

Learning APA Format

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What is APA Style, and Why Should I Care

APA style is a structure of formatting rules that will ensure that your manuscript is presented uniformly throughout and also in symmetry with other manuscripts. It provides an evenness of construction that makes reading pleasurable. You are required to follow APA guidelines in preparing your exit project, thesis, or dissertation. It will be helpful for you to have a quick reference outlining some of the basic requirements regarding presentation format. These notes will guide you. Additionally, some tips are offered to help you to identify and overcome some of the peculiarities of APA style, and some common errors are identified. These notes are intended to supplement your use of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed., 2010) and the *Master of Education Program Guide*, online at <http://www3.ed.brocku.ca/medguide/>. It should be noted that some of the requirements outlined are specific to Brock's Faculty of Education and may differ from APA mandated style.

Format of Manuscript

The width of the margin at the left side of every page of the manuscript must be 1.5 inches (3.81 cm). The top, bottom, and right-side margins must be at least an inch (2.54 cm). The additional half inch (1.27 cm) at the left side is required to accommodate the binding of the manuscript.

The right-side margin is not justified to end evenly. Rather, allow the right margin to be uneven. Long words are not hyphenated at the ends of lines.

A serif font is used for the manuscript (with the exception of figures). The preferred font is Times New Roman (which is used here).

Size of type is 12 point throughout the manuscript. Do not increase size for headings.

Double spacing is used throughout the body of the manuscript, including block-style quotations. Do not leave blank space around headings, block quotes, or at the bottoms of pages before the introduction of a new heading. If there is sufficient space at the bottom of a page to accommodate the heading and a line of accompanying text, the space must be used.

Each paragraph is indented a half inch (1.27 cm).

The order of preliminary pages is as follows: title page, Abstract, Acknowledgements, Table of Contents, List of Tables, List of Figures (as applicable). Headings for preliminary pages are written in upper and lower case letters, centered, at the top of the page. These pages are numbered using lowercase Roman numerals centered at the bottom. The title page is counted as

page i, but the number is not shown. The Abstract, then, is page ii, with the other preliminary pages following in sequence. Preliminary pages (excluding the title page and the Table of Contents) are listed in the Table of Contents.

Beginning at Chapter One, pages are numbered at the top right (approximately a half inch from the top of the page and an inch from the right edge) using Arabic numerals. The page number can be shown on the first page of a chapter. This sequence continues throughout the remainder of the manuscript, including reference list and appendices.

The abstract must be double spaced, presented in the past tense, and must be limited to one page. The abstract is typed as a single paragraph with no paragraph indentations.

As a general rule, Chapters One through Four are written in the past tense; Chapter Five is written in the present tense.

Levels of Heading

Your manuscript will require from one to five levels of heading. The heading styles, in subordination, are as follows:

A **chapter heading** is centered and typed in boldface, capital block style:

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

A **Level 1** heading is centered, boldface, and has capital letters beginning the first and all significant words:

Representation of a Level 1 Heading

A **Level 2** heading is typed flush left, boldface, has capital letters beginning the first and all significant words:

Representation of a Level 2 Heading

A **Level 3** heading is indented, boldface, lowercase except for the first letter of the first word and proper nouns, closed with a period, and has the text following on the same line:

Representation of a level 3 heading. The text follows here.

A **Level 4** heading is indented, boldface, italicized, lowercase except the first letter of the first word and proper nouns, closed with a period, and has the text following the same line:

Representation of a level 4 heading. The text follows here.

A **Level 5** heading is indented, italicized, lowercase except for the first letter of the first word and proper nouns, closed with a period, and has the text following the same line:

Representation at a level 5 heading. The text follows here.

Only chapter headings and Level 1 headings are listed in the Table of Contents.

Two heading cannot be used directly after one another. Each heading must be followed by some text that relates to it before the subordinate heading is introduced. Headings such as Introduction, Overview, and Summary are not used following a chapter heading. The opening of the chapter is assumed to be an introduction and is not labelled.

There must be at least two headings of any subordinate level. That is, in order to use a subheading subordinate to Level 1, for example (probably level 3), there must be at least two subordinate headings of that level.

Citations and Quotations

A citation is intended to provide easy access to the corresponding listing in the references. Therefore, it includes the primary elements of the reference listing, usually the author(s) and year. Each citation within the text of the manuscript must have a corresponding listing in the references.

Citation of an Internet reference follows the same style as citation of a print source: author/year (or title/year if an author is not shown).

A citation at the end of a sentence precedes the closing punctuation (Parish & Pollock, 2009). For a quotation, the citation follows the closing quotation marks and “precedes the closing punctuation” (Parish & Pollock, 2009, p. 3). The citation at the end of a block quotation *follows* the closing punctuation.

When citing references with multiple authors, use *and* in open text but an ampersand (&) within parentheses. That is, Parish and Pollock (2009) found this to be correct. This was found to be correct (Parish & Pollock, 2009).

A quotation that is 40 words or longer must be set in block style and double spaced. Every line begins on an indented margin (the paragraph margin of half inch or 1.27 cm). No adjustment is made to the right margin. If a new paragraph begins within the quotation, indent the first line of the new paragraph an additional half inch. A quotation presented in block style is *not* enclosed in quotation marks, and the citation *follows* the closing punctuation.

Any material copied verbatim from another source must include in the citation the page number from the source. In the case of an online article that is not paged, use the paragraph number with the abbreviation *para* in parenthesis, like this: (para.4).

When citing a reference with multiple authors: For a work with two authors, use both authors' names in every citation. For a work with three to five authors, cite all authors' names in the first citation; cite the first author and et al. in subsequent citations throughout the manuscript. For a reference with six or more authors, cite the first author and et al. in *all* citations.

Multiple citations within the same parentheses are ordered alphabetically, that is, the same order as the reference list: (Jones, 1997, 1998; Jones & Smith, 2005; Weir, 1997).

To cite a personal communication (conversation, email, letter, etc.), show the initials and surname of the communicator and be as specific as possible regarding the date (J. Chrétien, personal communication, September 1, 2005). Do not include a reference listing for a personal communication.

To indicate a deletion from quoted text, use three ellipsis points with a space before and after each . . . like this. Add a fourth ellipsis point if the deletion includes the end of a sentence (a period for the sentence ending, followed by three spaced points . . .). Ellipsis points are not used at the beginning or end of a quotation; that is, the quotation begins/ends with the first/last word copied from the source text.

To insert *your* text into a quotation (for syntax, clarification, etc.), use brackets [square], not (parentheses). You are permitted to change (without indicating) the beginning letter of a quoted text from capital to lowercase or from lowercase to capital to fit your usage.

Tables and Figures

Tables and figures are presented alone on page, with no text on the same page. Each table and figure is introduced in the manuscript text (using its identifying number), and the page with the table/figure is positioned as the page following or soon after the page on which it is introduced. No blank space is left on the page preceding the table/figure to accommodate its position

Tables

A table heading is typed flush left above the table on two lines. The second line (title) is italicized, and the first and all significant words begin with capital letters. There is no closing punctuation:

Table 1

Correct Presentation of a Table Heading

A table should be double spaced throughout, with the exception that, for readability, single spacing is permitted.

In column headings, begin only the first word with a capital letter.

Numbers in columns are aligned vertically according to the decimal points or perceived decimal points. Avoid repetition of descriptors in columns. As an example, if all numbers in a column are percentages, indicate % in the column heading and do not repeat it throughout the column.

In the body of a table, avoid the use of lines. Horizontal lines are used only as required for clarity. Vertical lines are not used. However, margin-to-margin horizontal lines are used to separate the table heading from the column headings, to separate the column headings from the table body, and to close the table (preceding any relevant table notes).

Table notes, which are placed below the table's closing line, explain the table data or provide additional information. There are three kinds of notes: general notes, specific notes, and probability notes, arranged in that order, with each type of note beginning a new line. Refer to Table 5.1 on page 129 of the APA manual for specific guidelines.

Figures

A figure caption is placed *below* the figure on a continuous line. Type the word *Figure* and the number, italicized, and followed by a period. The title follows and has only the first word and proper nouns capitalized. The title is also closed with a period:

Figure 1. A representation of a figure caption.

For figure data, a **sans serif** font (no handles and curls) is used.

References

Only those works that have been cited in the manuscript are included in the reference list, and all works that have been directly cited must be included.

A reference listing must provide all the information necessary for retrieval of the source. In addition to author(s), date, and title, include for books the city and abbreviated state/province of publication and the publisher; for print and online articles, identify the journal, magazine, etc.; and where applicable, the digital object identifier (DOI) or the online address.

The APA manual has examples of references covering every possible source. If you are having difficulty classifying a work for referencing, refer to the examples shown there.

The reference list is double spaced throughout. The first line of each listing begins at the left margin, and subsequent lines are indented (paragraph margin).

Listings are ordered alphabetically by the surname of the first author. For listings with the same first author and different second and/or third authors, continue to alphabetize by secondary authors' names (i.e., Jones, 1997; Jones & Allen, 2005; Jones, Allen, & Buckle, 2004; Jones & Dink, 2003). Listings for different authors with the same surname are ordered alphabetically by the initials of the authors' given names. Multiple listings for the same author(s) in different years are ordered chronologically beginning with the earliest. Listings for the same author(s) in the same year are ordered alphabetically by the first significant word in the title (except articles in a series, such as Part 1 and Part 2, which are arranged in series order). Same author/same year listings are differentiated by adding a lowercase letter to the year of publication (e.g., 1990a, 1990b) with the listings ordered alphabetically by title, and this letter identifier must be included in all text citations.

Note that when authors' names have multiple initials, there are spaces between initials (e.g., Parish, M. J. L.).

A listing for a group or corporate author is alphabetized by the first significant word in the name (e.g., The National Institute is alphabetized as N), and full names are used (e.g., Canadian National Institute for the Blind, not CNIB). A parent body precedes a subdivision (e.g., Brock University, Faculty of Education).

If a work has no identified author, the title moves to the author position and the listing is ordered alphabetically by the first significant word in the title.

Note that titles of articles and books are presented in lowercase letters except the first letter of the first word, the first word of a subtitle, and proper nouns.

Publication information for books includes the city of publication and the publisher's name. In the publisher's name, omit unnecessary words such as *Publishers, Co., Inc., etc.*, but retain Books and Press. In identifying the place of publication, give the city and state /province or country (using U.S. Postal Service and/or Canada Post abbreviations) or the city and country for works published outside North America.

References for Articles in Periodicals

Becker, L. J., & Seligman, C. (1981). Welcome to the energy crisis. *Journal of Social Issues*, 37(2), 1-7.

Spetch, M. L., & Wilkie, D. M. (1983). Subjective shortening: A model of pigeons' memory for event duration. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Animal Behavior Processes*, 9, 14-30.

Retrieval information includes the name of the periodical, the volume number and issue number (if there is one), and the page numbers on which the article appeared. Do not include *Vol.* before the volume number. The issue number is included in parentheses following the volume number only if each issue of the journal begins on page 1. It is not included if the journal uses continuous numbers from issue to issue. If no volume number is shown, include the month, season, or other designation *with the year* (e.g., 1997, September). Use p. or pp. before the page numbers in references for newspapers.

References for Articles or Chapters in an Edited Book

O'Neil, J. M., & Egan, J. (1992). Men's and women's gender role journeys: Metaphor for healing, transition, and transformation. In B. R. Wainrib (Ed.), *Gender issues across the life cycle* (pp. 107-123). New York: Springer.

Note that the book in which the article appeared is the element which is italicized. Page numbers for the article are included in parentheses following the title but are not italicized.

References for Books

Strunk, W., Jr., & White, E. B. (1979). *The elements of style* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: MacMillan

Wainrib, B. R. (Ed.). (1992). *Gender issues across the life cycle*. New York, NY: Springer.

Koch, S. (Ed.). (1959-1963). *Psychology: A study of science* (Vols. 1-6). New York: McGraw-Hill.

References for Reports

Gottfredson, L. S. (1980). *How valid are occupational reinforcer pattern scores?*

(Report No. CSOS-LR-292). Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University, Center for Social Organization of Schools. Retrieved from <http://www.eric.ed.gov/PDFS/ED182465.pdf>.

Newport, E. L. (1975). *Motherese: The speech of mothers to young children* (Tech. Rep. No. 52). San Diego, CA: University of California, Center for Human Information Processing.

Note the abbreviated version of Technical Report. (APA manual lists accepted abbreviations for parts of publications.)

References for Unpublished Papers

Brener, J. (1979, October). *Energy, information and the control of heart rate*. Paper presented at the meeting of the Society for Psychophysiological Research, Cincinnati, OH.

Devins, G. M. (1981). *Helplessness, depression, and mood in end-stage renal disease*. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). McGill University, Montreal, QC.

References for Online Media

It is important to remember that in listings for electronic sources, the author must be credited and the reader must be able to find the material. When citing Internet sources, observe the following two guidelines:

1. Readers must be directed as closely as possible to the information being cited; specific documents should be referenced if possible, rather than home or menu pages.
2. Addresses provided for retrieval should work. There are numerous examples in the APA manual for your guidance.

For Internet articles based on a print source which is identical, use the basic journal reference format; but if you have viewed the article only in its electronic form, include the DOI or URL, as applicable.

Remember that citations for online listings follow the same format as print sources: author/year or title/year.

Appendix

Appendices are identified using capital letters (A, B, etc.) in the order that they are introduced in the manuscript. That is, the first appendix introduced in the manuscript is Appendix A and so on. If your manuscript has only one appendix, the letter designation is not required. Each appendix is listed in the Table of Contents showing the title as it appears in the appendix heading.

The appendix heading is typed on two lines, double spaced, and centered at the top of the first page of the appendix, like this:

Appendix A

Style of Appendix Heading

The heading is not repeated on each page.

There is some tolerance regarding APA style in the appendix. However, the heading must be correct, and grammar and spelling must be accurate for work produced by you. *The left-side margin must be 1.5 inches (3.81 cm).* Note that APA preferred spelling of the plural of appendix is appendices.

Department Policy on Confidentiality/Anonymity

No actual names, locations, or jurisdictions are revealed throughout the document. General locations only are to be specified in the document (e.g., a school board in southern Ontario or a hospital in northern Ontario). If pseudonyms are used for names, schools, school boards, hospitals, etc., then this should be stated in the methodology chapter and in the handbook, if applicable.

Letters of information, informed consent, or appreciation are not included as appendices. If a letter of approval from another institution was received and is included as an appendix, identifying names of persons and the institution must be deleted unless exemption was applied for and received.

Students can apply for exemption from the Confidentiality Policy by completing the Request for Exemption form and submitting it to the department.

If clearance from Brock's Research Ethics Board (REB) was necessary for the research, a copy of the most recent ethics certificate at the time of submission must be included in the MRP, project, or thesis as an appendix.

Department Policy on Copyright

The last line of the title page must include the copyright symbol, the name of the copyright owner (the author), and the year of graduation:

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Department Policy on Use of Reproduced Materials

The use of figures (i.e., charts, graphs, maps, photographs) and tables, and other original materials (e.g., student assignments, writing samples), whether published or unpublished, requires the written permission of the copyright owner. The copyright owner can be either the creator (i.e., author, compiler, editor, translator) or an assignee (e.g., employer, publisher). The

owner of the copyright must stipulate that he/she is licensing publication of the material one time in Canada, in English or in French, and in the student's Master of Education MRP/project/thesis or in the student's doctoral dissertation. Each separate copyright used beyond the initial agreement must be renegotiated with the copyright owner, who retains all other rights.

Permission is required to reproduce or adapt all or part of any table, figure, or extended quotation (i.e., more than 500 words) from a copyrighted source, including published and unpublished material.

If using or adapting a table or figure, insert a note at the bottom of the table or figure. If using extended quotations, insert a numbered footnote in the text. In each case, the note will use the appropriate selection of the following forms:

If the table, figure, or extended quotation is from a journal article:

Note. From "Title of Article," by A. N. Author and C. O. Author, 2000. *Title of Journal*, 50, p. 22. Copyright 2000 by Name of Copyright Holder. Reprinted [or Adapted] with permission.

If the table, figure, or extended quotation is from a book or monograph:

Note. From *Title of Book* (p. 103), by A. N. Author and C. O. Author, 1999, Place of Publication: Publisher. Copyright 1999 by Name of Copyright Holder. Reprinted [or Adapted] with permission.

If the table, figure, or extended quotation is from unpublished material:

Note: From [type of material, e.g., class assignment], by A. N. Author and C. O. Author, 1999, Place of Publication. Reprinted [or Adapted] with permission of author.

All graphics must be cited in APA format, even original graphics created in the research for the MRP, project, or thesis. Any graphics or clipart included in the document must be original, acquired from an open source, such as Creative Commons with an Attribution-only Copyright License, or used with the written permission of the copyright owner. Graphics located on any web page that contains a copyright date may not be used without the express permission of the web page copyright-holder.

If materials are included from an open source (e.g., graphics, clipart), either a footnote or a sentence to indicate the complete source of the material is necessary.

Note that pseudonyms are used even if permission has been granted from each individual to include photographs, artwork, writing samples, written assignments, etc. Written consent from

the individuals must stipulate that materials may be used as part of a research process, shared in research reports, and used in a published document.

If students have made application to the Research Ethics Board, and they are planning to make use of their students' assignments, artwork, writing samples, or photographs, they must stipulate their intention in the application.

Before submitting your completed manuscript to the Faculty of Education, Department of Graduate Studies (i.e., following proofreading and the necessary corrections), you are required to complete the *Checklist for MRP, Project, and Thesis Submission*, and it must accompany the manuscript. A copy of the form is appended to these notes.

Helpful Hints

Following are some basic guidelines to help with commonly used elements of APA style. But remember that there are exceptions, and there are exclusions from many of the exceptions.

1. In a series of three or more words and/or phrases, a comma precedes the conjunction (e.g., sugar, spice, and all things nice).

2. Numbers: Unless beginning a sentence, numbers 10 and greater and numbers in the abstract are always numbers. Numbers that represent time, age, grades, and points on a scale are always expressed as numbers (e.g., 3 years, 2-year-olds, Grade 8, 5-point Likert scale). Common fractions are presented as words and do not have hyphens (e.g. one fourth). Commas are used in numbers 1,000 and larger (this includes tables).

3. When presenting material within quotation marks, type periods and commas *inside* the closing quotation marks; other punctuation (e.g., question mark, semicolon) is typed inside only if it is a part of the quoted material. (Of course, if a citation is included at the end of the quotation, the quotation marks will precede the citation and the closing punctuation will follow the citation.)

4. A compound modifier that is not permanent (i.e., it is not listed in the dictionary as a permanent compound) is hyphenated only if it precedes what it modifies (i.e., a brown-eyed girl is brown eyed). There are a number of exceptions to this rule, among them that if one of the modifying words ends in *ly* it is never hyphenated (e.g., highly conspicuous errors).

5. Words with common prefixes (pre, re, multi, sub, etc.) are not hyphenated (with exceptions). A complete list of these prefixes can be found in the APA manual.

6. Uniformity of spelling: Words for which alternate spellings are acceptable should be spelled consistently the same throughout the manuscript (behavior/behaviour, focuses/focusses). Of course, in quotations you must copy spelling.

7. Do not use apostrophes in plurals of numbers (e.g., 1990s; 3s and 4s) or acronyms (CDs).

8. Parentheses cannot be used back to back. Instead, use a single pair of parentheses to enclose both items and use a semicolon to separate them (the items; Parish, 2008).

9. The abbreviations i.e. and e.g. always have periods and are followed by commas and are *always* enclosed in parentheses with the relevant text (e.g., like this). In open text, spell the terms in full; that is, for example, like this.

10. Its vs. It's: It's is a contraction of it is. Its is possessive. Its' is not a word.

11. When you are approaching deadline and running short of time, do not spend time searching your APA manual. When in doubt, make your best guess. Your proofreader will make the correction if one is required.

Reference

American Psychological Association. (2010). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.