don't use both. To help you make up your mind, here's a table listing the advantages and disadvantages of both.

► **Footnotes**

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A reader only has to look at the bottom of the page to find the corresponding footnote. ■ You don't need to include a separate section. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ If you include a few footnotes on one page, it can make the page appear cluttered. ■ In fact, if the footnote is particularly long, it can take up more space than the main text.

► **Endnotes**

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ As they're located in a separate section, they're not as distracting as footnotes. ■ Your reader can easily look over all supplementary material as it's in one space. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A reader has to go to a different page to access the endnote. ■ They can be more confusing to use if you have different chapters.

■ **APA style rules**

APA style doesn't encourage foot- or endnotes (simply because they're expensive for publishers to deal with). However, there are two reasons it states for using them:

- **Content notes:** these provide your reader with supplementary information, or tell them where they can find additional information.
- **Copyright permission notes:** these are only necessary if you include a quote of over 500 words, or include material that requires formal permission from the author(s).

In regard to formatting:

The superscript number should follow a punctuation mark.¹ The exceptions are dashes² – then, the footnote number should be placed before not after a dash (and, when it comes to parenthesis, the number should be included within the last bracket.³)

■ **MLA style rules**

As with APA style, MLA doesn't encourage the use of too many foot- or endnotes. It prefers if they're used for:

- **Bibliographic notes:** these are where you provide your reader with other sources they can consult for further information.
- **Explanatory notes:** these are the same as content notes, in which you provide your reader with additional information.

In regard to formatting:

As with APA, footnote numbering should only come after a punctuation mark.¹
Apart from with dashes² – then the superscript number should come before the dash (and, in the case of parenthesis, inside the final bracket.³)

■ Inserting using Microsoft Word

It's easy to insert foot- or endnotes using Microsoft Word. In the “**References**” tab you'll find the option to include either. Simply place your cursor where you want it included in the text, then click on the appropriate option.

