

## APA FORMAT 7TH EDITION

Different classes will use different types of formatting. For example, English classes typically use MLA format (see our handout on MLA for more information). However, psychology classes and other scientific disciplines often use APA format. APA stands for The American Psychological Association. The following handout will provide a basic explanation of APA format as well as a sample document in APA format. You can always look to the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, Seventh Edition for more information.

Disclaimer: The LAVC Library database may not be updated to the most recent edition of the APA format as of April 2020

### Features of the APA Style

- Use the font: Times New Roman 12-point font or these listed: Calibri 11-point font, Arial 11-point font, Lucida Sans Unicode 10-point font, Georgia 11-point font, Computer Modern 10-point font.
- Double-space the whole paper.
- All margins should be set to 1 inch.
- Every page should have page numbers inserted at the top right side.
- APA papers begin with a title or cover page as the first page.
- Include a references page or pages.

**Note:** A student APA paper does not require a running head unless instructed to by a professor. You can refer to the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* for more information about the running head.

### Features of the Title Page

The “Title Page” of an APA paper is the very first page. This page should only have the information on it described below. The main body of the paper does not start on this page. **Refer to page 5 of the handout to see an example of the title page.**

- At the top of your title page, you will include the page number in the upper right-hand corner.
- In the center of the title page, include the title of the paper (no **bold**, *italics*, or underlining), below that add your name, and below that add your school affiliation.

### The Abstract

In many APA papers, the second page (after the title page) contains an “Abstract.” This may not always be required, so be sure to check with your professor if you are unsure. An abstract is basically a summary of your paper in one paragraph. **Refer to page 6 of the handout to see an example of the abstract.**

### Features of the Abstract

- At the top of the page, centered, type “Abstract” (no **bold**, *italics*, or underlining).
- Under the “Abstract” heading, and without an indentation, write a brief and clear summary on the key points of your paper. This should contain your topic, research questions, methods, results, participants, data analysis, and conclusion based on your findings. You can also tie it to other research or make predictions.
- Limit the abstract to 150 to 250 words.
- Optionally, you can include keywords. If you choose to do so, skip to the next line, indent, and type “Keywords:” followed by a list of words or topics discussed in your paper that best describe your topic.

### The Main Body

In the Main Body of your paper, you will have an introduction followed by your main ideas and analysis. Some characteristics you will want to pay attention to are organization, writing style, bias, grammar usage and mechanics. You want to be sure to write clearly and concisely, and stick to factual information. APA papers are not focused on poetic or emotionally charged language. For example, an APA paper would say, “the five-year-old cat walked half a mile in thirty minutes,” rather than, “the happy cat glided down the street swiftly and joyfully for a while.” Remember to use “they” instead of “she” or “he” to properly address all genders. **Refer to pages 7 and 8 of the handout to see an example of the main body.**

### Subheadings of the Main Body

You can add subheadings to break up large sections of text. These subheadings should explain what is talked about in that section. Some typical subheadings used in APA papers are:

- Methods
- Data Analysis
- Literature Review
- Conclusion

Note: *There are five levels of headers, each with a different formatting style.*

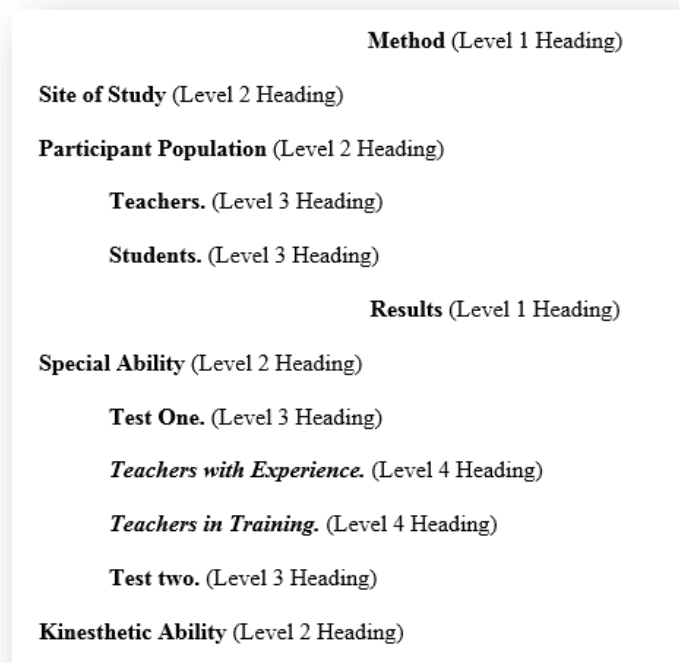


Figure 1. This image demonstrates the different levels of sections and their formatting style (also see sample paper for more details)

Your professor may tell you what subsections they want you to include in your paper, so pay close attention to their instructions.

### In-text Citations

Another major feature of the Main Body will be in-text citations. This is how you cite your sources and avoid plagiarism. One of the best sources for a complete guide on in-text citations is the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*.

The website [https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research\\_and\\_citation/apa\\_style/apa\\_style\\_introduction.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_style_introduction.html) is another good source of information on APA. We will briefly discuss some basic features of in-text citations below, and in the sample paper in this handout:

#### About Parenthetical in-text Citations

When using parenthetical citations, try to keep them brief and to the point. Whether you use a direct quotation or choose to paraphrase, you will also have to include citation information.

Citations include the author or authors last names, the year of publication, and sometimes a page number, in parentheses. For example: (Carstensen, 1992, p. 199). If the source does not have page numbers, such as a website, then they can be left out.

#### Adding Parenthetical in-text Citations

There are various places you can put in-text citation.

Direct Quote—This is when you use the exact words that the author used.

The citation can be placed at the end of the sentence if that is where the quote ends.

#### **Example:**

Although some may disagree, the fact remains that, “age is associated with an increased motivation to derive emotional meaning from life and a simultaneous decreasing motivation to expand one’s knowledge base” (Carstensen, 1992, p. 199).

The citation can also appear throughout the sentence. For example, if the author’s name is used as part of the sentence, then the year would follow the name, but the page number would still follow the end of the quote.

#### **Example:**

Carstensen (1992) explains that, “age is associated with an increased motivation to derive emotional meaning from life and a simultaneous decreasing motivation to expand one’s knowledge base” (p.199).

Even if the quote is in the middle of a sentence, the citation should still follow the quoted information to show the difference between the quoted material and your own words.

#### **Example:**

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

Paraphrasing – This is when you rephrase the quote in your own words. Similar to the rules for a direct quote, the citation for a paraphrase can appear throughout the sentence.

#### **Example:**

According to Carstensen (1992), people become more inclined to find emotional meaning in the later years of their life, but less inclined to expand their knowledge (p. 199).

The same rules apply even if there are multiple authors.

#### **Example:**

According to Bentham and Jones (1998), people become more inclined to find emotional meaning in the later years of their life, but less inclined to expand their knowledge (p. 203).

For works with 3 or more authors, list the first author followed by “et al.”

**Example:**

The text states that students often had difficulty using APA style (Harris et al., 2001)

Ellipses, Brackets, and Broken Up Quotes

Ellipses show omitted (or left out) words in a quotation:

**Example:**

“Age is associated with...decreasing motivation to expand one’s knowledge base” (Carstensen, 1992, p. 199).

Brackets show added or modified words by you in order to interject information, correct a verb tense, or add any necessary wording. The brackets tell readers that the words are *yours*, not the source’s:

**Example:**

“Gender is not the sole determinant of woman’s [nor man’s] identity” (Hooks, p. 77, 1994).

Lastly, “Broken up quotes” refers to the action of separating one quote into two parts in one sentence. Usually, this is done to add analysis between the quote sections:

**Example:**

Alfred North Whitehead (1927) exemplified this point, noting, “the ideal of a University is not so much knowledge as power” (p. 26), while also raising the essential issue that the true goal of the university, “is to convert the knowledge of a boy into the power of a man” (p. 27).

The References Page

The References page is one of the most important pages in the essay. Here, you provide more information on the sources you mentioned in the in-text citations throughout the paper. For example, if you have used an online resource for research help, then you must cite it in order to avoid **plagiarism**.

**Refer to pages 10 and 11 of this handout to see an example of the references page.**

Features of the References Page

- All sources should be sorted alphabetically.
- All sources should have a *hanging indentation*. Here is how to do that in Microsoft Word: Within the “Format” tab, click “Paragraph.” In the “Indentation” section, click the drop-down list under “Special” and choose “Hanging.”

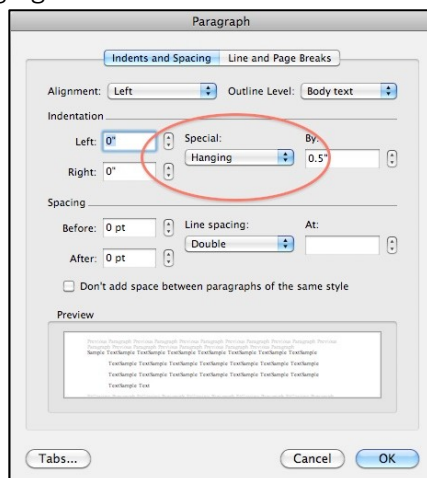


Figure 2. This image shows how to create a hanging indentation through Microsoft Word

## Sample Title Page

TITLE OF THE PAPER IN ALL CAPITAL LETTERS

Notice the running head at the top of the page. Please check with your professor to see if this is needed.

1

Title of the Paper

First Name Middle Initial. Last Name

Name of Institution

## Sample APA Page with In-text Citations

TITLE OF THE PAPER IN ALL CAPITAL LETTERS		2
<p style="text-align: center;">Abstract</p> <p>The abstract is basically a summary of your paper in one paragraph. Sometimes the abstract is not required by the professor so please check with them if you are unsure. For this sample, the topic of this paper will be an APA formatted paper. The abstract should not be too long, simply 150 to 250 words will be enough. You can also include keywords at the end of an abstract. Again, this is not required so please check with your instruction if unsure.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Keywords:</i> APA format, Abstract, Essay</p>		
Do not indent the first line of the abstract. All other paragraphs in the paper should be indented.		The word, "Abstract" should be centered, 12 pt Times New Roman.

TITLE OF THE PAPER IN ALL CAPITAL LETTERS		3
Indent the first line of each paragraph	<b>Title of Paper</b>	The title of the paper is centered and bolded
<p>This is a sample APA paper. It will show the format of an APA paper as well as how to incorporate quotes and how to cite sources. Also, pay attention to the informative rather than literary style of the writing. Notice how the heading is in all capital letters and this introduction section is explaining the main purpose of the paper.</p>		
	<b>Method</b>	Level 1 Heading: Centered, Bolded, Uppercase and Lowercase
<p>The method is one of the potential subsections of the main body. The other potential subsection are Data Analysis, Results, and Literature Review. Please note that not all APA format papers will have all the subsection so it is important to ask your professor what they require. The method section of an APA paper shows how you performed an experiment.</p>		
	<b>Participants</b>	Level 2 Heading: Left-aligned, Bolded, Uppercase, Lowercase
<p>This section lists the participants in the experiment.</p>		
	<b>Materials</b>	
<p>This section lists the materials, measurements, or stimuli used in the experiment.</p>		
	<b>Procedure</b>	
<p>This section details the procedures followed in the experiment. Someone should be able to follow your procedures and accurately recreate your experiment.</p>		
	<b>Discussion</b>	
<p>The discussion section of an APA paper usually discusses the topic in a more in-depth way. There are several ways to add in-text citations to an APA paper that will be demonstrated in the next few paragraphs.</p>		
<p>If you use the authors name in your sentence, you then put the year in parenthesis after their name, and the page number, if there is one, at the end of the sentence like this: Boeckx</p>		

## Sample APA Page

TITLE OF THE PAPER IN ALL CAPITAL LETTERS

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(2014) note that “previous accounts on variation that make a case for lexical and/or syntactic parameters” (p.123). Make sure to explain in your own words why the quote is important.

If you do not use the title or the authors name in the sentence, then the citation will go at the end like this: The study states, “The cues that aid the learner are identified and schematically integrated in the form of an acquisition algorithm” (Boeckx, 2014, p. 123).

Many people will explain an author’s ideas in a summary format where they do not use direct quotes. This is called paraphrasing. Paraphrasing still needs to be cited. If you are making a general summary of the entire paper you do not have to include a specific page number. Here is an example: The study shows that language acquisition begins to occur as soon as a baby is born (Boeckx, 2014).

Note: Pay attention to this section to know about incorporated quotes and citing sources

If you paraphrase a very specific passage, and a page number is available, then it should be included. Here is an example: Boeckx (2014) explains that the process of language acquisition can be very complicated (p. 124).

If the author’s name is unknown, you can use the title of the article in a sentence instead. Then you add the citation with the year of publication after the title. According to “Empirical Research” (2009), teachers can employ the scientific method in their classrooms to study different aspects of the learning process (p. 18). You should then explain why you used this quote to the reader.

Level 1 Heading:  
Centered, Bolded,  
Uppercase and  
Lowercase

### Conclusion

These are some of the basics of an APA paper. Do not forget to check out the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, Sixth Edition for further information. Also, remember that the conclusion section of your paper will summarize your main ideas and will often make suggestions for further research.



## Sample References Page

TITLE OF THE PAPER IN ALL CAPITAL LETTERS

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### References

- Arnheim, R. (1971). *Art and the visual perception*. University of California Press.
- Boeckx, K., Howdes, J., Fulton, L., Lockhead, M., Craig, K., Peterson, R, et al. (2014). *Nerve Cell and Insect Behavior*. Harvard University Press.
- Brockett, O. (1987). *History of the Theatre* (5th ed.). Allyn Bacon.
- Brown, M. (2005, December 2). Martin Luther King, Jr.: A Biographical Sketch. Retrieved January 24, 2006, from <http://www.lib.lsu.edu/hvm/mlk/srs218.html>
- “Empirical research.” (2009). Dickens, C. In *Encyclopedia Americana* (Vol. 9, pp. 75-79). Grolier.
- GWU’s 9th English Language Page. (n.d.). Retrieved August 10, 2005, from <http://www.gwu.org/usersurver/survey2000>
- Harder, B. (2005, October 1). Falling Influence: Influenza fighters have limited effects. *Science News*, 168, 211.
- Passons, W. (1967). Predictive validities of the ACT, SAT, and high school grades for first semester GPA and freshman courses. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 27(3), 1143-1144.
- Rubenstein, J.P. (1967). The effect of television violence on small children. In B.F. Kane (Ed.), *Television and juvenile psychological development* (pp. 112-134). American Psychology Society.
- Schneiderman, R.A. (1997). Librarians can make sense of the Net. *San Antonio Business Journal*, 11, 58+. Retrieved January 27, 1999, from EBSCO Masterfile database.
- Stanley, A. (2005, October 25). Bringing Out the Absurdity of the News. *The New York Times*, pp. B1, B8.

**Below are some common references used in the “References” page. Disclaimer: *This is not a sample page.***

**Book with one author:**

Arnheim comma R period (1971) period *Art and the visual perception* period University of California Press period

Last name comma first initial period (Publication year) period Book title in italics period Publisher period

**Book with multiple authors:** *Note-* Up to 20 names of authors can be listed followed by the term “et al period”

Boeckx comma K period comma Howdes comma J period comma Fulton comma L period comma Lockheed comma M period comma Craig comma K period comma Peterson comma R comma et al period (2014) period *Nerve Cell and Insect Behavior* period Harvard University Press period

Last name comma first initial period (Publication year) period Book title in italics period Publisher period

**Book with specific edition:**

Brockett comma O period (1987) period *History of the Theatre* (5th ed period) period Allyn Bacon period

Last name comma first initial period (Publication year) period Book title in italics (Edition) period Publisher period

**Book with citing items/chapters:**

Rubenstein comma J period P period (1967) period The effect of television violence on small children period In B period F period Kane (Ed period) comma *Television and juvenile psychological development* (pp period 112-134) period American Psychology Society period

Last name comma first initial period (Publication year) period Chapter/Item title period (Edition) period Title of book/anthology in italics (Page number) period Publisher period

**\*Reference:**

“Empirical research period” (2009) period Dickens comma C period *In Encyclopedia Americana* (Vol period 9 comma pp period 75-79) period Grolier period

“Title of entry period” (Publication year) period Last name comma first initial period Title of reference book in italics (Volume comma page number) period Publisher period

**\*Journal:**

Passons comma W period (1967) period Predictive validities of the ACT comma SAT comma and high school grades for first semester GPA and freshman courses period *Educational and Psychological Measurement* comma 27(3) comma 1143-1144 period

Last name comma first initial period (Publication year) period Article title period Publication title in italics comma Volume number(issue number) comma page numbers period

**Magazine:**

Harder comma B period (2005 comma October 1) period Falling Influence: Influenza fighters have limited effects period *Science News* comma 168 comma 211 period

Last name comma first initial period (Publication year comma date) period Article title period Magazine title in italics comma Issue number comma page number period

### **Newspaper:**

Stanley comma A period (2005 comma October 25) period Bringing Out the Absurdity of the News period *The New York Times* comma pp period B1 comma B8 period

Last name comma first initial period (Publication year comma date) period Article title period Newspaper title in italics comma Page numbers period

### **\*Online database:**

Schneiderman comma R period A period (1997) period *Librarians can make sense of the Net* period San Antonio Business Journal comma 11 comma 58+ period Retrieved January 27 comma 1999 comma from EBSCO Masterfile database period

Last name comma first initial period (Publication year) period Article title in italics period Database title comma Volume number comma page number period Retrieved date comma Database used period

### **Webpage with no author or date:**

GWU's 9th English Language Page period (n period d period) period Retrieved August 10 comma 2005 comma from <http://www.gwuorg/usersurver/survey2000>

Title of webpage period (n period d period) period Retrieved date comma Full URL

### **Webpage with an author:**

Brown comma M period (2005 comma December 2) period *Martin Luther King comma Jr period: A Biographical Sketch* period Retrieved January 24 comma 2006 comma from <http://www.lib.lsu.edu/hvm/mlk/srs218.html>

Last name comma first initial period (Publication year comma date) period Article title in italics period Retrieved date comma Full URL

### **Film or broadcast:**

Crystal comma L period (Executive Producer) period (2004 comma June 10) period *The MacNeil/Lehrer news hour* [Television broadcast] period Public Broadcasting Service period

Last name comma first initial period (Release date) period Move/broadcast title in italics [Medium] period Broadcast service period

### **Youtube or video:**

Lushi comma K period [Korab Lushi] period (2016 comma July 3) period *Albatross culture 1* [Video] period YouTube period <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AMrJRQDPjk&t=148s>

Last name comma first initial period [Username] period (Release date) period Title in italics [Video] period Streaming service period Full URL

**\*Note:** Common sources like references, journals, and online databases contain a DOI URL to identify specific articles. The newest version of APA asks for the entire URL of the article instead of the DOI number. Do not provide DOI label. If there is no DOI, then provide the URL for the source.

For more information, please use the following resources:

[https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research\\_and\\_citation/apa\\_style/apa\\_formatting\\_and\\_style\\_guide/general\\_format.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/general_format.html)

<https://lib.lavc.edu/c.php?g=1038294&p=7528958>

<https://www.scribbr.com/apa-style/apa-seventh-edition-changes/>