
GUIDE FOR WRITING RESEARCH PAPERS

AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

Wharton County Junior College
English and Humanities

Courses

ENGL-1302

Based on

Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association
Purdue OWL

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1 Introduction

The American Psychological Association (APA) is one of the largest scientific and professional organization representing psychology in the United States, with researchers, educators, clinicians, consultants and students as its members. APA's mission is to advance the creation, communication and application of psychological knowledge to benefit society and improve people's lives.

The APA style is generally used for academic writing in the social sciences. Styles and examples in this document are not meant to be inclusive of all APA styles. Students are encouraged to refer to the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th edition) for more information and examples.

2 General Format

APA style sets the guidelines for formatting manuscripts using the English language in writing. APA style also provides writers a system for citing sources through parenthetical citation in essays and References pages. Writers who adopt the APA style build credibility by attributing referenced material to their authors and protect themselves from accusations of plagiarism.

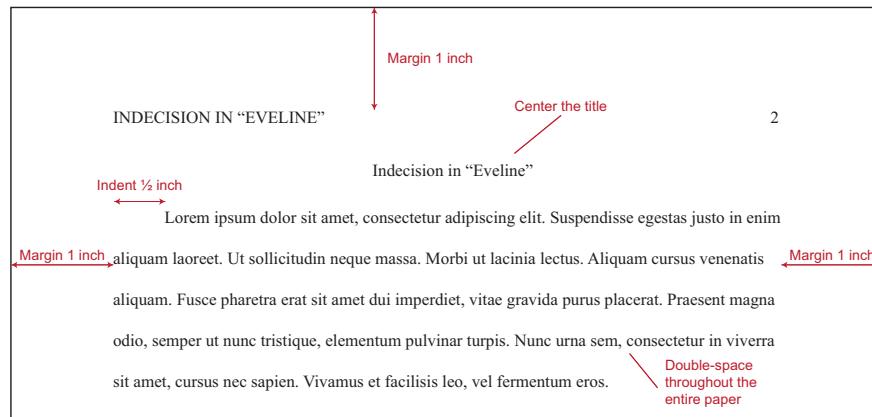


Figure 1: Example pages of an APA paper

For the purpose of this course, all assignments will strictly adhere to the following guidelines (refer to Figure 1 for an example):

1. Type your manuscript on a computer and print it out on standard, white letter-size paper. Print only on one side of the paper. Set the margins of your manuscript to at least one inch on all sides.
2. Your essay should include four major sections: the Title Page, Abstract, Main Body, and References.
3. Set the headers and footers within the pages' margins. Include a page header (also known as the "running head") at the top of every page. Refer to Section 2.1 for more information.
4. Double-space the text throughout your entire manuscript.
5. Use Times Roman typeface (or an equivalent serif typeface). The font size should be 12 points.
6. Leave only one space after periods or other punctuation marks.

7. Indent the first line of paragraphs one-half inch from the left margin. Use the TAB key as opposed to using the space bar multiple times.
8. Use italics throughout your essay for the titles of longer works (refer to Section 3 on page 6 for more information on in-text citations), and only when absolutely necessary to provide emphasis.
9. If you have any endnotes, include them on a separate page after your References page (refer to Section 4.1 on page 8 for more information).

2.1 Running Head

The page header — also known as the “running head” — is a shortened title (no more than 50 characters, including spaces) that appears on every page. The header is located within, not below, the paper’s margin. The words *Running head:* precede the running head on the title page only (see Figure 2). For example:

Running head: INDECISION IN “EVELINE”

All other pages should omit the words *Running head:* (see Figure 1). For example:

INDECISION IN “EVELINE”

2.2 Title Page

The title page may include up to five elements: title, running head, author, byline, institutional affiliation, and author note (which includes grant or funding information and a full correspondence address). The title page is numbered page 1.

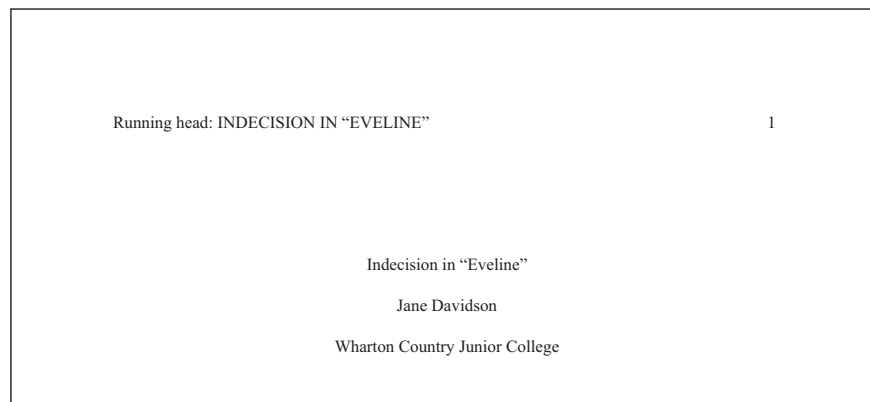


Figure 2: Title page in APA style

For the purpose of this course, the title page (see Figure 2.2) should include:

1. Title, no more than 12 words in length, in upper and lowercase letters centered in the upper half of the page. Your title may take up one or two lines.
2. Beneath the title, type the author’s name: first name, middle initial(s), and last name. Do not use titles (e.g., Dr.) or degrees (e.g., PhD).

- Beneath the author's name, type the institutional affiliation, which should indicate the location where the author(s) conducted the research.

All text on the title page, and throughout your paper, should be double-spaced.

2.3 Abstract

An abstract is a brief summary of your paper that immediately follows your title page (see Figure 3). Your abstract should be a single paragraph of 150–250 words. Begin your abstract on a new page and place your running head and the page number 2 in the top right hand corner. Center the word *Abstract* at the top of the page with no formatting (bold, italics, underlined, quotation marks, etc.).

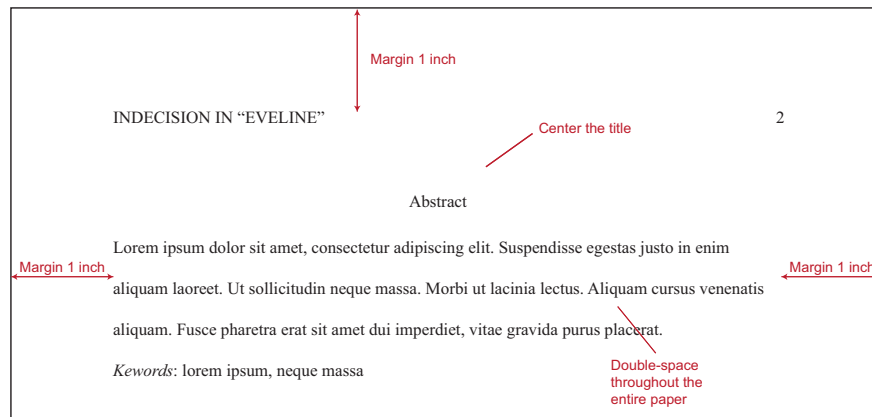


Figure 3: Abstract in APA style

Beginning with the next line, write a concise summary of the key points of your research (no indentation). Your abstract should contain at least your research topic, research questions, participants, methods, results, data analysis, and conclusions. You may list keywords from your paper in your abstract as shown in Figure 3.

2.4 Main Body

The main body will include the actual essay itself. You may divide the main body into sections using headings. There are five levels of headings in APA Style. The number of headings needed for a paper will vary depending on the paper's complexity and subject matter. Sections of similar importance have the same level of heading.

2.5 References

The reference section of your paper will include a list of all of the sources that you used in your paper. How to cite references is covered in more details in Section 3. The format of the References pages is also covered in more details in Section 5 on page 9.

3 In-Text Citations

To refer to the works of others in your text, use parenthetical author–date referencing: include the author and date either both inside parentheses or with the author names in running text and the date in parentheses. All sources of information provided in-text must correspond to a source in the References page. The source information required depends on the source medium and the source’s entry in the References page (refer to Section 5 on page 9).

3.1 Formatting Quotations

The style for quotations depends on the length of the quoted text. Short quotations are fewer than 40 words.

Short quotations: For short quotations fewer than 40 words, enclose the quotation within double quotation marks within the text. 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:

Jones (1998) found “students often had difficulty using APA style” (p. 199); what implications does this have for teachers?

If the author is not named in a signal phrase, place the author’s last name, the year of publication, and the page number in parentheses after the quotation:

She stated, “Students often had difficulty using APA style” (Jones, 1998, p. 199), but she did not offer an explanation as to why.

When paraphrasing another work’s ideas, make a reference to the author and year of publication in your in-text reference, and provide the page number:

According to Jones (1998), APA style is a difficult citation format for first-time learners.
or
APA style is a difficult citation format for first-time learners (Jones, 1998, p. 199).

Punctuation marks of the quoted text — such as question marks, periods, commas, semicolons, etc. — must come within the double-quotation marks. Punctuation marks that are not part of the quoted text but are part of your text should appear after the parenthetical citation.

Long quotations: Place direct quotations that are 40 words or longer in a free-standing block and omit quotation marks. Start the quotation on a new line, indented one-half inch from the left margin. Type the entire quotation on the new margin, and indent the first line of any subsequent paragraph within the quotation one-half inch from the new margin. Maintain double-spacing throughout. The parenthetical citation should come after the closing punctuation mark:

Jones’s (1998) study found the following:
Students often had difficulty using APA style, especially when it was their first time citing sources. This difficulty could be attributed to the fact that many students failed to purchase a style manual or to ask their teacher for help. (p. 199)

3.2 Formatting Sources

General guidelines: When using APA format, follow the author–date method of in-text citation: the author’s last name and the year of publication for the source should appear in the text, for example, (Jones, 1998), and a complete reference should appear in the Reference list at the end of the paper.

Always capitalize proper nouns, including author names and initials. When capitalizing titles, capitalize both words in a hyphenated compound word: *Natural-Born Cyborgs*. Italicize or underline the titles of longer works such as books, edited collections, movies, television series, documentaries, or albums.

When you cite a direct quotation, include a page number. You may include page numbers for paraphrases if you think it would aid the reader, but this is not required.

Smith and Wexwood (2010) reported an increase in the number of books read, whereas Gibson (2011) reported a decrease. Albright, Wayne, and Fortinbras (2004) found no significant results.

Electronic sources: For electronic and other sources that do not include a page number, include the author’s name without the page number. For a passing reference to a website in text, the URL is sufficient; no reference list entry is needed:

Gussie Fink-Nottle has set up a discussion forum for newt fanciers (<http://gfnnfg.livejournal.com/>).

When citing a particular document or piece of information from a website, include both a reference list entry and an in-text citation. The key to creating the reference list entry is to determine the type of content on the web page. Provide the following four pieces of information:

Author, A. (date). Title of document [Format description]. Retrieved [date] from <URL>

For example:

New child vaccine gets funding boost. (2001). Retrieved March 21, 2001,
from http://news.ninemsn.com.au/health/story_13178.asp

The in-text citation includes the author and date (Author, date), as with any other APA Style citation.

Author unknown: If the author of the text is not given, include the next piece of information in the reference (the title of the article or book) in its place. Place the title in quotation marks if it is a short work (e.g., articles), or italicize it if it is a longer work (e.g., plays or books) and provide a page number:

A similar study was done of students learning to format research papers (“Using APA,” 2001).

The same principle applies when quoting organizations:

According to the American Psychological Association (2000), . . .

Citing sources with more than one author: For a source with two authors, name both authors in the signal phrase or in the parentheses each time you cite the work. Use the word *and* between the authors' names within the text:

Research by Wegener and Petty (1994) supports . . .

Use the ampersand (&) in the parentheses:

(Wegener & Petty, 1994)

For a source with three to five authors, list all the authors in the signal phrase or in parentheses the first time you cite the source:

Smith, Yang, and Moore (2011) argue that tougher gun control is not needed in the United States (p. 76).

In subsequent citations, only use the first author's last name followed by "et al." in the signal phrase or in parentheses:

Legal experts counter Smith, Yang, and Moore's argument by noting that the current spike in gun violence in America compels lawmakers to adjust gun laws (Jones et al., 2013).

4 Special Formats

4.1 Endnotes and Footnotes

Endnotes and footnotes are used to include additional information, such as definitions, explanations, or citations. The extensive use of explanatory or digressive notes is discouraged. However, if explanatory notes still prove necessary to your document, APA details the use of two types of footnotes: content and copyright.

The endnotes or footnotes should start numbering at the Arabic number one (do not use symbols), and should continue consecutive numbering in superscript format throughout the essay. Insert the number formatted in superscript following the punctuation mark, except for dashes and parentheses.

[. . .] , but Peter Scotto has offered another view.³

3. Peter Scotto, "Censorship, Reading, and Interpretation: A Case Study from the Soviet Union," *PMLA* 109 (1994): 61.

Endnotes appear on a separate page entitled Footnotes (centered, no formatting), or Footnote if there is only one note. The Footnotes page should come after the References page. The notes on this page should be listed by consecutive Arabic numbers that correspond to the notation in the text. Each endnote should be indented by five spaces, and subsequent lines should be flush with the left margin.

For footnotes, begin four single-spaced lines (or two double-spaced lines) below the main text. Footnotes at the bottom of a page should use single-spaced lines — as an exception to the double-spaced-lines rule throughout the essay — with the first line indented by five spaces and subsequent lines flush with the left margin. Endnotes combined on a separate Footnotes page should, however, maintain the double-spaced line format.

4.2 Abbreviations

Refer to the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th edition) for more information related to the use of abbreviations. A subset of commonly-used abbreviations is included in this document for the purpose of this course.

When abbreviating a term, use the full term the first time you use it, followed immediately by the abbreviation in parentheses. In APA, abbreviations should be limited to instances when the abbreviation is standard and will not interfere with the reader's understanding, and if space and repetition can be greatly avoided through abbreviation.

Uppercase letter abbreviations: Do not use periods or spaces in abbreviations composed solely of capital letters, except in the case of proper names. For example:

US, MA, CD, HTML
P. D. James, J. R. R. Tolkien, E. B. White

Lowercase letter abbreviations: Use a period if the abbreviation Latin abbreviation or a reference abbreviation:

etc., e.g., a.m.
Vol. 7, p. 12, 4th ed.

Do not use periods when abbreviated measurements (with the exception of in. for inches), or when referring to an internet suffix:

cd, ft, lb, mi, min
esp. .com, .edu, .gov (URL suffixes)

To form the plural of abbreviations (except for units of measurement, which do not take a plural form), add *s* alone without apostrophe or italicization, but maintain the use of

vols., IQs, Eds.

Abbreviations in citations: Condense citations using abbreviations. Shorten publisher's names as much as possible by abbreviating the first and middle names, while providing enough information to identify the person:

Laurence, D. H.

5 References List

The reference list should appear at the end of your paper. All entries in the References page must correspond to the References in your main text. It provides the information necessary for a reader to locate and retrieve any source you cite in the body of the paper.

5.1 Basic Rules

1. Begin your References list on a separate page at the end of your paper.
2. Label the page *References* (centered, no formatting) at the top of the page.
3. Double-space all citations; do not skip spaces between entries.
4. Indent the second and subsequent lines of citations one-half inch from the left margin so that you create a hanging indent.
5. Reference list entries should be alphabetized by the last name of the first author of each work.
6. Maintain the punctuation and capitalization that is used by the journal in its title.
7. 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.
8. APA does not provide rules on how to cite all types of sources. If you have a source that APA does not include, APA suggests that you find the example that is most similar to your source and use that format.

5.2 Listing Author Names

Entries are listed alphabetically by the author's last name.

Single author: Author names are written last name followed by author initials. Do not include titles or degrees with names.

Bower, H. (2001). The gender identity disorder in the DSM-IV classification: A critical evaluation. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry, 35*, 1–8.

Two authors: List by their last names and initials. Use the ampersand (&) between the authors' names.

Carroll, L. & Gilroy, P. J. (2002). Transgender issues in counselor preparation. *Counselor Education & Supervision, 41*, 233–242. Retrieved from <http://www.counseling.org>

Three or more authors: For three to seven authors, list by last names and initials; commas separate author names, while the last author name is preceded by ampersand.

Carroll, L., Gilroy, P. J., & Ryan, J. (2002). Counseling transgendered, transsexual, and gender-variant clients. *Journal of Counseling and Development, 80*(2), 131-129. Retrieved from <http://www.counseling.org>

For more than seven authors, after the sixth author's name, use ellipses (...) in place of the author names, then provide the final author name. There should be no more than seven names.

Author unknown: Alphabetize works with no known author by their title.

Merriam-Webster's collegiate dictionary (10th ed.).(1993). Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster.

Use a shortened version of the title in the parenthetical citations in your paper: (Merriam-Webster's, 1993).

5.3 Books

The author's name or a book appears in last name, first name format. The basic form for a book citation is:

Last name, first initials (Year of publication). *Title of Book: Capital letter for subtitle*. City of Publication: Publisher.

Book with one author: Use the standard format.

Crain, W. (2005). *Theories of development: Concepts and applications* (5th ed.). Upper Saddle Ridge, NJ: Pearson.

Two or more books by the same author: Provide the author's name in *last name, initials* format followed by the year of publication in parentheses. List works sorted by year of publication.

Book by a corporate author or organization: A corporate author may include a commission, a committee, or a group that does not identify individual members on the title page. List the names of corporate authors in the place where an author's name typically appears at the beginning of the entry.

Book with an unknown author: List by title of the book in italics. Incorporate these entries alphabetically just as you would with works that include an author name. Parenthetical citation of a book with no author requires that you provide the name of the work in full or a shortened version and the year of publication in parentheses.

Merriam-Webster's collegiate dictionary (10th ed.).(1993). Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster.

5.4 Periodicals

Periodicals (e.g., magazines, newspapers, and scholarly journals) require that authors are named last name followed by initials; publication year goes between parentheses, followed by a period. The title of the article is in sentence-case (only the first word and proper nouns in the title are capitalized). The periodical title is run in title case, and is followed by the volume number which, with the title, is also italicized.

A digital object identifier (DOI) is a unique string of letters, numbers, and symbols assigned to a published work to identify content and provide a persistent link to its location on the Internet. The DOI is typically located on the first page of an electronic document near the copyright notice and on the database landing page for the document. When DOIs are available, include them in the reference information. Place the DOI at the end of the reference, and don't add a period at the end of it.

Author, A. A., Author, B. B., & Author, C. C. (Year). Title of article. *Title of Periodical, volume number*(issue number), pages. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/xx.xxx/yyyy>

Article in a magazine: Citing articles in magazines follows the standard format for APA periodicals.

Dixon, A. L., Scheidegger, C., & McWhirter, J. J. (2009). The adolescent mattering experience: Gender variations in perceived mattering, anxiety, and depression. *Journal of Counseling and Development, 87*, 302–310.

Article in a newspaper: Unlike other periodicals, p. (for single page) or pp. (for multiple pages) precedes page numbers for a newspaper reference.

Trembacki, S. (2000, December 5). Brees Hopes to Win Heisman for Team. *Purdue Exponent*, p. 20.

5.5 Electronic Sources

When citing documents or information from an electronic source, include both a reference list entry and an in-text citation. The in-text citation includes the author–date as with any other APA Style citation. The reference entry has to include a minimum of four pieces of information: author, date, title of work, and place of retrieval from the electronic source.

Article from an online periodical: Online articles follow the same guidelines for printed articles. Include all information the online host makes available, including an issue number in parentheses.

Author, A. (Date of publication). Title of article. *Title of Online Periodical, volume number*(issue number if available). Retrieved from <http://www.someaddress.com/full/url/>

If the article has a DOI (refer to Section 5.4 on the preceding page for more information) assigned:

Author, A. (Date of publication). Title of article. Title of Journal, volume number, page range. doi:0000000/000000000000 or <http://dx.doi.org/10.0000/0000>

Always use the DOI format which the article appears with when it is available. Online materials can potentially change URLs. The DOI format, as opposed to the URL, provide stable, long-lasting links for online articles.

Electronic books: Use the following format if the book you are using is only provided in a digital format or is difficult to find in print. Include the type and version of e-book you are referencing (e.g., “[Kindle DX version]”). If DOIs are available, provide them at the end of the reference.

De Huff, E. W. (n.d.). *Taytay’s tales: Traditional Pueblo Indian tales*. Retrieved from <http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/dehuff/taytay/taytay.html>

If the work is not directly available online or must be purchased, use *Available from*, rather than *Retrieved from*, and point readers to where they can find it.

Davis, J. (n.d.). *Familiar birdsongs of the Northwest*. Available from <http://www.powells.com/cgi-bin/biblio?inkey=1-9780931686108-0>

Abbreviations commonly used with electronic sources: If publishing information is unavailable for entries that require publication information such as publisher (or sponsor) names and publishing dates, APA requires the use of special abbreviations to indicate that this information is not available. Use *n.p.* to indicate that neither a publisher nor a sponsor name has been provided. Use *n.d.* when the electronic source does not provide a publication date. When an entry requires that you provide a page but no pages are provided in the source (as in the case of an online-only scholarly journal or a work that appears in an online-only anthology), use the abbreviation *n. pag.*