

American Psychological Association (APA) Style Guidelines Overview



Introduction

This poster provides *basic* rules 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 reference the Purdue University Online Writing Lab (OWL) for information on APA: <http://owl.purdue.edu/owl>.

Poster by Kate Bouwens and Allen Brizee. © 2009 The Writing Lab & OWL at Purdue University. Updated for APA 7 by Rachel Atherton. © 2019 The Writing Lab & OWL at Purdue University.

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 or fewer characters. Then insert page numbers flush right.

Title Page

Title pages should include the "TITLE OF YOUR PAPER" in the header. In the upper half of the title page, type your name, the byline, and affiliation centered on separate lines. Student paper title pages include the title, author name and affiliation, course number and name, instructor name, and 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 or fewer words 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 numbers. Page margins should be 1 inch. Indent first lines of paragraphs one half-inch from left margins.

Headings

APA uses a five heading system to separate papers: 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; Level 5: Indented, boldface italic, titlecase heading with period.

	<p>Method (Level 1)</p> <p>Site of Study (Level 2)</p> <p>Participant Population (Level 2)</p> <p>Teachers (Level 3)</p> <p>Students (Level 3)</p> <p>Results (Level 1)</p> <p>Spatial Ability (Level 2)</p> <p>Test One (Level 3)</p> <p>Teachers With Experience (Level 4)</p> <p>Teachers in Training (Level 4)</p> <p>Test Two (Level 3)</p> <p>Kinesthetic Ability (Level 2)</p>
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In-Text Citation

Basics

Use the past tense or present perfect tense when using signal phrases to describe earlier research, e.g., "Jones (2020) found" or "Jones (2020) has found." Follow the author-date method of in-text citation: (Jones, 2020).

Place direct quotations longer than 40 words in a free-standing block of double-spaced lines and omit quotation marks. Start the quotation on a new line, with all lines indented .5 in. from the left margin. Indent the first line of any subsequent paragraph within the quotation an extra .5 in. Place the parenthetical citation after the closing punctuation mark.

A Work with One or Two Authors

Name the author(s) in the signal phrase or in the parentheses. Spell out "and" in signal phrases but use the ampersand in parentheses.

Fan and Okoye (2020) found that... (Fan & Okoye, 2020).

A Work by Three or More Authors

Include the name of the first author plus "et al." in each citation, including the first, unless that would create ambiguity with another source.

Gutierrez et al. (2019) argued that... (Gutierrez et al., 2019)

Avoiding Ambiguity With Multiple Sources

When different sources have similar groups of authors, include as many authors as are necessary to differentiate between the sources.

Gutierrez, Jones, Wang, et al. (2019) argued that... On the other hand, Gutierrez, Jones, Patil, et al. (2019) claimed that...

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 in the parentheses. Italicize titles of books and reports; titles of articles and chapters go in quotation marks.

A similar study was conducted with students learning to format research papers ("Using APA," 2001).

Organization as Author

For organization or government agency authors, 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, order them the same way they appear in the reference list, separated by a semi-colon.

(Chen, 2020; Ruiz, 2019)

General Mentions of Common Websites, Software, and Applications

Mention the site in the text and include the address in parentheses. Software and apps use version numbers in parentheses.

We consulted the Purdue OWL (<https://www.owl.purdue.edu>).

References

Basics

References lists appear at the end of 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 in the list should be indented .5 inch from the left margin. Author's names are inverted; give last names and 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 21 or more authors, follow the pattern above for the first 19 authors, use an ellipsis, and write the final author's name.

For an organization as author, write the whole name of the organization:

American Psychological Association.

For an unknown author, start with the title of the work and follow all other guidelines.

Book

Author, A. A. (Year). *Title of Book*. 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 work [Description]. YouTube.

URL

Podcast Episode

Host, A. A. (Date). Title of episode (No. 1) [Audio podcast episode]. In *Title of podcast*. Publisher. URL

Tweet

Author, A. A. [@username]. (Date). Content of post up to first 20 words. Site Name. URL

Page on a Website

Most online sources that do not fall under other categories (social media posts, blog, journal) 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