

APA Guidelines

This handout provides simple guidelines for using APA style. See the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, 6th edition, in the Writing Lab for additional information.

1. **Type Face** (section 8.03, which begins on page 228)
 - Preferred type face is Times New Roman, 12 point font.
2. **Title Page** (sections 2.01 and 8.03, also see sample paper on pages 41-59 in the APA manual)
 - A page header should appear ½” down from the top of the page at the left margin with the words “Running head:” followed by the running head (an abbreviated version of the title, in caps, less than 50 characters). The running head is followed, at the right hand margin, by the page number (1). This format, minus the words “Running head,” should appear on page 2 and all subsequent pages.
 - A block of type consisting of a descriptive, summative title (simple, but composed with style); your name and the name of the university should be centered and appear at the upper half of the page.
 - Double-spaced below the title should be the author’s name, followed by the university affiliation two spaces below.
3. **Abstract** (section 2.04 which begins on page 25)
 - This page, number 2, also has a header similar to that on page 1 except that the words “Running head” no longer appear.
 - The word “Abstract” is centered on the first line.
 - The first line of text is not indented.
 - The abstract itself should be accurate, self-contained, simply written, to the point, objective (not opinionated), coherent, and readable.
 - The abstract of an empirical study, a study based on direct research by the author, should state the problem under investigation in one sentence, followed by brief explanations of the subjects, experimental methods, findings, conclusions, and implications or applications.
 - The abstract of a literature review or theoretical article, which most academic papers are, should describe the topic in one sentence, followed by brief explanations of the purpose, thesis or organizing construct and scope, the general sources used, and conclusions.
4. **Margins** (section 8.03)
 - 1” margins are used on top, bottom, left, and right of every page.
 - The header should be located ½” from the top and 1” from the right side and should be the only item outside the 1” margin. Do not right justify.
5. **Spacing** (section 8.03)
 - All text should be double-spaced, including quotes, notes, references, and figure captions..
 - All paragraphs are indented ½” (five spaces) on the first line.
 - Block quotes (used for quotes consisting of forty words or more) are indented ½” from the left margin, with no initial paragraph indent, but subsequent changes in paragraph should be signaled by an additional ½” indent. They require no quotations marks to set them off.
 - APA requires **one** space after all end punctuation, commas, colons, and semicolons, periods of initials, and periods that separate parts of the reference entries, with the exception of internal periods in abbreviations and around colons in ratios, which require no spacing. All other standards of English apply.
6. **Footnotes** (section 2.12, pages 37-38)
 - Footnotes fall into two different categories: content notes and copyright permission notes.
 - Content notes add information to ideas in the text, but they should be simple and straightforward, containing only one idea at a time. Information from a lengthy footnote should either be included in the text or moved to an appendix.
 - Copyright permission notes acknowledge the source of lengthy quotes for which permission has been gained from the author(s) or tables and graphs reproduced exactly. Cite on the reference page all other materials used.
 - Number footnotes consecutively with superscript numerals throughout the paper and place the footnote at the bottom of the page on which it is discussed. Footnotes may alternatively be placed in consecutive order on a separate page after the reference. Center the word “Footnotes,” with no punctuation, on the

first line. The notes themselves begin with the corresponding superscript number and are typed double-spaced, paragraph style.

7. In-text Citations (sections 6.11 – 6.21)

- Place all in-text citations at the most appropriate point within a sentence, usually as a parenthetical reference just before the period or by using the author and year to introduce the quote, with the page number to follow as a parenthetical.

EXAMPLE: ...last words of quote” (Anderson, 1996, p. 48).

OR

Anderson (1996) claimed, “Quoted material” (p.48).

- The citation contains the last name(s) of the author(s) and the year of publication if the material is paraphrased or summarized. If the material is quoted, the citation must also include the page(s) on which the quote can be found in the original.
- In block quotes, the citation is placed after the end punctuation.

8. References (section 2.11, page 37, and Chapter 7, which begins on page 193)

- Begin the reference list on a new page with the same header and appropriate page number, as well as the word “References” (centered, no punctuation) at the top of the page.
- The references should be typed alphabetically, based on the first author’s last name, double-spaced, with first line flush left and subsequent lines indented ½” from the left margin (hanging indent).
- The rules of order of information in reference entries and formatting are very specific, so be sure to obtain a reliable handout or the current edition of the APA style manual

9. Headings (sections 3.02 – 3.03)

- APA headings done correctly should look like a classic outline of the text. Five levels are possible, and the particular levels used depend on the number needed.
- When only one heading level is required, use level 1 alone to split up sections. For two levels, use level 1 for main headings and level 2 for subheadings. When three levels are required, use level 1, level 2, and level 3, and so forth. For four levels, use level 1, level 2, level 3, and level 4. Generally, only dissertations will incorporate all five headings.

Level 1

Centered, Boldface, Uppercase, and

Lowercase Heading

Level 2

**Flush Left, Boldface, Uppercase and
Lowercase Heading**

Level 3

**Indented, boldface, lowercase paragraph heading
ending with a period.**

Level 4

***Indented, boldface, italicized, lowercase paragraph
heading ending with a period.***

Level 5

*Indented, italicized, lowercase paragraph ending
with a period.*

10. Miscellaneous

- Pages are numbered consecutively throughout the manuscript, starting with the cover page.
- When dealing with numbers, some general rules follow, but rules that are more specific can be found in sections 4.31, 4.32, 4.34, and 4.38 of the manual. In text, only numbers through nine are written out. Do not mix written-out words and symbols (35%, not 35 percent). Do not begin a sentence with a figure, and use figures when combining numbers above and below ten (3 of 12, not three of 12).
- When referring to authors, use only the last name and omit such titles as Jr. or Sr. Never refer to an author by his or her first name.
- Unlike the reference list, major words in titles in the text are capitalized, and general rules of italicizing and quotation mark use apply (i.e., place article titles in quotation marks but italicize journal titles).
- APA takes an emphatic approach to verb tense in text. In other words, habitual actions, current trends, and eternal conditions will be placed in present tense; however, when discussing an author’s work, past tense is preferred. Example: Walters (1956) discussed the results of an experiment in which 7 of 11 subjects preferred white bread over wheat.