APA Style in a Nutshell (6th edition)

Important items to remember for the reference page

- Double-space all entries
- Use a hanging indent
- Break URLs before punctuation marks (see Publication manual p. 192)
- Books—italicize titles and capitalize only the first word, the first word after a colon, and proper nouns (e.g., Publication manual)
- Periodicals—italicize titles and capitalize all important words (e.g., Journal of Applied Biology)
- Articles and short works—do not italicize and capitalize only the first word, the first word after a colon, and proper nouns
- e.g., Hanson, R.K., Steffy, R.A., & Gauthier, R. (1993). Long-term recidivism of child molesters...

- Journals—italicize the journal title and the volume number, but not the issue number, and do not leave a space between the volume and the parenthesis:
- Journals with DOI (digital object identifier) – include the DOI instead of the URL (omit period at end)

Important items to remember for in-text citations

- Use the last names of authors (not the first names) and year when discussing others’ work. (See author chart on p. 177 of the Manual)
  e.g., The most recent study of the eating behaviors of porcupines revealed that …(Smith, 2002).
  e.g., Smith (2002) studied the eating behaviors of porcupines and found…
- In the same paragraph, do NOT repeat the year if you repeat the author’s name if you include the year in all parenthetical references in the same paragraph (see p. 174 in the Manual)
- Avoid including the title of the work within your text—UNLESS the work does not have an author. If no author is named, change the format of titles (see No author section below for examples)
- For parenthetical citations and the reference list, use the ampersand (&) for two-six authors:
  e.g., (Smith, Jones, & Rogers, 2006)
- For in-text sentences, use the word “and”: Smith, Jones, and Rogers (2006) found …
- Use commas and “p.” or “pp.” for page numbers:
  e.g., One study found that rats “showed no sign of emotion” (Jones, 1999, p. 45).

- Page numbers are required for direct quotations (Smith, 2009, p. 45)
- APA encourages the inclusion of page, paragraph, chapter, or section numbers as a courtesy for easy access:
  e.g., (Shimamura, 1989, Chapter 3)----NOTE: DO NOT ABBREVIATE “Chapter.”
  e.g., (Myers, 2000, para. 5) or (Myers, 2000, § 5)
  e.g., (Beutler, 2000, Conclusion section, para. 1)

Two authors

- In-text: cite both names every time the work is mentioned.
- Reference list: cite both names.
- When works have the same author/s and date, assign a letter on the reference page and use it in the text, too:
  e.g., (Derryberry & Reed, 2005a, 2005b; Rothbart, 2003a, 2003b)

Three, four, or five authors

- In-text: cite all names for the first reference, and cite the first author and “et al.” in subsequent references.
- Reference list: Cite all names.

Six or seven authors

- In-text: cite only the name of the first author followed by “et al.” for all references.
- Reference list: provide the initials and surnames of the all six or seven authors.

More than seven authors

- In-text: cite only the name of the first author followed by “et al.” for all references.
- Reference list: provide the initials and surnames of the first six authors, insert an ellipses, and give the last author’s name and initials (see example #2 at the bottom of p. 198 in the Publication manual).

Groups as authors

- Spell out the full title of long or easily-recognized groups and indicate the abbreviation for the first reference and abbreviate afterwards.
- Use brackets within parentheses: (National Institute of Mental Health [NIMH], 1999) …(NIMH, 1999)
- Use parentheses in the sentence: Mothers Against Drunk Drivers (MADD, 1999) found that…

No author

- Reference page, alphabetize by the first important word in the title and place the year after the title.
- Reference page, only capitalize the first word, proper names, and the first word after a colon.
- In-text: use quotation marks and capitalize the important words in article titles:
  e.g., The article, “The New Health-Care Lexicon,” (1992) discusses the…
  e.g., “…The New Health-Care Lexicon,” 1993
- In-text: italicize and capitalize book titles, periodical titles, and other major works:
  e.g., …the book College Bound Seniors (1979).
Anonymous

- Do not use “Anonymous” for the author’s name—except when the source uses it.
- On the reference list, use “Anonymous” for the author’s name and alphabetize under “A.”
- In the parenthetical citation, use it in place of the author’s name:
  e.g., (Anonymous, 1998)

Secondary sources

- When possible, use primary sources.
- Otherwise place secondary sources on the reference page, but refer to the original study in your discussion, and include the secondary source in parentheses:
  e.g., Skinner (2000) found no evidence of emotion in rats (as cited in Smith & Jones, 2006).

Personal communication, interviews, and standard classical/religious works (see pp. 178-179 in the Manual)

- Do not list them on the reference page, but cite them in the text.
  e.g., T.K. Lutes (personal communication, April 18, 2001) found that …
  e.g., 1 Cor. 13:1 (Revised Standard Version)
  e.g., (Qur'an 5:3-4)

Block quotations

- Indent/block quotations of 40 or more words.
- Indent ½” from the margin (5 spaces) and double-space.
- If there are additional paragraphs within the block, indent an additional ½”.
  This is an example of a block quotation. Generally, direct quotations should be used sparingly in APA style. Studies are summarized and results are paraphrased, except when the author's original words are unique and difficult to put into different words. I will type another paragraph to illustrate the second indent.
  The second paragraph looks strange, but the idea is to replicate the original text as closely as possible.

Lists

- To set off lists within a paragraph, use letters with parentheses (a), (b), (c), etc.
- In bulleted lists, use numerals/figures without parentheses if ordination is important; otherwise, bullets are acceptable:
  1. item
  2. item
  3. item

Running heads

- Include a running head in the header (beginning with the title page) of the manuscript; limit the head to 50 characters, counting letters, punctuation, and spaces between words.
- The running head is an abbreviated title, not necessarily the exact words.

Numbers

- Use figures for numbers 10 and above.
- Exceptions: use numbers with units of measurement or when low numbers are grouped with high numbers.

General

- Do not use “this present study” or “the current study” to refer to someone else’s work—use them to refer to your own study.
- Watch your tone—even when you disagree with or challenge a study, present the evidence in a polite tone:
  e.g., Smith may have overlooked the importance of …
- The longest part of a research report is usually the literature review/introduction.
- Use past tense (e.g. showed) or present perfect tense (e.g. have shown) for the literature review.
- Use past tense for results.
- Use present tense (e.g. results indicate) for conclusions and implications.
- Passive verbs are acceptable (the study was designed to…; the data were analyzed), but active verbs are preferred (the researchers designed the study to…)
- Do not use contractions.
- Avoid using verbs such as feel, think, believe, stated, wrote, said, confirm, prove—use find, reason, assess, test, hypothesize, demonstrate, investigate, provide evidence, support and indicate.
- Use qualifiers to allow for exceptions to your claims (may, might, possible): One possible explanation might be…One interpretation may be…The data suggest….The results appear to …
- Use transitions: Notably, …In contrast, …Similarly, …First, …Second, …Third…
- Be concise: strive for clarity and economy of expression—use active voice (if possible) and use short phrases and words instead of wordy phrases.
  - The study was designed by Smith to = Smith (2001) designed a study to
  - Being that or since = because
  - Based on the fact that = because
  - The obtained results showed = The results showed
  - Participants for the study were = Participants were
  - Due to the fact that = Because
  - The reason is because = The reason is that
  - A total of eight participants = Eight participants
References