

Overview of APA Format: Beginning From the Title Page

Student Name

Department of Something Interesting, Pittsburg State University

SMIN 655: Course Name

Instructor Name

Month Day, Year

Overview of APA Format: Beginning From the Title Page

It is possible to use the American Psychological Association (APA)'s format for source citations without using their guidelines for other features such as page layout, use of headings, and title page. If your instructor has specified "APA format," you can be certain that they are referring to the references list and in-text citations, but they may also want you to follow other guidelines shown in this document. As always, your instructor's rules and guidelines are the ones you should follow, even if they conflict with the guidance in the APA manual.

Commented [JZ1]: Restate the title of the paper at the top of the first page of the main text.

Commented [JZ2]: The introduction follows the paper title with no separate heading.

Page Formatting

APA format does not require a specific font, but the American Psychological Association's publication manual (2020, 7th edition) recommends Times New Roman (12 pt), Calibri, Arial, or Georgia (11 pt), or Lucida Sans Unicode (10 pt). All text should be double-spaced with no extra lines between paragraphs; text should be left-aligned (straight left margin and ragged right margin); and the first lines of paragraphs should be indented one-half inch (1.25 cm)

Commented [JZ3]: Level 1 headings are centered.

First Page

If your assignment requires a title page, your title page will be page one. In that case, the paper should begin at the top of page two. The title of the paper should be repeated at the top of page two in bold and centered at the top of the page. The first paragraph of the paper begins immediately below the title. Unless your instructor says otherwise, the introduction does not get a section header.

Commented [JZ4]: Level 2 headings are left aligned.

Abstract

If your assignment asks for an abstract, the abstract should appear on its own page, immediately after the title page. In that case, the abstract will be on page two, and the main body

of the paper begins on page three. For a thesis, doctor of nursing practice project or other document with special requirements, follow departmental or university guidelines for front matter (title page, abstract, table of contents, etc).

Page numbers

Page numbers should be placed in the top margin on the righthand side, .5” from the top of the page. For regular student papers, page numbers begin on the title page and continue through the end of the document. For documents with special formatting, consult the document guidelines for how to use page numbers.

Line spacing

Unless your instructor says otherwise, the entire paper should be double-spaced, including the references list, with no extra spaces between paragraphs, before or after section headers or tables and figures, or between references list entries. Use the line spacing tool to remove extra blank space before and after paragraphs.

References list

The references list begins on a new page immediately following the body of your paper. The word “References” should be in bold and centered at the top of the page.

Appendix

Use an appendix (or multiple appendices) for ancillary information (that is, information that is important enough to be included but that doesn’t actually belong as part of your paper). The appendix section begins on a separate page after the references list. Each appendix begins with the word “Appendix” in bold and centered at the top of the page with a new letter (A, B, C, etc.) for each new appendix. On the line below the word Appendix, add a description of the content in plain text.

Headings

APA designates five levels of headings, shown in Figure 1. Headings of all levels are capitalized in title case. Levels of headings are distinguished by alignment (centered, left-aligned, or indented) and plain text versus italics.

Figure 1

APA's Five Levels of Headings

Heading One (Centered on the page)

Heading Two

Heading Three

Heading Four

Heading Five

Figures and Tables

Every figure or table has a boldface numbered label. The title appears below the label in italics and in title case. If the figure or table is borrowed from a source, reference and copyright information should be presented in the optional note immediately below it.

Source Citations

APA is an author-date source citation system, which means that each source is uniquely identified by its author or authors and publication date.

The References List

The foundation of this system is the references list. The references list begins at the top of the next page after the end of the main body of the paper. Like the paper itself, the references list is double-spaced, and a hanging indent (first line at the left margin, subsequent lines indented one half inch, as shown in Figure 2) is used to indicate the beginning of each new source.

Figure 2*Sample References List Entries for Book and Journal Article*

Author, A. A. (Year of publication). *Sample citation for a book: The book title and subtitle are italicized and capitalized in sentence case.* Publisher.

Wedderburn, H. T., Bodner, P., Radcliffe, E. S., & Graves, L. E. (Year). Title of in plain text: Capitalized in sentence case. *Journal Name in Title Case and Italics*, volume number(issue number), pages. <https://doi.org/xx.xxx/yyyy>

The references list at the end of this document provides sample references list entries for journal articles, books, blog posts, and information from an organization's website.

In-Text Citations and Attribution Phrases

Along with the references list, complete source citation requires in-text citations to indicate where source material is used in the paper and which material comes from which source. APA discourages the use of direct quotes except in the rare cases when HOW something is said is as important as WHAT is said. Instead, ideas and information from sources should be rewritten in your own words, but regardless of whether you have rewritten it in your own words or used an exact quote, all ideas and information borrowed from a source must be cited.

In APA format, the basic in-text citation consists of the author and date. For quoted information, the in-text citation should also include the page number (for sources with page numbers). The format for parenthetical citations for one, two, and three or more authors, with and without dates, and with and without page numbers is shown in in Figure 4. The parenthetical citation should appear immediately after the borrowed information, before any closing punctuation.

Figure 3*Parenthetical Citations in APA Style and Various Types of Attribution Phrases*

	One Author	Two Authors	Three or More Authors
Parenthetical citation	(Boyes, 2013)	(Lee & Hong, 2018)	(Chin et al., 2021)
Parenthetical citation for a quote	(Boyes, 2013, p. 12)	(Lee & Hong, 2018, p. 455)	(Chin et al., 2021, p. 82-83)
Attribution phrases	Boyes (2013) showed that ...	Lee and Hong's (2018) findings suggest...	Chin and colleagues (2021) argued that ...

When using both an attribution phrase and a direct quote, the year of publication stays with the author name, while the page numbers remain with the quoted text, like this: A study by Chin and colleagues (2021) demonstrated a direct relationship between note-taking skills and test performance, with “the best note-takers consistently out-performing non-note-taking students of otherwise equal ability” (pp. 82-83).

Block Quotes

When a quote is more than 40 words, use the block quote format to set it off from the text around it. Because quoted text should never be used as a stand-alone sentence, a block quote will always be preceded by a partial sentence of your own that introduces it. The quote itself should begin on a new line, and the entire quote should be indented one half inch (forming an indented “block” of text). Block quotes are not enclosed in quotation marks, and the parenthetical citation appears after the closing punctuation.

References

Ambady, N., & Rosenthal, R. (1993). Half a minute: Predicting teacher evaluations from thin slices of nonverbal behavior and physical attractiveness. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 64(3), 431–441. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.64.3.431>

Anderson, K., & Miller, E. D. (1997). Gender and student evaluations of teaching. *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 30(2), 216–219. <https://doi.org/10.2307/420499>

Armstrong, J. S. (1998). Are student ratings of instruction useful? *American Psychologist*, 53(11), 1223–1224. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.53.11.1223>

Attiyeh, R., & Lumsden, K. G. (1972). Some modern myths in teaching economics: The U.K. experience. *American Economic Review*, 62(1), 429–443. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1821578>

Bachen, C. M., McLoughlin, M. M., & Garcia, S. S. (1999). Assessing the role of gender in college students' evaluations of faculty. *Communication Education*, 48(3), 193–210. <http://doi.org/cqcgssr>

Becker, W. (2000). Teaching economics in the 21st century. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 14(1), 109–120. <https://doi.org/10.1257/jep.14.1.109>

Belcher, W. (2019). *Writing your journal article in twelve weeks: A guide to academic publishing success* (2nd ed.). University of Chicago Press.

Hamel, K., Tong, B., & Hofer, M. (2019, March 28). Poverty in Africa is now falling – But not fast enough. *Future Development*. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/future-development/2019/03/28/poverty-in-africa-is-now-falling-but-not-fast-enough/>

Commented [JZ5]: Use the line-spacing tool to remove extra space before and after paragraphs so that you have consistent double-spacing through the entire paper, including the references list.

Commented [JZ6]: In the references list, titles and subtitles of books, articles, and stand-alone reports are capitalized in sentence case (that is, they follow the same capitalization rules as ordinary English sentences). The first word of the title and subtitle are always capitalized.

Commented [JZ7]: Note that the journal name and the volume number are in italics.

Commented [JZ8]: For sources with a doi number, use that. When a doi number does not exist, use the stable URL (permalink).

Commented [JZ9]: For all sources that have a doi number or a permanent link (almost all journal articles, and now also some books and other documents) include the doi number or the permalink. If the source has only the doi number itself, add the URL prefix <https://doi.org> before the number. Be sure not to add an extra space between the prefix and the number.

In the references list, don't use any punctuation after the doi number or URL.

Commented [JZ10]: As with article titles, titles of blog posts are in sentence case. The blog name should be capitalized in title case and italicized.

National Center for Education Statistics. (n.d.) Nontraditional undergraduates: Definitions and data: Who is nontraditional?. U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved March 25, 2022, from <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs/web/97578e.asp>

Worldometer. (n.d.). *South Africa population* (live). Retrieved August 24, 2022, from <https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/south-africa-population/>

Commented [JZ11]: 1. Note that the author might be an organization, not a person. In that case spell out the complete name of the organization. If the organization is a smaller part of a larger organization, name the parent organization in the publisher slot.

2. For an online source with no publication date, use (n.d.) instead of the publication date and then include a retrieval date, using the form "Retrieved Month Day, Year, from <https://www...>"

If the source has a publication date, a retrieval date is not included.

Commented [JZ12]: When capitalizing titles in sentence case, remember to capitalize the same proper nouns you would capitalize in an ordinary English sentence.

Appendix A

New for APA 7th Edition

APA 7th edition does not require a running head for student papers, but follow your instructor's guidance about whether to include one or not. When used, the running head should appear in the header, .5" from the top of the page, starting at the left margin and on the same line as the page number. The page number should be at the far righthand end of that line. The running head should be in all caps and consists of a shortened version of the paper's title. The words "running head" are no longer used.

In the references list, include up to 20 authors. For sources with more than 20 authors, list the first 19 authors, type an ellipsis [...], and then list the final author.