

APA Style Guidelines for Student Papers

Intro

All papers at this institution and throughout the academia require documentation of source materials. As a rule of thumb, any information you did not know before you began the paper requires documentation or *citing*.

To neglect to do so is considered *plagiarism*, whether intentional or not, and is grounds for dismissal from this or any college. Therefore, documentation of source material is of vital importance. Sources get cited or citations even if they are *rewritten in your own words*.

In the academic world, two major documentation styles are used frequently: Modern Language Association style (MLA) is most often used in the liberal arts while American Psychological Association (APA) is most frequently used in the social, psychological, and health sciences. Both styles also publish guidelines dictating the format of the paper itself. Academic journals will often stipulate their own documentation style, usually some variant of MLA or APA. If you understand how to utilize one style correctly, it becomes easy to learn or to adjust to a different style; the differences are minor but important. *Because of this consistency and leniency, students are expected to be exacting in their APA usage and standards.*

The following pages provide the simple basics for using APA style. *These sheets are not a substitute* for the APA style guide (*Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, 6th edition, 2010). Be aware, too, that instructors may provide different requirements depending on their preferences and the type of assignment. When no additional instructions are provided, then follow the APA manual; however, when an instructor requires anything above or beyond APA style in a writing assignment, follow that instructor's preferences for the specified modifications and follow the APA manual for everything else not otherwise specified by the instructor. When in doubt, ask your instructor to clarify the expectations.

General Rules

All papers must be typed on single-sided, white, 8 ½ by 11 in. paper. Font may be Arial or Times New Roman but should be used consistently throughout the paper. The font size is 12 point. The paper is double-spaced throughout including the title and reference page. The margins are 1" all the way around. Text is flushed left and ragged right. The running head is flush left, while the page number is flush right. These rules do not vary anywhere in the paper.

The *Concise Rules of APA Style* (6th ed.) offers a brief overview of APA standards. An even more comprehensive guide may be found in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.).

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Parts of the Manuscript

This section outlines the parts of a standard assignment manuscript in APA style. Your instructor may modify these elements to suit the needs of their assignment. For example, a one-paragraph reflection paper probably does not need an abstract.

Title Page

The title page contains a page header, a running head, the paper title, your name, and the institutional affiliation. Some instructors may ask for a class and date to be added to the title page. The title page is page 1. Include a few key words from the title, a tab space, but allow your computer to number for you (# key); otherwise, the number will stay the same on all pages.

The running head is added using the “headers and footers” function on a computer. The running head is left justified and on the same line as the page number throughout the document. The words “Running head:” only appear on the title page. As many as 40 characters of the title in all uppercase letters and appears on every page in the header.

The rest of the title page is centered and double-spaced. The title page must have your full paper title and subtitle, your name, and your affiliation (Mercy College of Ohio). Some instructors may also require your course and the submission date of the paper.

Abstract

Page 2 of your paper is an abstract, if your instructor requires one (ask to make sure). The word “Abstract” is centered with no additional formatting (not bold) at the top of the page. There is no indent of the paragraph summary that follows. This condensed description of your paper should be written in third person and be accurate, self-contained, concise, specific, non-evaluative, and readable. It may be the most important paragraph in your paper. The abstract should contain your paper’s point or thesis. Although abstracts may be up to 300 words, generally, a student abstract will range from 50–150 words.

Text or Body

The first page of text or body starts on page 3 if your assignment requires an abstract (or page 2 if it doesn’t). On the first page of text, center, bold and type the title and subtitle as found on the title page. On the next line, indent the first line and begin typing.

Reference Page

The reference list is started on a new page. The word “References” is centered below the header (in the case of one reference, you type “Reference”). The entries are also double-spaced. Since students are submitting a final copy, a hanging indent is used. A hanging indent means that the first line is flush left while the rest of the entry is indented. Each entry contains at a minimum the author, the copyright date, the title, the city of publication, and the publisher, in that order.

APA In-Text Citations

Writers incorporate researched information into papers in two ways: *paraphrase* and *quotes*. All three uses require appropriate citation/documentation to accomplish the following:

- Identify the source materials used in the essay (give credit where credit is due).
- Direct the reader/audience to the alphabetical list of References, which *must* correlate with in-text citations.
- Clearly distinguish the writer's original ideas from information taken from outside research sources.

Paraphrase

A paraphrase is entirely in your own words but reflects the author's original ideas and/or findings (not your opinions or reflections on them). You may also use short paraphrases and/or summaries mixed with your own critical commentaries on the material as long as your in-text citations make it clear which information comes from where. You still must cite even these short passages before launching into your own reflections.

Cite references in text with the last name of the author(s) and the year.

For one or two authors: Give last name(s) and date in citation. If using a parenthetical citation, replace the word and with & (both types illustrated below).

- *Example 1:* Some studies have suggested that...(Svartvik & Leech, 2006)
- *Example 2:* Svartvik and Leech (2006) have suggested that...

For three to five authors: Give all author names and dates the first time you cite the source. Use the abbreviation et al. for all subsequent citations (illustrated below). If you have six or more authors, cite only the first author's last name followed by et al. and the date (Stuart et al., 2005).

- *Example:* The data of Stuart et al. (2005) support the argument that...

If you have no author: Cite the first few words of the title and the year. Use quotation marks around the title of an article or chapter; *italicize* the title of a book, brochure, or report (illustrated below).

- *Example 1:* ...free medical care ("Study Finds," 2004).
- *Example 2:* The book *Reading Through: College Reading* (1999) advises...

Work discussed within another author's work: an example of this would be if the article you are using in your research quotes another author and you want to use that other author's quote. You must clearly distinguish between the two works and/or writers, and you do so as illustrated below:

- *Example:* Research by Smith (2005) demonstrates... (as cited in Jones, 2007).
- *Explanation:* Jones is the source you are using which includes the quote from Smith, and Smith is the author of the quote you are using. The research source from Jones is the only one that needs to be on your References page. However, try your best to retrieve the original source and only cite a source within a source if it is very difficult to access the original.

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Quotes

Direct quotes use all the author's own words exactly as they are printed. Quotes may be trimmed in the middle, in which case ellipses (...) are used to indicate missing words. If you insert anything into the quote for clarification, use brackets [like so].

Cite references in text with (author(s), year, page), as illustrated below. Note that if you use a range of pages, it should be (pp. 18–20). If there are not page numbers, such as for online sources, use paragraph numbers (para. 2).

Narrative: If the author(s) is/are part of the sentence, include the year in parentheses immediately after the name(s) but include the page number(s) in another set of parentheses at the end of the sentence.

- *Example:* Bellingham, Cohen, Jones, and Spaniol (2008) define spiritual health as “the ability to live in the wholeness of life” (p.18).
- *Explanation:* this sentence includes the names of the authors and the year parenthetically (within the sentence), so only the page number is required after the quote (as illustrated in example 2).

Parenthetical: If the author(s) is/are not part of the sentence, put all the information (author, year, page number) in parentheses at the end of the sentence.

- *Example:* Spiritual health is defined as “the ability to live in the wholeness of life” (Bellingham, Cohen, Jones, & Spaniol, 2008, p.18).
- *Explanation:* this sentence does NOT include the author names or year of publication within the sentence, so it is required after the quote within the citation (as illustrated in example 2).

Block Quote: A quotation of more than 40 words; to properly format a block quote, writers must do the following.

- Type as a free-standing block of text, indented ½ inch from the left margin (double spaced as usual)
- Do *not* use quotation marks around the quote
- For a block quote, the punctuation comes *after* the quotation, followed by the page number in parenthesis.

Example: Note the indent for the block quote, as well as how the writer's paragraph continues beneath the block quote without indentation.

Hawking and Mlodinow (2005) described the information that a star's luminosity can provide:

But the apparent brightness of a star depends not only on its distance, but also on how much light it radiates (its luminosity). A dim star, if near enough, will outshine the brightest star in any distant galaxy. So, in order to use apparent brightness as a measure of its distance, we must know a star's luminosity. (pp.51-52)

The remainder of this chapter will cover the information that astronomers have gained from the deployment of the Hubble telescope.

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Examples of Reference Entries and In-Text Citations for Various Sources

The following is a list of common source types written first as found on a reference list and second as a parenthetical note. These notes are also called *in-text citations* and must be used with quotes, paraphrases, and summaries in the body of your paper.

Book: One Author

Elkins, J. (2002). *Stories of art*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Elkins (2002) found . . .
... (Elkins, 2002).

"Quote from source" (Elkins, 2002, p. 48).
Elkins (2002) claimed, "Quote from source" (p. 48).

Book: Two Authors

McQuain, J., & Malless, S. (1998). *Coined by Shakespeare: Words and meanings first penned by the Bard*. Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster.

McQuain and Malless (1998) stated ...
... (McQuain, & Malless, 1998, pp. 210-213).

Book: Three or More Authors

Rosenberg, B., Gerver, I., & Howton, F. W. (1971). *Mass society in crisis: Social problems and social pathology* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: MacMillan.

First citation: Rosenberg, Gerver, and Howton (1971) claimed...
Subsequent citations: Rosenberg et al. (1971) found...
... (Rosenberg, Gerver, & Howton, 1971).
... (Rosenberg et al., 1971).

Book: Edited

Moffatt, M. J., & Painter, C. (Eds.). (1974). *Revelations: Diaries of women*. New York: Random House.

Moffatt & Painter (1974) summarized...
... (Moffatt & Painter, 1974).

Book: No Author

Illustrated atlas of the world. (1998). Chicago: Rand McNally.

In the *Illustrated Atlas* (1998)...
... (*Illustrated Atlas*, 1998, pp. 88–89).

Article or Chapter in an Edited Book

Hightower, J. (2004). Rebellion is what built America. In Loeb, P. R. (Ed.), *The impossible will take a little while: A citizen's guide to hope in a time of fear* (pp. 198–202). New York: Perseus Books.

Hightower (2004) found...
... (Hightower, 2004).

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E-book

Ochs, S. (2004). *A history of nerve functions: From animal spirits to molecular mechanisms* [ebrary Reader version]. Retrieved from <http://www.cambridge.org/>

Ochs (2004) explained...
... (Ochs, 2004).

Article in a Scholarly Journal

Tebeaux, E. (1991). Ramus, visual rhetoric, and the emergence of page design in medical writing of the English Renaissance. *Written Communication*, 8, 411–445.

Tabeaux (1991) showed...
... (Tabeaux, 1991, p. 411).

Magazine Article

Stolzenberg, W. (1999, July). Pathways of invasion. *Nature Conservancy*, 49, 8–9.

Stolzenberg (1999) noted...
... (Stolzenberg, 1999, p. 8).

Periodical Article: No Author

Aladdin releases desktop tools. (1993, October). *Macworld*, 10, 35-37.

In the article “Aladdin Releases Desktop Tools” (1993) ...
... (“Aladdin Releases,” 1993).

Newspaper Article

Bragg, R. (1994, October 15). Weather gurus going high-tech. *San Antonio Express- News*, pp. 1A, 7A.

Bragg (1994) reported...
... (Bragg, 1994, p. 7A).

Website

Johnson, C. W., Jr. (1997, February 13). How our laws are made. Retrieved from <http://www.thomas.loc.gov/home/lawsmade.toc.html>

Johnson (1997) summarizes...
... (Johnson, 1997).

Online Scholarly Article from a Database

Fine, M. A., & Kurdek, L. A. (1993). Reflections on determining authorship credit and authorship order on faculty-student collaborations. *American Psychology*, 48, 1141-1147.
doi:10.1037/0003-066X.48.11.1141

As Fine and Kurdek (1993) reflected...
... (Fine & Kurdek, 1993).

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Online Newspaper Article

Cohen, E. (1997, January 17). Shrinks aplenty online, but are they credible? *New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com>

Cohen (1997) reported ...
... (Cohen, 1997).

Online Article with No Copyright Or Revision Date

15 reasons to be angry. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.urban75.com/Action/angreten.html>

In the article "15 Reasons to Be Angry" (n.d.), ...
... ("15 Reasons," n.d.).

Government Document

Environment Canada. (2004). *The 1995 peregrine falcon Survey in Canada* (Occasional Paper no. 110). Retrieved from Canadian Wildlife Service website: <http://www.cws-scf.ec.gc.ca/publications/AbstractTemplate.cfm?Lang-e&id-1067>

Environment Canada (2004) found ...
... (Environment Canada, 2004).

Lecture Notes

Mokry, J. (2007). *Lecture 3: The wonders of APA* [PowerPoint slides].

Mokry (2007) explained...
... (Mokry, 2007).

Movie, DVD, Videotape

Coppola, F. (Producer), & Ballard, C. (Director). (1980). *The black stallion*. [Motion picture]. United States: MGM/UA.

Coppola (1980) depicted...
In the film *The Black Stallion* ... (Coppola, 1980).

Musical Recording

Dylan, B. (1989). What was it you wanted? [Recorded by Willie Nelson]. On *Across the borderline* [CD]. New York: Columbia

Dylan (1980) sang ...
In the song "What Was It You Wanted?" ... (Dylan, 1989, track 10).