AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION (APA) STYLE GUIDELINES OVERVIEW

THE PURDUE OWL

This one-pager provides basic guidelines for using APA style. To supplement this material, consult the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (7th Edition). The APA manual is available in most writing centers, libraries, and bookstores. You may also refer to the Purdue University Online Writing Lab (OWL) for information on APA: http://owl.purdue.edu/owl.

FORMATTING

Type APA papers on white 8.5 x 11-inch paper. Margins should be 1-inch on all sides. Text should be double-spaced. Use a legible font in 10- to 12-pt. size. Include a page header at the top of every page. To create a page header, type "TITLE OF YOUR PAPER" flush with the left margin. Abbreviate your title to 50 characters or fewer. Then insert page numbers flush right.

Title

- Title pages should include the "TITLE OF YOUR PAPER" in the header. In the upper half of the title page, type your name, byline, and affiliation, each centered on a separate lines. Student paper title pages include the title, author's name and affiliation, course number and name, instructor's name, and the assignment due date.

Abstract

- On a new page, center and type the word "Abstract." Beginning with the next line, type a double-spaced paragraph of 250 words or fewer summarizing your paper. Abstracts are not typically required for student papers.

Main Body

- The top area of the body pages should contain the header and the page number. Page margins should be 1 inch on all sides. Indent first line of each paragraph one-half inch from left margin.

Headings

- APA uses a five-level heading system to organize sections within a paper. The levels are formatted: **Level 1:** Centered, boldface and titlecase heading; **Level 2:** Left-aligned, boldface, titlecase heading; **Level 3**: Left-aligned, boldface italic, titlecase heading; Level 4: Indented, boldface, titlecase heading with period. Paragraph begins on the same line. **Level 5:** Indented, boldface italic, titlecase heading with period. Paragraph begins on the same line.

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IN-TEXT CITATIONS

The Basics

- Follow the author-date method of in-text citations: (Jones, 2020).
  - If you are directly quoting or borrowing from another work, you should include the page number at the end of the parenthetical citation. Use the abbreviation "p." (for one page) or "pp." (for multiple pages) before listing the page number(s): (Jones, 1998).
  - If you are referring to an idea from another work but not directly quoting the material, or making reference to an entire book, article, or other work, you only have to include the author and year of publication.
- Use the past tense or present perfect tense for signal phrases that occur in the literature review and procedure descriptions: for example, "Jones (1998) **found**" or "Jones (1998) **has found.**"
- Place direct quotations longer than 40 words in a free-standing block of double-spaced text and omit quotation marks.
  - Start the quotation on a new line, with all lines indented 0.5 inch from the left margin.
  - Indent the first line of any subsequent paragraph within the quotation an additional 0.5 inch.
  - Place the parenthetical citation after the closing punctuation mark.

Authors

- **A work by two authors:** Name both author(s) in the signal phrase or in the parentheses. Spell out "and" between the authors' names within the text, and use the ampersand (&) in parentheses:
  - "**Fan and Okoye** (2020) found that…" or "(**Fan & Okoye**, 2020)."
- **A work by three or more authors:** List only the first author's name followed by *et al.* in every citation— even the first— unless doing so would create ambiguity between different sources:
  - "**Gutierrez et al.** (2019) argued that…" or "(**Gutierrez et al.**, 2019)."
- **Unknown author:** If the work does not have an author, cite the source by its title in the signal phrase or use the first word or two of the title in parentheses. Italicize titles of books and reports; and use quotation marks for the titles of articles and book chapters:
  - A similar study was conducted with students learning to format research papers (**"Using APA,"** 2001)
- **Organization as an author:** When an organization or government agency is the author, mention organizations in the signal phrase **or** the parenthetical citation the first time you cite it:
  - According to the **American Psychological Association (APA)** (2020), …
- **Two or more works in the same parentheses:** When your parenthetical citation includes two or more works, list them in alphabetical order by the first author's name, separated by semicolons:
  - (Chen, 2020; Ruiz, 2019)

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REFERENCES

The Basics

- Reference lists appear at the end of research papers on a separate page.
  - Center and type the word "References" at the top of your list.
  - All lines after the first line of each entry should be indented 0.5 inch from the left margin.
  - Authors' names are inverted: list the last names followed by initials for all authors of a work, unless the work has more than 20 authors.
  - Sources should be listed in alphabetical order and double-spaced.

Single Author Periodical

- Author, A. A. (Year). Title of article. *Title of Periodical*, *volume number* (issue number), pages. DOI.

Other Author Variations

- For **two authors**, use the ampersand and separate with a comma:
  - Lastname, A. A., & Lastname, B. B.
- For **three to 20 authors**, separate all names with a comma and use an ampersand before the final name, similar to the above.
- For an **organization** as author, write the whole name of the organization:
  - American Psychological Association
- For an **unknown author**, start with the title and follow all other guidelines.

Book

- Author, A. A. (Year). *Title of book: Subtitle if included*. Publisher Name.

Chapter in Edited Book

- Author, A. A. (Year). Title of chapter. In E.E. Editor (Ed.), *Title of book*, (pp. 1-25). Publisher Name.

YouTube Video

- Uploader, A. A. (Date). *Title of video* [Description]. YouTube. URL

Page on a Website

- Most online sources that do not fall under other categories (social media posts, blogs, journal articles) will use this template, including articles on news websites such as BBC News and pages on government or NGO websites:
  - Author, A. A. (Date). *Title of page*. Site Name. URL
- If the page's author is not listed, start with the title instead.
  - *Title of page*. (Year, Month Date). Site Name. URL