

Converting Harvard citations to shortened footnotes (sfn)

Framing the problem

The urgency

- As per [WP:PARREF](#), there is a consensus that **inline parenthetical referencing should be deprecated** on English Wikipedia.

What is parenthetical referencing & what's the simplest way to replace it?

- What is [parenthetical referencing](#) (AKA Harvard referencing)?
- Parenthetical referencing used to be a valid citation style, (see examples at [WP:HARVARD](#)), again, now deprecated.
- The simplest replacement is **shortened footnotes**: [Help:Shortened footnotes](#)

Why use shortened footnotes?

- They are advantageous when individual sets of footnotes reference different pages from the same source.
- The full citations are then placed in alphabetic or alphanumeric order, rather than in order of citation use. This eases locating the citation when viewing the section by itself.
- In cases where an article has an inconsistent citation style, [WP:CITEVAR](#) recommends seeking consensus and
 - imposing one style on an article with inconsistent citation styles (e.g., some of the citations in footnotes and others as parenthetical references): an improvement because it makes the citations easier to understand and edit;
 - combining duplicate citations (see [Duplicate citations](#)).

Before and after examples

- [Actuary](#), an easy conversion, because it was primarily changing from one template to another
 - Before: <https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Actuary&oldid=975935343>
 - Diff: <https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Actuary&diff=next&oldid=975935343&diffmode=source>
 - After: <https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Actuary&direction=next&oldid=975935343>
- [Shizi \(book\)](#), a more complicated conversion, because it required creating both full citations and shortened footnote templates
 - Before: [https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Shizi_\(book\)&oldid=983678367](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Shizi_(book)&oldid=983678367)
 - Diff: [https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Shizi_\(book\)&type=revision&diff=993547062&oldid=983678367&diffmode=source](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Shizi_(book)&type=revision&diff=993547062&oldid=983678367&diffmode=source)
 - After: [https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Shizi_\(book\)&oldid=983678367](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Shizi_(book)&oldid=983678367)

- [Kahlil Gibran](#) exemplifies conversion to shortened footnotes as part of WP:CITEVAR
 - Before: https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Kahlil_Gibran&oldid=985030005#References
 - After: https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Kahlil_Gibran&oldid=991619709#References

Step by step: how to do it

Recommended: install [User:Ucucha/HarvErrors.js](#)

This will warn you of any errors such as full citations that are not used by shortened footnotes, or sfns that do not have a full citation to which to link.

- Documentation: [User:Ucucha/HarvErrors](#)
- JavaScript: [User:Ucucha/HarvErrors.js](#)

To install the script, add:

```
importScript('User:Ucucha/HarvErrors.js');
```

to [Special:MyPage/common.js](#).

Pick an article

- Go to [Category:Use Harvard referencing](#) and drill down into a month.
- Alternately, go to [User:Peaceray/Conversions from Use Harvard referencing](#)
 - If you do this, please apply a ~~strike through~~ by using the `<s></s>` tags when done.

State your intention on the article talk page

- For example, see [Talk:Shizi \(book\)#Converting to shortened footnotes](#)

To obtain a full citation and a sfn

Items to note:



- `{{sfn}}` and `{{sfnm}}` generate their own `<ref></ref>` tags.
- `{{sfn|Last_name|2020|p=25}}` is equivalent to `<ref>{{harvnb|Last_name|2020|p=25}}</ref>`.
- See the section on [Author–date citation templates](#) for more detail.
- [Citation templates](#) that have the author(s) and date or year values will automatically generate the author(s)/year value for the `|ref=` parameter.

- Pick a citation in your target article that needs conversion
- If you have a URL, [DOI](#), ISBN, [PMID](#), [PMCID](#), or [OCLC #](#), go to [Citer](#)
- If you only have a title for a book, a journal, or article, go to [WorldCat.org](#) to get an OCLC # or an ISBN, then go to [Citer](#) at <https://citer.toolforge.org/>. (Also see [Github citer page <https://github.com/5j9/citer>] for concise description)
- **Citer examples** — *Note that some need to be manually adjusted*
 - URL: [Citation for www.newyorker.com/magazine/2008/01/07/prophet-motive](#)

- Wayback Machine at web.archive.org: [Khalil Gibran, archived from collectiondevelopment.library.cornell.edu](http://web.archive.org/wayback/20160905000000/http://collectiondevelopment.library.cornell.edu)
- ISBN: [9780861402793](https://www.isbn-international.org/details/9780861402793)
- DOI: [10.31826/9781463240387](https://doi.org/10.31826/9781463240387)
- OCLC: [62023693](https://www.worldcat.org/oclc/62023693)
- OCLC, rendering as web page rather than book: [589037866](https://www.worldcat.org/oclc/589037866)
- If the citation link goes to a Google books item, then follow the **About this link**-->**Get this book in print**-->**Find in a library** pulldown/links. This will take you to WorldCat to get an OCLC # or an ISBN, then go to [Citer](#).
- At Citer, pick the appropriate ID type from the drop down list at the upper left, enter the ID value (URL, DOI, ISBN, OCLC #, etc.) that you have. Submit.
- Copy the Shortened footnote and citation to a text editor.
- Adjust the citation as needed. For instance, if the URL or DOI is to an article, and the generated citation omits the author(s) or date(year), alter the citation and the `{{sfn}}` template accordingly, including any `|ref=` values. If the citation has one or more author last names, it will generate a ref value containing the each of the first four author names plus the year of publication.
- Citer will typically render a single author as `{{sfn |last_name |year |p=}}` format whereas it will render two authors will generate a `{{sfn |last1_name |last2_name |year |p=}}` format. Please keep this in mind if you are manually altering the generated values.
- **Or hand craft it yourself!**

Placing the citation and a sfn

- Ensure that there are the appropriate sections. I prefer `==References==` and `==Sources==`. See [MOS:NOTES](#).
- Either place the full citation first by editing the Sources section (easier), or by placing the full citation and sfns simultaneously by editing the full article code (harder). *Always preview!* If you have `User:Ucucha/HarvErrors.js` installed, it will warn you of any errors.
- If are placing the shortened footnote(s) after placing the full citation, do it now.

End steps

After you have completed the conversion, there are follow through steps.

- Add the `{{Use shortened footnotes}}` template using the `{{Use shortened footnotes|date=December 2020}}` syntax near the top of the article.
- Consider adding `{{done}}` (✓ **Done**) and any comments to your comments on the talk page.
- Notify a [template editor](#) or an administrator to (or if you have template editor privileges) add `{{Shortened footnote editnotice}}` using the `{{Shortened footnote editnotice|expiry=indefinite}}` syntax. You can find an example at [Template:Editnotices/Page/Kahlil Gibran](#).