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Guidelines for Using APA Style when Writing Papers
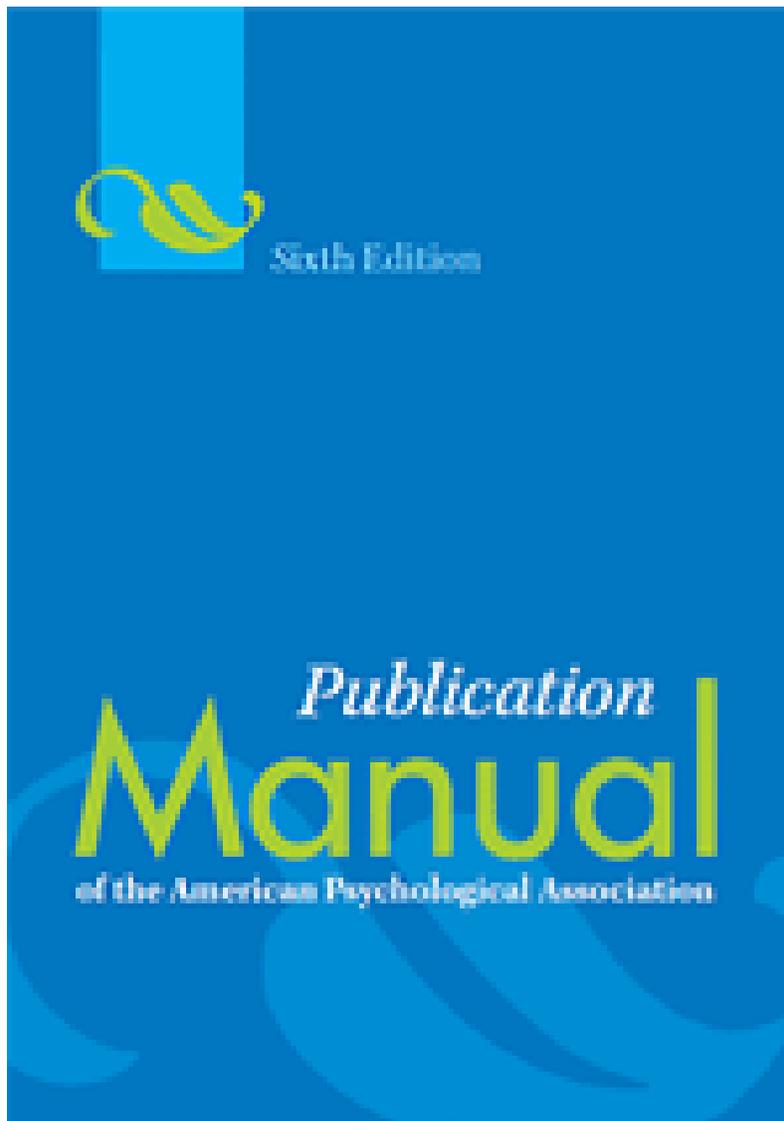
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This document was compiled using the APA Manual 6th Edition and the Purdue Online Writing Lab (http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/10/) by Tim Anson-Pritchard and edited by Senior Lecturer Kent Whitman.

1. General Format

a. General APA Guidelines
Your essay should be typed, double-spaced on standard-sized paper (8.5" x 11") with 1" margins on all sides. You should use 10-12 point Times New Roman font or a similar font. Include a **page header** at the top of every page. To create a **page header**, insert page numbers flush right. Then type "TITLE OF YOUR PAPER" in the header flush left.

b. Major Paper Sections
Your essay should include **four** major sections: the **Title Page**, **Abstract (Abstract - only if it to be published)**, **Main Body**, and **References**.

c. Title Page
The title page should contain the **title** of the paper, the **author's name**, and the **institutional affiliation (Instructor name, Course number and name, and Franklin Pierce University)**. Include the page header (described above) flush left with the page number flush right at the top of the page. Please note that on the title page, your page header should look like this:
TITLE OF YOUR PAPER   1
(Note that it is all capital letters and flush left)   (page number flush right)

2. In-Text Citations: The Basics

Note: APA style requires authors to use the past tense or present perfect tense when using **signal phrases** to describe earlier research. e.g., **Jones (1998) found that blar blar blar** or **Jones (1998) discovered in his research that blar blar blar...**

a. APA Citation Basics
References using APA format are cited in text with an **author-date** citation system and are listed alphabetically in the reference list on the last page of the document. This means that the author's last name and the year of publication for the source should appear in the text, e.g., **(Jones, 1998)**, and a complete reference should appear in the reference list at the end of the paper. See paragraphs 6.11 through 6.21 in the APA Manual for directions on how to format specific in text citations.

b. In-Text Citation Capitalization, Quotes, and Italics/Underlining
- Always capitalize proper nouns, including author names and initials: D. Jones.
- If you refer to the title of a source within your paper, capitalize all words that are four letters long or greater within the title of a source: *Permanence and Change*. Exceptions apply to short words that are verbs, nouns, pronouns, adjectives, and adverbs like: *Writing New Media*, *There Is Nothing Left to Lose*.
  (**Note:** in your References list, only the first word of a title will be capitalized: *Writing new media*.)
- When capitalizing titles, capitalize both words in a hyphenated compound word: *Natural-Born Cyborgs*.
- Capitalize the first word after a dash or colon: *"Defining Film Rhetoric: The Case of Hitchcock's Vertigo."*
- Italicize or underline the titles of longer works such as books, edited collections, movies, television series, documentaries, or albums: *The Closing of the American Mind*; *The Wizard of Oz.*
- Put quotation marks around the titles of shorter works such as journal articles, articles from edited collections, television series episodes, and song titles: *"Multimedia Narration: Constructing Possible Worlds"; "The One Where Chandler Can't Cry."*

c.   Short Quotations (Less than 40 words)

If you are directly quoting from a work, you will need to include the author, year of publication, and the page number for the reference (preceded by "p."). Introduce the quotation with a signal phrase that includes the author's last name followed by the date of publication in parentheses.

> Interpreting these results, Robbins et al. (2003) suggested that the "blar blar blar" (p. 541), contributed to an overall blar blar blar.

If the quotation appears at the end of a sentence, close the quoted passage with quotation marks, cite the source in parentheses immediately after the quotation marks, and end with a period or other punctuation outside of the final parenthesis.

> Confusing this issue blar blar blar, whereby "medical needs are met by those blar blar blar by anyone on the team" (Csikai & Chaitin, 2006, p. 112).

d.   Long Quotations

Place direct quotations longer than 40 words in a free-standing **block** of typewritten lines, and omit quotation marks. Start the quotation on a new line, indented five spaces from the left margin. Type the entire quotation on the new margin, and indent the first line of any subsequent paragraph within the quotation five spaces from the new margin. Maintain double-spacing throughout. The parenthetical citation should come after the closing punctuation mark.

> Co-presence does not ensure intimate interaction among all group members. Consider large-scale social gatherings in which hundreds or thousands of people gather in a location to perform a ritual or celebrate an event.
> In these instances, participants are able to see the visible manifestation of the group, the physical gathering, yet their ability to make direct, intimate connections with those around them is limited by the sheer magnitude of the assembly. (Purcell, 1997, pp. 111-112)

Alternatively, if the quoted source is cited in the sentence introducing the block quote, only the page or paragraph number is needed at the end of the quotation.

Blar blar blar. In 1997, Purcell contradicted this view by stating,

> Co-presence does not ensure intimate interaction among all group members. Consider large-scale social gatherings in which hundreds or thousands of people gather in a location to perform a ritual or celebrate an event.
> In these instances, participants are able to see the visible manifestation of the group, the physical gathering, yet their ability to make direct, intimate connections with those around them is limited by the sheer magnitude of the assembly. (pp. 111-112)

e.   Paraphrasing Material

When paraphrasing or referring to an idea contained in another work, you are only required to make reference to the author and year of publication in your in-text reference. However, APA guidelines (see para. 6.04 in the Manual) encourage you to also provide the page number, especially when it would help an interested reader locate the relevant passage in a long or complex text. Examples: Kessler (2003) found that the early signs of blar blar blar..... or   Some of the early signs of the flu entails blar blar blar.....(Kessler, 2003, p. 12).

f.   Direct Quotations of Online Material Without Pagination

(See para. 6.05 in the Manual) Credit direct quotations of online material by giving the author, year, and page number in parentheses. Many electronic sources do not provide page numbers. If paragraph numbers are visible, use them in place of page numbers. Use the abbreviation *para.*

> Basu and Jones (2007) went so far as to suggest the need for a new "intellectual framework in which to consider the nature and form of regulation in cyberspace" (para. 4).

If the document includes headings and neither paragraph nor page numbers are visible, cite the heading and the number of the paragraph following it to direct the reader to the location of the quoted material.

> In their study, Verbunt, Pernot, and Smeets (2008) found that "the level of perceived disability in patients with fibromyalgia seemed best explained by their mental health condition and less by their physical condition" (Discussion section, para. 1).

In some cases in which no page or paragraph numbers are visible, headings may be too unwieldy to cite in full. Instead, use a short title enclosed in quotation marks for the parenthetical citation.

> "Empirical studies have found mixed results on the efficacy of labels in educating consumers and changing consumption behavior" (Golan, Kuchler, & Krissof, 2007, "Mandatory Labeling Has Targeted," para. 4).

> (In this example the full heading was "Mandatory Labeling Has Targeted Information Gaps and Social Objectives.")

3. Reference List: Basic Rules

Your reference list should appear at the end of your paper. It provides the information necessary for a reader to locate and retrieve any source you cite in the body of the paper. Each source you cite in the paper must appear in your reference list; likewise, each entry in the reference list must be cited in your text.

Your references should begin on a new page separate from the text of the essay; label this page "References" centered at the top of the page (do NOT bold, underline, or use quotation marks for the title). All text should be double-spaced just like the rest of your essay.

a.   Basic Rules
- All lines after the first line of each entry in your reference list should be indented one-half inch from the left margin. This is called hanging indentation.
- Authors' names are inverted (last name first); give the last name and initials for all authors of a particular work if it has three to seven authors. If the work has more than seven authors, list the first six authors and then use elipses after the sixth author's name. After the elipses, list the last author's name of the work.
- Reference list entries should be alphabetized by the last name of the first author of each work.
- If you have more than one article by the same author, single-author references or multiple-author references with the exact same authors in the exact same order are listed in order by the year of publication, starting with the earliest.
- When referring to any work that is NOT a journal, such as a book, article, or Web page, capitalize only the first letter of the first word of a title and subtitle, the first word after a colon or a dash in the title, and proper nouns. Do not capitalize the first letter of the second word in a hyphenated compound word.
- Capitalize all major words in journal titles.
- Italicize titles of longer works such as books and journals.
- Do not italicize, underline, or put quotes around the titles of shorter works such as journal articles or essays in edited collections.

b.   Reference List Help

For a complete list of references and how they are to be individually documented see ***Publication Manual of the American Psychology Association (APA)*** by the APA; online at*: **http://www.apastyle.org/***

The basics of APA Style (This one has a tutorial): http://www.apastyle.org/learn/tutorials/basics-tutorial.aspx?imw=Y

APA Style Help: http://www.apastyle.org/apa-style-help.aspx?imw=Y

Frequently asked questions about APA Style: http://www.apastyle.org/learn/faqs/index.aspx?imw=Y

Learning APA: This one has tutorials: http://www.apastyle.org/learn/?imw=Y

The Publication Manual: http://www.apastyle.org/manual/index.aspx?imw=Y

4.   APA Stylistics: Basics

Writing in APA is more than simply learning the formula for citations or following a certain page layout. APA also includes the stylistics of your writing, from point of view to word choice.

a.   Point of View and Voice

When writing in APA Style, you rarely use the first person point of view ("I studied ..."). First person is not often found in APA publications unless the writer is a senior scholar who has earned some credibility to speak as an expert in the field.

You should use the third person point of view ("The study showed ...) unless you are co-authoring a paper with at least one other person, in which case you can use "we" ("Our finding included ..."). In general, you should foreground the research and not the researchers.

However, it is a common misconception that foregrounding the research requires using the passive voice ("Experiments have been conducted ..."). This is inaccurate.

APA Style encourages using the active voice ("We conducted an experiment ..."). The active voice is particularly important in experimental reports, where the subject performing the action should be clearly identified (e.g. "We interviewed ..." vs. "The participants responded ...").

b.   Clarity and Conciseness

Clarity and conciseness in writing are important when conveying research in APA Style. You don't want to misrepresent the details of a study or confuse your readers with wordiness or unnecessarily complex sentences.

For clarity, be specific rather than vague in descriptions and explanations. Unpack details accurately to provide adequate information to your readers so they can follow the development of your study.

Example: "It was predicted that marital conflict would predict behavior problems in school-aged children." To clarify this vague hypothesis, use parallel structure to outline specific ideas:
"The first hypothesis stated that marital conflict would predict behavior problems in school-aged children. The second hypothesis stated that the effect would be stronger for girls than for boys. The third hypothesis stated that older girls would be more affected by marital conflict than younger girls."

To be more concise, particularly in introductory material or abstracts, you should pare out unnecessary words and condense information when you can.

Example: The above list of hypotheses might be rephrased concisely as: "The authors wanted to investigate whether marital conflict would predict behavior problems in children and they wanted to know if the effect was greater for girls than for boys, particularly when they examined two different age groups of girls."

Balancing the need for clarity, which can require unpacking information, and the need for conciseness, which requires condensing information, is a challenge. Study published articles and reports in your field for examples of how to achieve this balance.

c.   Word Choice

You should even be careful in selecting certain words or terms. Within the social sciences, commonly used words take on different meanings and can have a significant effect on how your readers interpret your reported findings or claims. To increase clarity, avoid bias, and control how your readers will receive your information, you should make certain substitutions:

- Use terms like "participants" or "respondents" (rather than "subjects") to indicate how individuals were involved in your research
- Use terms like "children" or "community members" to provide more detail about who was participating in the study
- Use phrases like "The evidence *suggests* ..." or "Our study *indicates* ..." rather than referring to "proof" or "proves" because no single study can prove a theory or hypothesis

As with the other stylistic suggestions here, you should study the discourse of your field to see what terminology is most often used.

d.   Avoiding Poetic Language

Writing papers in APA Style is unlike writing in more creative or literary styles that draw on poetic expressions and figurative language. Such linguistic devices can detract from conveying your information clearly and may come across to readers as forced when it is inappropriately used to explain an issue or your findings.
Therefore, you should:

- minimize the amount of figurative language used in an APA paper, such as metaphors and analogies unless they are helpful in conveying a complex idea
- avoid rhyming schemes, alliteration, or other poetic devices typically found in verse
- use simple, descriptive adjectives and plain language that does not risk confusing your meaning

5.   APA Headings and Seriation

a.   Headings

APA Style uses a unique headings system to separate and classify paper sections. There are 5 **heading levels** in APA. *The 6th edition of the APA manual revises and simplifies previous heading guidelines.* Regardless of the number of levels, always use the headings in order, beginning with level 1. The format of each level is illustrated below:

APA Headings	
Level	Format
1	**Centered, Boldface, Uppercase and Lowercase Headings**
2	**Left-aligned, Boldface, Uppercase and Lowercase Heading**
3	**Indented, boldface, lowercase heading with period.**
4	***Indented, boldface, italicized, lowercase heading with period.***
5	*Indented, italicized, lowercase heading with period.*

Thus, if the article has four sections, some of which have subsection and some of which don't, use headings depending on the level of subordination. Section headings receive level one format. Subsections receive level two format. Subsections of subsections receive level three format. For example:

Methods (Level 1)

Site of Study (Level 2)

Participant Population (Level 2)

    Teachers. (Level 3)

    Students. (Level 3)

Results (Level 1)

Spatial Ability (Level 2)

    Test one. (level 3)

      Teachers with experience. (Level 4)

      Teachers in training. (Level 4)

    Test two. (Level 3)

Kinesthetic Ability (Level 2)

In APA Style, the Introduction section never gets a heading and headings are not indicated by letters or numbers. Levels of headings will depend upon the length and organization of your paper. Regardless, always begin with level one headings and proceed to level two, etc.

6.   APA Tables

The purpose of tables and figures in documents is to enhance your readers' understanding of the information in the document. Most word processing software available today will allow you to create your own tables and figures, and even the most basic of word processors permit the embedding of images, thus enabling you to include tables and figures in almost any document.

a.   General Guidelines

Necessity. Visual material such as tables and figures can be used quickly and efficiently to present a large amount of information to an audience, but visuals must be used to assist communication, not to use up space, or disguise marginally significant results behind a screen of complicated statistics. Ask yourself this question first: is the table or figure necessary? For example, it is better to present simple descriptive statistics in the text, not in a table.

Relation of Tables or Figures and Text. Because tables and figures supplement the text, refer in the text to all tables and figures used and explain what the reader should look for when using the table or figure. Focus only on the important point the reader should draw from them, and leave the details for the reader to examine on her own.

Documentation. If you are using figures, tables and/or data from other sources, be sure to gather all the information you will need to properly document your sources.

Integrity and Independence. Each table and figure must be intelligible without reference to the text, so be sure to include an explanation of every abbreviation (except the standard statistical symbols and abbreviations).

Organization, Consistency and Coherence. Number all tables sequentially as you refer to them in the text (Table 1, Table 2, etc.), likewise for figures (Figure 1, Figure 2, etc.). Abbreviations, terminology, probability level values must be consistent across tables and figures in the same article. Likewise, formats, titles, and headings must be consistent. Do not repeat the same data in different tables.

b.   Table Guidelines I

Table Checklist

- Is the table necessary?
- Is the entire table double spaced (including the title, headings, and notes)?
- Are all comparable tables presented consistently?
- Is the title brief but explanatory?
- Does every column have a column heading?
- Are all abbreviations; special use of italics, parentheses, and dashes; and special symbols explained?
- Are all probability level values correctly identified, and are asterisks attached to the appropriate table entries? Is a probability level assigned the same number of asterisks in all the tables in the same document?
- Are the notes organized according to the convention of general, specific, probability?
- Are all vertical rules eliminated?
- If the table or its data are from another source, is the source properly cited?
- Is the table referred to in the text?

c.   Table Guidelines II

Data in a table that would require only two or fewer columns and rows should be presented in the text. More complex data is better presented in tabular format. In order for quantitative data to be presented clearly and efficiently, it must be arranged logically, e.g. data to be compared must be presented next to one another (before/after, young/old, male/female, etc.), and statistical information (means, standard deviations, N values) must be presented in separate parts of the table. If possible, use canonical forms (such as ANOVA, regression, or correlation) to communicate your data effectively.

7. APA Figures

a.   Figures
Figure Checklist
- Is the figure necessary?
- Is the figure simple, clean, and free of extraneous detail?
- Are the data plotted accurately?
- Is the grid scale correctly proportioned?
- Is the lettering large and dark enough to read? Is the lettering compatible in size with the rest of the figure?
- Are parallel figures or equally important figures prepared according to the same scale?
- Are terms spelled correctly?
- Are all abbreviations and symbols explained in a figure legend or figure caption? Are the symbols, abbreviations, and terminology in the figure consistent with those in the figure caption? In other figures? In the text?
- Are the figures numbered consecutively with Arabic numerals?
- Are all figures mentioned in the text?

As tables supplement the text, so should each figure.

8. Statistics in APA

When including statistics in written text, be sure to include enough information for the reader to understand the study. Although the amount of explanation and data included depends upon the study, APA Style has guidelines for the representation of statistical information:
- Do not give references for statistics unless the statistic is uncommon, used unconventionally, or is the focus of the article

- Do not give formulas for common statistics (i.e. mean, *t* test)
- Do not repeat descriptive statistics in the text if they're represented in a table or figure
- Use terms like respectively and in order when enumerating a series of statistics; this illustrates the relationship between the numbers in the series.
-

9. Additional Resources

It's always best to consult the Publication Manual first for any APA question. If you are using APA style for a class assignment, it's a good idea to consult your professor or other campus resources for help with using APA style—they're the ones who can tell you how the style should apply in your particular case.

a.   Print Resources

Here are some print resources for using APA style. From the American Psychological Association:
- *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th edition) (ISBN 13: 978-1-4338-0561-5; ISBN 10: 1-4338-0561-8)
- *Mastering APA Style: Student's Workbook and Training Guide* (ISBN: 1557988919)
- *Mastering APA Style: Instructor's Resource G*uide (ISBN: 1557988900)
- *Displaying Your Findings: A Practical Guide for Creating Figures, Posters, and Presentations* (ISBN: 1557989788)

From other publishers:
- *The World's Easiest Guide to Using the APA* (ISBN: 0964385317)
- *Writing With Style: APA Style Made Easy* (ISBN: 0534363652)
- *Writing With Style: APA Style for Social Work* (ISBN: 0534263119)

b.   Online Resources from the APA
- APA Style Website

c.   Other Online Resources: Style Templates and Sample Papers
- APA Simulated Journal Article (from Elmira College)
- A Sample Paper in American Psychological Association Style (From Valencia Community College)
- Sample reference list (from Vanier College)

d.   Other Online Resources: Documenting and Referencing Sources
- Using APA Style to Cite and Document Sources (from Bedford St. Martin's *Online!*)
- How to Cite Online Nursing Resources Using APA Style (from the University of Nevada at Reno)
- APA Citation Style: Examples for Nursing Students (from College of St. Benedict/St. John's University)
- Citing Legal Materials in APA Style (Westfield State College)