

Sample APA Paper for Students

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Do not include an abstract.

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Sample Paper APA Paper for Students

This sample paper will review how to set up your student paper in APA style. The intended audience is undergraduate and graduate students who use APA to format their assignments. A dissertation follows slightly different conventions.

Title Page

Did you notice how the title page of this paper was set up? Let's review this here. We'll start with the information in the header. It is best to use Microsoft (MS) Word when writing your paper so you can use the Word features that help you format your paper correctly. Learn how to create a header in Word, and set it up so that the first page of your header is different from subsequent pages. At the top of your first page, within the header, place a shortened version of your title. It should be no more than 50 characters. Place the phrase *Running head*, followed by a colon, before your shortened title. On page 2 and all subsequent pages, include the shortened title, but do not preface it with the phrase *Running head*. Make sure you use the same font in your header that is used in the rest of your paper. APA suggests Times New Roman font. Your shortened title should appear flush left in all uppercase letters. Do not italicize or bold any of the information on the title page. For more information on the running head, see page 229 of the publication manual (American Psychological Association [APA], 2010). In addition, the Purdue OWL has created a YouTube video that walks you through the basics of setting up your paper using MS Word 2007 (OWLPurdue, 2012).

Number the pages of your paper, starting with the title page, and place these numbers in the top right of your paper, within the header. Also keep in mind the order of the sections of your paper. They are as follows: (a) title page; (b) abstract; (c) body of paper or text; (d) references; (e) tables; (f) figures; (g) appendices. Some sections are optional, such as tables,

figures and appendices. For more information, see pages 299 and 230 in the publication manual (APA, 2010).

Choose your title carefully. It should describe your study well. Do not use abbreviations in your title. The title should be in upper and lowercase letters (called *title case*), centered, and set in the top half of the page. Limit the title to no more than 12 words and remember that you will need to shorten it to 50 characters or less when you create a shortened version for your running head. For more information on the title, see page 23 of the publication manual (APA, 2010).

Just below your title, place the author's name. The author is you, so this is where your name goes. Just below the author's name is the institutional affiliation. Write *Regis College* here. Again, do not italicize or bold any of this. Also, do not put the date, your professor's name, the name of the course, or any other information on the title page, unless specifically instructed to do so by your instructor. Author notes are not required for student papers unless your professor tells you otherwise. For more information, see page 23 of the publication manual (APA, 2010).

The Body of the Paper

Before you start writing your paper, learn some basic formatting rules. Then you can use MS Word to set up your paper correctly. It is best to do this from the beginning rather than going back and retrofitting your paper into APA style. Here are some rules to get started: (a) double space the entire paper; (b) set your margins so they are 1-inch on all four sides; (c) use Times New Roman, 12-point font.

The paper begins with an introduction that describes your study and research. APA states that "because the introduction is clearly identified by its position in the manuscript, it does not

carry a heading labeling it introduction” (APA, 2010, p. 27). So, do not use a heading called *Introduction*.

Quotations

Did you notice that the previous paragraph used a direct quotation? There are specific rules for quotations in APA and these are described on pages 91 and 92 of the publication manual (APA, 2010). It is important to understand how to quote material correctly in order to avoid plagiarizing from the work of others.

Headings.

Within the body of the paper you may have sections that require headings. For example, a paper describing a research study may have a section called *Methods*. In longer papers you may need to use headings and subheadings. These must follow APA conventions, and they are described on pages 62 and 63 of the publication manual (APA, 2010). Even more useful information about how to construct headings is available in the searchable blog from the APA, the APA Style Blog (Lee, 2011).

Citations

Have you noticed how this paper uses in-text citations? An entire chapter of the manual is devoted to in-text citations. These can be mastered with some help from the extremely useful chart on page 177 of the publication manual, called Table 6.1. Basic Citation Styles (APA, 2010). See Table 1 for a similar example.

As you write your paper you will use scholarly or academic sources to support your work. Whenever you present an idea, data, or any type of information that is not your own and is not considered common knowledge, you will need to cite it. In-text citations are used in the body of your paper, and references are created in a separate list toward the end. There are many

reasons to cite correctly, but one of the most important reasons to cite is to avoid plagiarism.

Sources of all types are used today, so in addition to citing print and electronic versions of books and journal articles, you may need to learn how to cite websites, videos, blogs, and more. Much information about how to create citations is included in Chapter 6 of the publication manual (APA, 2010). Information about citing less typical sources can often be found in the APA Style Blog (APA, n.d.-a)

There are two ways to cite your sources within the text of your paper. When you mention the author's name in your sentence, end the sentence with a citation that includes the date in parentheses. When you do not mention the author within your sentence, place the author's name and date in parentheses at the end of the sentence. For example, Luttrell, Bufkin, Eastman and Miller state that students who are taught APA are better able to produce scientific writing than students who did not receive instruction (2010). They even claim that a one-hour course provides enough instruction to improve scientific writing (Luttrell, Bufkin, Eastman & Miller, 2010).

References

Journal Article Citation:

Smith, J. (2020). Investigating various components of APA. *Journal of APA*, 8(2), 5-6. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19400200.2020.1731034>.

Book Citation with chapter:

Weinstock, R., Leong, G. B., & Silva, J. A. (2023). Defining forensic psychiatry: Roles and responsibilities. In R. Rosner (Ed.), *Principles and practice of forensic psychiatry* (2nd ed., pp. 7-13). CRC Press.

More rules about the reference list include:

Each time you cite a source within your paper you must list it as a reference in a separate list toward the end of the paper. Your references must be constructed so that the reader can easily identify and retrieve your sources. Sections of the publication manual that address

- Title a separate page *References* and center this at the top of the page. Do not bold or italicize this heading.
- Double space the list. Do not add extra line spaces between references.
- Each reference is constructed with a hanging indent. MS Word can help you do this.
- The order of references is important. Generally speaking, arrange alphabetically. See page 181, section 6.25 of the publication manual for detailed information (APA, 2010).

Components

References include the name of the author(s), the date of publication, the title of the work, and publication detail. Authors can be individuals or organizations, and sometimes you will have a reference with no author identified. The date is typically the year the work was published, but may include the full date in some instances, and in some cases no date of publication is identified. It is important to remember that journal article titles are written in sentence case, which means the title is written as if it were a sentence. The first letter of the first word is capitalized, the first letter of the first word following a colon is capitalized, and proper nouns are capitalized. Publication detail for a scholarly article includes information such as the name of the journal, the volume, the issue and the pages of the article, as well as the digital object identifier (DOI). See the publication manual reference section beginning on page 180 for detailed information (APA, 2010).

Students often ask if reference hyperlinks should be live in the reference list. This is not addressed in the publication manual, but the blog does discuss it (Lee, 2015). The bottom line is that either way is fine (Lee, 2015). Consistency is important, however, just as it is when

determining how to format DOIs in a reference (McAdoo, 2017). Choose a format and use it consistently throughout your paper.

Discussion

This is but one example of a sample paper. APA offers more detailed sample papers online as well (APA, n.d.-b). There are many resources to help you learn APA, some through Regis College, some in print, and some online. The best way to master APA is to be patient and persistent. You will find that the more you use it, the more it will become second nature. Having said that, APA remains a complex citation style and you should always have your manual nearby when writing. If you cannot find the answer in the publication manual, turn to the APA blog for answers, especially for information about online sources that are more typically used today.

References

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Table 1

Basic Citation Styles

Type of citation	First citation in text	Subsequent citations in text	Parenthetical format, first citation in text	Parenthetical format, subsequent citations in text
One work by one author	Jones (2017)	Jones (2017)	(Jones, 2017)	(Jones, 2017)
One work by two authors	Hernandez and Wright (2014)	Hernandez and Wright (2014)	(Hernandez & Wright, 2014)	(Hernandez & Wright, 2014)
One work by three authors	Shapiro, Bailey, and Chen (1999)	Shapiro et al. (1999)	(Shapiro, Bailey, & Chen, 1999)	(Shapiro et al., 1999)
One work by four authors	Stone, Plante, Gronkowski, and Ali (2016)	Stone et al. (2016)	(Stone, Plante, Gronkowski, & Ali, 2016)	(Stone et al., 2016)
One work by five authors	Baldwin, Farmer, Singh, Cooper, and Smith (2018)	Baldwin et al. (2018)	(Baldwin, Farmer, Singh, Cooper, & Smith, 2018)	(Baldwin et al., 2018)
One work by six or more authors	Miranda et al. (2015)	Miranda et al. (2015)	(Miranda et al., 2015)	(Miranda et al., 2015)
Groups (readily identifiable through abbreviation) as authors	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, 2013)	CDC (2013)	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2013)	(CDC, 2013)
Groups (no abbreviation) as authors	University of Chicago (2015)	University of Chicago (2015)	(University of Chicago, 2015)	(University of Chicago, 2015)

Note: Tables may be either double-spaced or single-spaced. (APA, 2010, p. 141).