

*APA Publication Manual* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.) Paper Preparation Guide

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This document was developed to help you learn APA publication style. Following the guidelines provided will help you write and format papers and theses. Other publications you may find useful include the *Thesis Information Bulletin*, available from the Graduate School (<http://www.gradsch.psu.edu/current/thesis.html>), and the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.; <http://www.apastyle.org/>).

Students are instructed by faculty to prepare their papers according to the *APA Publication Manual* (currently in its sixth edition), which is available at local bookstores. There are also copies available for loan in 315 CEDAR and in Pattee/Paterno Library. The *APA Publication Manual* was written to answer your questions about headings, tables, numbers, quotations, references, punctuation, capitalization, writing style, and general formatting instructions. We selected some of the more important items from the *APA Publication Manual* and reproduced them here to make it easier for you to get acquainted with APA style.

The *APA Publication Manual* is written primarily for authors hoping to get manuscripts published in scholarly journals. Manuscripts are prepared in a way to help them navigate through the review and publication process. Student papers do not have to abide by all these requirements, although it is a good idea to follow them since you may want to submit a paper for publication. Following the guidelines could also result in a higher grade on your paper.

**General Formatting Instructions**

Chapter 2 in the *APA Publication Manual* covers these matters thoroughly (pp. 21-59) and is recommended for your reading. Before beginning your paper, set your margin to 1 inch on all four sides (with the margin on the left side flush at 1 inch, and the right margin “ragged”), and set the entire paper to double-space. This will help as you begin to type your paper. Every

line is double-spaced in APA format, including titles, headings, tables, and references. You can also use the “page break” feature to separate sections of your paper (e.g., title page, abstract, references). All of this is easily accomplished in Microsoft Word. The first line of each paragraph is indented one-half inch. You can set your computer to default to one-half inch when you press the tab key.

### **General Writing**

Keep your writing style clear and concise. Carefully observe the rules of good grammar, punctuation, spelling, and other matters of English composition. It is not enough to write a paper full of good ideas and good content if it is poorly written. Lack of agreement between pronoun and antecedent is one of the most common grammatical errors people make. For example, “Each student wrote their list...” is wrong because one student cannot be a “they.” One student writes his/her list; many students write their lists. The easiest thing to do to avoid this error is to write in plural whenever possible.

### **Literary Usage and Reducing Bias in Language**

The *APA Publication Manual* provides a complete list of ways to be inclusive and accurate in your use of language. Listed below is a summary of the more common issues to be aware of in your writing. You can review the complete explanation in the manual or using the on-line tutorial (<http://www.apastyle.org/>).

- Use an appropriate level of specificity. For example, rather describing children as “at-risk,” note what the risk is (children at risk for school dropout).
- Be sensitive to labels when referring to groups of people. For example, refer to people as Asian or by their country of origin rather than Orientals; refer to Native American Indians by their nation or group name.

- When describing a sample, people should be fully described with respect to gender, age, and race or ethnicity. Where appropriate, additional information should be presented (e.g., socioeconomic status, national origin, sexual orientation, special interest group membership).
- Do not use adjectives as nouns (refer to “older people” rather than “the elderly”).
- Refer to people as active participants, rather than passive participants (“Ten people participated in the study...” rather than “Our study included 10 participants...”).
- Use *male* and *female* as adjectives where appropriate and relevant (female researcher, male participant; when the age range is broad or ambiguous). Avoid unparallel usage such as 10 men and 16 females.
- Avoid consistently placing dominant groups first (e.g., men and women, Whites and racial minorities).
- Use gender inclusive language: people v. mankind; staff or personnel v. manpower; same sex, other sex v. same sex, opposite sex; parenting v. mothering; homemaker v. housewife.
- Avoid use of *homosexual* and *homosexuality*, and specify gender of participants. Use gay, lesbian, or bisexual depending on the people to whom you are referring.
- Use “person first” language. Refer to a “person with schizophrenia” rather than “a schizophrenic.” Use emotionally neutral expressions (person who had a stroke v. stroke victim; uses a wheelchair v. confined to a wheelchair).

### **Formatting Sections of the Paper**

#### **Title Page**

The title page includes a running head with an abbreviated form of the paper title (in all capital letters) at the top of the page, flush with the left margin, with the number 1 flush with the right margin (this is easily accomplished with the header/footer feature in Microsoft Word). The

remaining pages had the abbreviated title (without “running head”) and the page number on the top of the page. The paper title, author name, and name of the author’s institution are centered in the middle of the title page. See Appendix A for an example.

### **Abstract**

The abstract is a summary of your paper (see the *APA Publication Manual* for guidance on how to write an abstract). The word abstract is centered in the top line of the page, and is not bolded. The first line of the first paragraph of the abstract is not indented.

### **First Page of Text**

The paper title is typed on the top line of the page, not bold, but all major words capitalized. If you included an abstract in your paper, this is page 3.

### **References Page**

Every source you cite in the text of your paper is listed on the Reference page (with the exception of “personal communications” and secondary sources). Every reference to a topic, statement, quote, or anything other than your own ideas and findings in your paper should have a companion listing on the reference list. If you do not cite sources in the text and on the references page, you are plagiarizing.

References begin on a separate page and the word References is centered on the top line of the page, not in bold. Every line of the reference page is double-spaced. The first line of each individual reference is flush with the left margin, and remaining lines in each reference are indented one-half inch. You can use the Tool Bars in Microsoft Word to set the ruler so the references automatically format to indent all but the first line one-half inch without having to press the Return key at the end of each line. The references are listed alphabetically by the last name of the first author for each source cited.

**Typing of references.** Put yourself in the place of someone reading your paper; you find an interesting comment by someone named Maggie Carson from a chapter she wrote for a book edited by John Smith. You should be able to look in the references and find the following:

Carson, J. S. (2005). How to use writing to your advantage. In R. C. Smith (Ed.), *Achieving success in college* (pp. 234-264). Boston: Houghton Mifflin Publishing Company.

Provided below are examples of the most common kinds of references you will use in your papers. They are meant to be followed literally, down to the last space and period (this information can also be found on pages 198-215 in the APA *Publication Manual*).

**Journal Article, with DOI** (p. 198)

Anderson, A. K. (2005). Affective influences on the attentional dynamics supporting awareness. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, 134, 258–281.

doi:10.1037/0096-3445.134.2.258

**Journal Article, when no DOI is available** (p. 199)

Light, M. A., & Light, I. H. (2008). The geographic expansion of Mexican immigration in the United States. *Law Enforcement Executive Forum Journal*, 8(1), 73-82.

The date is placed in parentheses after author names; the article title has only the first word capitalized; and the journal title has every important word capitalized and is italicized, as is the volume number (but not the issues number). Note also the spaces between the authors' first name and middle name initials.

**Book Reference** (p. 203)

Brinkerhoff, L., McGuire, J., & Shaw, S. (2002). *Postsecondary education and transition for students with learning disabilities* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Austin, TX: Pro-Ed.

For a book reference the book title has its first letter capitalized and is italicized.

**Article or Chapter in an Edited Book, Two Editors (p. 204)**

Sideridis, G. D. (2005). Goal orientations, classroom goal structures, and regulation in students with and without learning disabilities. In G. D. Sideridis & T. A. Citro (Eds.), *Research to practice: Effective interventions in learning disabilities* (pp. 193-219). Boston, MA: LDW.

The author is the chapter author, not one of the editors; the reference will be alphabetized by the chapter author's name. Include pages numbers in parentheses for the chapter.

**Daily Newspaper Article, No Author (p. 200)**

New drug appears to sharply cut risk of falling asleep when studying late at night. (2003, July 15). *The Standardized Post*, p. A12.

Alphabetize this reference at "N" in your list since the title stands for the author. The month and day are added after the year. In the text use the entire title the first time you refer to it and an abbreviated version subsequent times, using double quotations: ("New Drug," 2003). Precede page numbers with p. or pp. If an article appears on discontinuous pages, give all page numbers and separate the numbers with a comma.

**Daily Newspaper Article, One Author (p. 200)**

Schwartz, K. (2006, September 30). Heavy snowfall affects local economy. *The Washington Gazette*, pp. A1, A4.

**Internet Article Based on a Print Source**

VandenBos, G., Knapp, S., & Doe, J. (2001). Role of reference elements in the selection of resources by psychology undergraduates. *Journal of Bibliographic Research*, 5, 117-123.

**Article in an Internet-only Journal (p. 200)**

Frederickson, B. L. (2000, March 7). Cultivating positive emotions to optimize health and well-

being. *Prevention & Treatment*, 3, Article 0001a. Retrieved November 20, 2000, from <http://journals.apa.org/prevention/volume3/pre0030001a.html>

### **Text-related APA Guidelines**

#### **Levels of Headings**

Headings are used to guide the reader by dividing your paper into sections. Generally, three levels are adequate; sometimes only two levels are all that are needed. The paper you are reading has three levels of headings. Here is an example of three-level headings:

#### **Method**

##### **Apparatus and Procedure**

##### **Pre-training period.**

Large divisions, usually two or three per paper, are named (e.g., Introduction, Methods, Discussion), typed centered on the page with the first letters of important words capitalized. Beneath this level are smaller subdivisions, as many as necessary, typed flush with the left-hand margin, in bold, with first letters capped. If yet smaller divisions are needed, indent the paragraph heading, capitalize the first word only, bold, and finish with a period.

#### **Listing Items in a Series**

When you wish to refer to a list of things *within a sentence*, use lower-case letters in parentheses like this: (a), (b), etc. Here's an example:

Test standards were developed on the initial criterion for one group and then were applied to a long-range criterion for (a) the same group, (b) a different group employed without benefits of the tests, and (c) a group selected partly on the basis of their test scores.

If you want to delineate separate paragraphs, items, or steps in a procedure, then use numbers indented number without parentheses. Second and subsequent lines of such items return to the original left margin. An example follows.

1. You have a great need to be liked and admired. There is nothing wrong with that, as long as you don't put other people's opinion about you above your own.
2. You have a tendency to be critical of yourself. It's OK to have high standards but don't hold yourself to standards you cannot meet.
3. You have a great deal of unused ability.

### **Citing Reference in the Text**

Any information that is not common knowledge must be referenced in the text (and cited on the reference list). Citations are listed by author last name followed by the year of publication. Readers use this information to locate the source on the reference page. There are several ways to cite references in text, as follows:

- Smith (2001) found the act of smiling actually makes people feel happy.
- In 2001, Smith found the act of smiling actually makes people feel happy.
- The act of smiling actually makes people feel happy (Smith, 2001).

### **Quotations**

*Short quotations* (those containing fewer than 40 words) should be incorporated in text and enclosed in double quotation marks. Here are two examples. The examples are indented only for illustration purposes. In your paper they would be flush with the left margin. In the first example, the authors are noted as part of the sentence.

In their study of individuals with multiple sclerosis, Bishop , Frain, and Tschopp (2008) identified self-management as “learning and practicing the skills necessary to carry on an active and emotionally satisfying life in the face of a chronic condition” (p. 45).

In the second example, the authors of the quote are not listed in the sentence so the author names, the year, and specific page number for the quote are noted in parentheses after the quote, followed by a period.

Self-management was defines as “learning and practicing the skills necessary to carry on an active and emotionally satisfying life in the face of a chronic condition” (Bishop, Frain, & Tschopp, 2008, p. 45).

*Block quotations* (any quotation of 40 words or more) do not use quotation marks to enclose the block. Block quotes are indented one-half inch on the left margin for the whole quote, but not on the right margin. Here’s an example:

With regard to plagiarism, the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (2010) makes the following statement:

Quotation marks should be used to indicate the exact work of another. Each time you paraphrase another author (i.e., summarize a passage or rearrange the order of a sentence and change some of the words), you will need to credit the source in the text....The key element of this principle is that authors do not present the work of another as if it were their own work. This can extend to ideas as well as written words. (pp. 15-16)

### **Checklist for Manuscript Submission**

#### **Format**

- Is the entire manuscript double-spaced?
- Are the margins 1 inch on all four sides?
- Are the title page, abstract, references, and table or figures on separate pages (one table or figure per page)? Are in sequence, with text pages between the abstract and the references?
- Are all pages (except figure pages) numbered in sequence, starting with the title page?

#### **Title Page**

- Does the title page include the running head, article title, author name, and institution?

#### **Paragraphs and Headings**

- Is each paragraph longer than a single sentence but not longer than one manuscript page?
- Do the levels of headings accurately reflect the organization of the paper?

#### **References**

- Are references cited both in text and in the references list?
- Do the text citations and reference list entries agree both in spelling and in date?
- Are journal titles in the reference list spelled out fully?
- Are the references (both in the text and the reference list) ordered alphabetically by first author last name?
- Are inclusive page numbers for all articles or chapters in books in the reference list?
- Are page or paragraph numbers provided in text for all quotations?

**Appendix A: Sample APA Cover Page Format**

Running head: PARTIAL TITLE IN ALL CAPS

1

[This line goes in the header of the first page. Remaining pages do not have the words “Running head:” on them, just the partial title of the paper.]

Title Double-spaced, First Letter of Each Word Capitalized

Your Name Here

The Pennsylvania State University