Summary:

APA (American Psychological Association) style is most commonly used to cite sources within the social sciences. This resource, revised according to the 6th edition, second printing of the APA manual, offers examples for the general format of APA research papers, in-text citations, endnotes/footnotes, and the reference page. For more information, please consult the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, (6th ed., 2nd printing).

General Format

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 a clear font that is highly readable. APA recommends using 12 pt. Times New Roman font.

Include a page header (also known as the "running head") at the top of every page. To create a page header/running head, insert page numbers flush right. Then type "TITLE OF YOUR PAPER" in the header flush left using all capital letters. The running head is a shortened version of your paper's title and cannot exceed 50 characters including spacing and punctuation.

Major Paper Sections

Your essay should include four major sections: the Title Page, Abstract, Main Body, and References.

Title Page

The title page should contain the title of the paper, the author's name, and the institutional affiliation. 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/running head should look like this:

Running head: TITLE OF YOUR PAPER

Pages after the title page should have a running head that looks like this:

TITLE OF YOUR PAPER

Type your title in upper and lowercase letters centered in the upper half of the page. APA recommends that your title be no more than 12 words in length and that it should not contain abbreviations or words that serve no purpose. Your title may take up one or two lines. All text on the title page, and throughout your paper, should be double-spaced.

Beneath the title, type the author's name: first name, middle initial(s), and last name. Do not use titles (Dr.) or degrees (PhD).
Beneath the author's name, type the **institutional affiliation**, which should indicate the location where the author(s) conducted the research. See example below:

![Image Caption: APA Title Page](image1)

**Abstract**

Begin a new page. Your abstract page should already include the **page header** (described above). On the first line of the abstract page, center the word “Abstract” (no bold, formatting, italics, underlining, or quotation marks). Beginning with the next line, write a concise summary of the key points of your research. (Do not indent.) Your abstract should contain at least your research topic, research questions, participants, methods, results, data analysis, and conclusions. You may also include possible implications of your research and future work you see connected with your findings. Your abstract should be a single paragraph double-spaced. Your abstract should be between 150 and 250 words.

![Image Caption: APA Abstract Page](image2)
In-Text Citations: The Basics

What follows are some general guidelines for referring to the works of others in your essay.

**Note:** APA style requires authors to use the past tense or present perfect tense when using signal phrases to describe earlier research, for example, Jones (1998) *found* or Jones (1998) *has found*...

**APA citation basics**

When using APA format, follow the author-date method of in-text citation. This means that 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.

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 make reference to the author and year of publication and not the page number in your in-text reference. All sources that are cited in the text must appear in the reference list at the end of the paper.

**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: *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; Friends*.
- 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."
Short quotations

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.

According to Jones (1998), "Students often had difficulty using APA style, especially when it was their first time" (p. 199).

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.

Long quotations

Place direct quotations that are 40 words, or longer, in a free-standing block of typewritten lines, and omit quotation marks. Start the quotation on a new line, indented 1/2 inch from the left margin, i.e., in the same place you would begin a new paragraph. Type the entire quotation on the new margin, and indent the first line of any subsequent paragraph within the quotation 1/2 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)

Summary or paraphrase

If you are paraphrasing an idea from another work, you only have to make reference to the author and year of publication in your in-text reference, but APA guidelines encourage you to also provide the page number (although it is not required.)

According to Jones (1998), APA style is a difficult citation format for first-time learners. APA style is a difficult citation format for first-time learners (Jones, 1998, p. 199).
In-Text Citations: Author/Authors

APA style has a series of important rules on using author names as part of the author-date system. There are additional rules for citing indirect sources, electronic sources, and sources without page numbers.

Citing an Author or Authors

A Work by 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 and use the ampersand in the parentheses.

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

A Work by Three to Five Authors: List all the authors in the signal phrase or in parentheses the first time you cite the source.

(Kernis, Cornell, Sun, Berry, & Harlow, 1993)

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

(Kernis et al., 1993)
In et al., et should not be followed by a period.

Six or More Authors: Use the first author's name followed by et al. in the signal phrase or in parentheses.

Harris et al. (2001) argued...
(Harris et al., 2001)

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. Titles of books and reports are italicized or underlined; titles of articles, chapters, and web pages are in quotation marks.

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

Note: In the rare case the "Anonymous" is used for the author, treat it as the author's name (Anonymous, 2001). In the reference list, use the name Anonymous as the author.
**Organization as an Author:** If the author is an organization or a government agency, mention the organization in the signal phrase or in the parenthetical citation the first time you cite the source.

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

If the organization has a well-known abbreviation, include the abbreviation in brackets the first time the source is cited and then use only the abbreviation in later citations.

First citation: (Mothers Against Drunk Driving [MADD], 2000)
Second citation: (MADD, 2000)

**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.

(Berndt, 2002; Harlow, 1983)

**Authors With the Same Last Name:** To prevent confusion, use first initials with the last names.

(E. Johnson, 2001; L. Johnson, 1998)

**Two or More Works by the Same Author in the Same Year:** If you have two sources by the same author in the same year, use lower-case letters (a, b, c) with the year to order the entries in the reference list. Use the lower-case letters with the year in the in-text citation.

Research by Berndt (1981a) illustrated that...

**Introductions, Prefaces, Forewords, and Afterwords:** When citing an Introduction, Preface, Foreword, or Afterwords in-text, cite the appropriate author and year as usual.

(Funk & Kolln, 1992)

**Personal Communication:** For interviews, letters, e-mails, and other person-to-person communication, cite the communicator's name, the fact that it was personal communication, and the date of the communication. Do not include personal communication in the reference list.

(E. Robbins, personal communication, January 4, 2001). A. P. Smith also claimed that many of her students had difficulties with APA style (personal communication, November 3, 2002).
Citing Indirect Sources

If you use a source that was cited in another source, name the original source in your signal phrase. List the secondary source in your reference list and include the secondary source in the parentheses.

Johnson argued that...(as cited in Smith, 2003, p. 102).

Note: When citing material in parentheses, set off the citation with a comma, as above. Also, try to locate the original material and cite the original source.

Electronic Sources

If possible, cite an electronic document the same as any other document by using the author-date style.

Kenneth (2000) explained...

Unknown Author and Unknown Date: If no author or date is given, use the title in your signal phrase or the first word or two of the title in the parentheses and use the abbreviation "n.d." (for "no date").

Another study of students and research decisions discovered that students succeeded with tutoring ("Tutoring and APA," n.d.).

Sources Without Page Numbers

When an electronic source lacks page numbers, you should try to include information that will help readers find the passage being cited. When an electronic document has numbered paragraphs, use the abbreviation "para." followed by the paragraph number (Hall, 2001, para. 5). If the paragraphs are not numbered and the document includes headings, provide the appropriate heading and specify the paragraph under that heading. Note that in some electronic sources, like Web pages, people can use the Find function in their browser to locate any passages you cite.

According to Smith (1997), ... (Mind over Matter section, para. 6).

Note: Never use the page numbers of Web pages you print out; different computers print Web pages with different pagination.
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.

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 for up to and including seven authors. If the work has more than seven authors, list the first six authors and then use ellipses after the sixth author's name. After the ellipses, 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.
- For multiple articles by the same author, or authors listed in the same order, list the entries in chronological order, from earliest to most recent.
- Present the journal title in full.
- Maintain the punctuation and capitalization that is used by the journal in its title.
  - For example: ReCALL not RECALL or Knowledge Management Research & Practice not Knowledge Management Research and Practice.
- Capitalize all major words in journal titles.
- When referring to books, chapters, articles, or Web pages, 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.
- 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.
- Please note: While the APA manual provides many examples of how to cite common types of sources, it does not provide rules on how to cite all types of sources. Therefore, 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. For more information, see page 193 of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, (6th ed., 2nd printing).
Reference List: Author/Authors

The following rules for handling works by a single author or multiple authors apply to all APA-style references in your reference list, regardless of the type of work (book, article, electronic resource, etc.)

Single Author

Last name first, followed by author initials.


Two Authors

List by their last names and initials. Use the ampersand instead of "and."


Three to Seven Authors

List by last names and initials; commas separate author names, while the last author name is preceded again by ampersand.


More Than Seven Authors

List by last names and initials; commas separate author names. After the sixth author's name, use an ellipses in place of the author names. Then provide the final author name. There should be no more than seven names.


Organization as Author

Unknown Author


**NOTE:** When your essay includes parenthetical citations of sources with no author named, use a shortened version of the source's title instead of an author's name. Use quotation marks and italics as appropriate. For example, parenthetical citations of the source above would appear as follows: *(Merriam-Webster's, 1993).*

**Two or More Works by the Same Author**

Use the author's name for all entries and list the entries by the year (earliest comes first).


When an author appears both as a sole author and, in another citation, as the first author of a group, list the one-author entries first.


**Two or More Works by the Same Author in the Same Year**

If you are using more than one reference by the same author (or the same group of authors listed in the same order) published in the same year, organize them in the reference list alphabetically by the title of the article or chapter. Then assign letter suffixes to the year. Refer to these sources in your essay as they appear in your reference list, e.g.: "Berndt (1981a) makes similar claims..."


Reference List: Articles in Periodicals

Basic Form

APA style dictates 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, meaning 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. If a DOI has been assigned to the article that you are using, you should include this after the page numbers for the article. If no DOI has been assigned and you are accessing the periodical online, use the URL of the website from which you are retrieving the periodical.


Article in Journal Paginated by Volume

Journals that are paginated by volume begin with page one in issue one, and continue numbering issue two where issue one ended, etc.


Article in Journal Paginated by Issue

Journals paginated by issue begin with page one every issue; therefore, the issue number gets indicated in parentheses after the volume. The parentheses and issue number are not italicized or underlined.


Article in a Magazine


Article in a Newspaper


Reference List: Books

Basic Format for Books

Author, A. A. (Year of publication). Title of work: Capital letter also for subtitle. Location: Publisher.

Note: For "Location," you should always list the city and the state using the two letter postal abbreviation without periods (New York, NY).


Edited Book, No Author


Edited Book with an Author or Authors


Edition Other Than the First


Article or Chapter in an Edited Book


Note: When you list the pages of the chapter or essay in parentheses after the book title, use "pp." before the numbers: (pp. 1-21). This abbreviation, however, does not appear before the page numbers in periodical references, except for newspapers.

Reference List: Other Print Sources

An Entry in an Encyclopedia


Work Discussed in a Secondary Source

List the source the work was discussed in:


**NOTE**: Give the secondary source in the references list; in the text, name the original work, and give a citation for the secondary source. For example, if Seidenberg and McClelland's work is cited in Coltheart et al. and you did not read the original work, list the Coltheart et al. reference in the References. In the text, use the following citation:

In Seidenberg and McClelland's study (as cited in Coltheart, Curtis, Atkins, & Haller, 1993), ...

Government Document


For information about citing legal sources in your reference list, see the University of Nebraska, Kearney page on Citing Legal Materials in APA Style.
Reference List: Electronic Sources (Web Publications)

Please note: There are no spaces used with brackets in APA. When possible, include the year, month, and date in references. If the month and date are not available, use the year of publication. Please note, too, that the OWL still includes information about print sources and databases for those still working with these sources.

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.


Online Scholarly Journal Article: Citing DOIs

Please note: In August of 2011 the formatting recommendations for DOIs changed. DOIs are now rendered as an alpha-numeric string which acts as an active link. According to The APA Style Guide to Electronic References, 6th edition, you should use the DOI format which the article appears with. So, if it is using the older numeric string, use that as the DOI. If, however, it is presented as the newer alpha-numeric string, use that as the DOI. The Purdue OWL maintains examples of citations using both DOI styles.

Because online materials can potentially change URLs, APA recommends providing a Digital Object Identifier (DOI), when it is available, as opposed to the URL. DOIs are an attempt to provide stable, long-lasting links for online articles. They are unique to their documents and consist of a long alphanumeric code. Many—but not all—publishers will provide an article's DOI on the first page of the document.

Note that some online bibliographies provide an article's DOI but may "hide" the code under a button which may read "Article" or may be an abbreviation of a vendor's name like "CrossRef" or "PubMed." This button will usually lead the user to the full article which will include the DOI. Find DOI's from print publications or ones that go to dead links with CrossRef.org's "DOI Resolver," which is displayed in a central location on their home page.
**Article From an Online Periodical with DOI Assigned**

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


**Article From an Online Periodical with no DOI Assigned**

Online scholarly journal articles without a DOI require the URL of the journal home page. Remember that one goal of citations is to provide your readers with enough information to find the article; providing the journal home page aids readers in this process.


**Article From a Database**

**Please note:** APA states that including database information in citations is not necessary because databases change over time (p. 192). However, the OWL still includes information about databases for those users who need database information.

When referencing a print article obtained from an online database (such as a database in the library), provide appropriate print citation information (formatted just like a "normal" print citation would be for that type of work). By providing this information, you allow people to retrieve the print version if they do not have access to the database from which you retrieved the article. You can also include the item number or accession number or database URL at the end, but the APA manual says that this is not required.

For articles that are easily located, do not provide database information. If the article is difficult to locate, then you can provide database information. Only use retrieval dates if the source could change, such as Wikis. For more about citing articles retrieved from electronic databases, see pages 187-192 of the Publication Manual.


Abstract

If you only cite an abstract but the full text of the article is also available, cite the online abstract as any other online citations, adding "[Abstract]" after the article or source name. However, if the full text is not available, you may use an abstract that is available through an abstracts database as a secondary source.


Newspaper Article


Electronic Books

Electronic books may include books found on personal websites, databases, or even in audio form. Use the following format if the book you are using is only provided in a digital format or is difficult to find in print. 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. For books available in print form and electronic form, include the publish date in parentheses after the author's name. For references to e-book editions, be sure to 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.


Kindle Books

To cite Kindle (or other e-book formats) you must include the following information: The author, date of publication, title, e-book version, and either the Digital Object Identifier (DOI) number, or the place where you downloaded the book. Please note that the DOI/place of download is used in-place of publisher information.

Here’s an example:

Stoker, B. (1897). Dracula [Kindle DX version]. Retrieved from Amazon.com
Chapter/Section of a Web Document or Online Book Chapter


NOTE: Use a chapter or section identifier and provide a URL that links directly to the chapter section, not the home page of the Web site.

Online Book Reviews

Cite the information as you normally would for the work you are quoting. (The first example below is from a newspaper article; the second is from a scholarly journal.) In brackets, write "Review of the book" and give the title of the reviewed work. Provide the web address after the words "Retrieved from," if the review is freely available to anyone. If the review comes from a subscription service or database, write "Available from" and provide the information where the review can be purchased.


Dissertation/Thesis from a Database


Online Encyclopedias and Dictionaries

Often encyclopedias and dictionaries do not provide bylines (authors' names). When no byline is present, move the entry name to the front of the citation. Provide publication dates if present or specify (n.d.) if no date is present in the entry.

Online Bibliographies and Annotated Bibliographies


Data Sets

Point readers to raw data by providing a Web address (use "Retrieved from") or a general place that houses data sets on the site (use "Available from").


Graphic Data (e.g. Interactive Maps and Other Graphic Representations of Data)

Give the name of the researching organization followed by the date. In brackets, provide a brief explanation of what type of data is there and in what form it appears. Finally, provide the project name and retrieval information.


Qualitative Data and Online Interviews

If an interview is not retrievable in audio or print form, cite the interview only in the text (not in the reference list) and provide the month, day, and year in the text. If an audio file or transcript is available online, use the following model, specifying the medium in brackets (e.g. [Interview transcript, Interview audio file]):


Online Lecture Notes and Presentation Slides

When citing online lecture notes, be sure to provide the file format in brackets after the lecture title (e.g. PowerPoint slides, Word document).


Nonperiodical Web Document, Web Page, or Report

List as much of the following information as possible (you sometimes have to hunt around to find the information; don't be lazy. If there is a page like http://www.somesite.com/somepage.htm, and somepage.htm doesn't have the information you're looking for, move up the URL to http://www.somesite.com/):


NOTE: When an Internet document is more than one Web page, provide a URL that links to the home page or entry page for the document. Also, if there isn't a date available for the document use (n.d.) for no date.

E-mail

E-mails are not included in the list of references, though you parenthetically cite them in your main text: (E. Robbins, personal communication, January 4, 2001).

Online Forum or Discussion Board Posting

Include the title of the message, and the URL of the newsgroup or discussion board. Please note that titles for items in online communities (e.g. blogs, newsgroups, forums) are not italicized. If the author's name is not available, provide the screen name. Place identifiers like post or message numbers, if available, in brackets. If available, provide the URL where the message is archived (e.g. "Message posted to..., archived at...").


Blog (Weblog) and Video Blog Post

Include the title of the message and the URL. Please note that titles for items in online communities (e.g. blogs, newsgroups, forums) are not italicized. If the author’s name is not available, provide the screen name.


Psychology Video Blog #3 [Video file]. Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lqM90eQi5-M
Wikis

Please note that the *APA Style Guide to Electronic References* warns writers that wikis (like Wikipedia, for example) are collaborative projects that cannot guarantee the verifiability or expertise of their entries.


Audio Podcast

For all podcasts, provide as much information as possible; not all of the following information will be available. Possible addition identifiers may include Producer, Director, etc.


Video Podcasts

For all podcasts, provide as much information as possible; not all of the following information will be available. Possible addition identifiers may include Producer, Director, etc.

Reference List: Other Non-Print Sources

Interviews, Email, and Other Personal Communication

No personal communication is included in your reference list; instead, parenthetically cite the communicator's name, the phrase "personal communication," and the date of the communication in your main text only.

A. P. Smith also claimed that many of her students had difficulties with APA style (personal communication, November 3, 2002).

Motion Picture

Basic reference list format:

Producer, P. P. (Producer), & Director, D. D. (Director). (Date of publication). Title of motion picture [Motion picture]. Country of origin: Studio or distributor.

Note: If a movie or video tape is not available in wide distribution, add the following to your citation after the country of origin: (Available from Distributor name, full address and zip code).

Television Broadcast or Series Episode


Single Episode of a Television Series


Television Broadcast


A Television Series

Music Recording

Songwriter, W. W. (Date of copyright). Title of song [Recorded by artist if different from songwriter]. On Title of album [Medium of recording]. Location: Label. (Recording date if different from copyright date).


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