APA Style in a Nutshell

NDSU Center for Writers
Presentation Overview

• APA – What is it, and why do we care?
• Manuscript content, structure, and format
• Reference page
• In-text citation
• Language issues and style notes
• Support resources
What is a citation style?

• MLA vs. APA
What is a citation style?

• MLA vs. APA vs. AAA vs. Chicago vs. ACS vs. AP vs. AMA vs. ASA vs. etc.
• Why bother?
What is a citation style?

When Editors refer to style, they mean the rules or guidelines a publisher observes to ensure clear, consistent presentation in scholarly articles. Authors writing for a publication must follow the style rules established by the publisher to avoid inconsistencies among journal articles or book chapters. For example, without rules of style, three different manuscripts might use sub-test, subtest, and Subtest in one issue of a journal or in one book. Although the meaning of the word is the same and the choice of one style over the other may seem arbitrary (in this case, subtest is APA Style), such variations in style may distract or confuse the reader” (Publication Manual, 2010, p. 87, emphasis mine).
What is APA style?

• Guidelines published by the American Psychological Society for manuscript preparation

• Used by journals in social and behavioral sciences, education, and other fields
Hierarchy of Authority

• Journal
  – Instructor
    • APA Manual
Resources for APA Style

Official text:

Note

• Style manuals are very complex
• Do not rely on your memory--ALWAYS refer to a manual for examples
• Pay attention to unique aspects
  – source type
  – capitalization & punctuation
  – author vs. editor
  – edition/volume/issue/DOI
Elements of APA Style

• Format (title page, running head, abstract, sections, subheadings, font, margins, tables, figures, etc.)
• In-text citations
• Reference page
Manuscript Content & Structure

» Title Page
» Abstract
» Main Body
» References
Manuscript Content & Structure

– 10-12 point Times New Roman Font
– 1” Margins
Manuscript Content & Structure

• Empirical Study
  – Introduction
  – Method
  – Results
  – Discussion

• Literature Review
  – Define the problem
  – Summarize previous work
  – Relate the literature
  – Suggest the next step
Manuscript Heading Format

Section Heading

Section Subheading

Subsection of the section subheading.

Sub-subsection of the section subheading.

Lowest form of heading.

APA Manual p. 62

http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/16/

Manuscript Format Minutiae

• Spacing
  – One space after commas, colons, semicolons
  – One space after periods on reference page (including name initials)
  – Two spaces after end punctuation in sentences
  – See exceptions on p. 88
Reference List

• Provide enough information to **identify** and **retrieve** each source.
• Exception: do not include personal communications on the list, but **cite them in the text**:

  T. K. Lutes (personal communication, April 18, 2001) claims that . . .
Reference List

• Arrange entries alphabetically by the first author’s last name
• Use a hanging indent
• Double-space (entire document)
• Use initials for all first names.
Reference List

Reverse the order of all authors’ names, and provide the year in parentheses:


Basic Reference Template

Author. (Year). Title. Publication Information.
NOTE:

Title format varies according to the genre.
Reference List

Articles:
do not italicize and capitalize only the first word, the first word after a colon, and proper nouns:

Reference List

Journals and periodicals:
use *italics* and capitalize all important words:

Reference List

Reminder—
always check the APA guidelines.
Reference Examples

• Book
Reference Examples

• Book

Tapscott, D.
Reference Examples

• Book

Reference Examples

• Book

Reference Examples

• Book

Reference Examples

• Journal article
  [note the volume/issue italics format]

Reference Examples

• **Edited book**

Reference Examples

• Subsequent edition of a reference book

Reference Examples

• Chapter in edited book

Reference Examples

• NOTE: Retrieval dates are no longer required unless the source material may change over time (e.g. Wikis).

... Retrieved October 5, 2000, from http://www...
Reference Examples

• Electronic journal article with a Digital Object Identifier (DOI)

Reference Examples

• Journal article **without DOI**
  [NOTE: omit period after URL or DOI and do not include retrieval date]

Reference Examples

• **Electronic version** of print book

  [NOTE: Use DOI instead of URL, if possible]

Reference Examples

• In general, do not include database name (e.g. PsycINFO) with the URL. One exception is for abstracts of limited circulation:

Reference Examples

• To cite a website, use the URL. Many websites do not specify author, so use the name of the website. When citing an online reference, like a dictionary, start with the word.

Reference Examples

• When citing websites, I highly recommend you consult the Purdue OWL or Valencia College:

http://owl.english.purdue.edu/OWL/resource/560/10/

http://valenciacollege.edu/library/mla-apa-chicago-guides/
Reference Examples

**YouTube:**


**Netflix:**

In-Text Citations

• Requirements
  – **author** of the source
  – **date** of publication
  – **page numbers** **required** for direct quotations and **encouraged** for paraphrases
In-Text Citations

• Walker (2000) compared reaction times.

• A recent study found reaction times vary (Walker, 2000).

• In 2000, Walker compared reaction times.
In-Text Citations

• If page numbers are not available, including other information for easy access is encouraged for online or long documents (e.g. sections, paragraph numbers)

(Discussion section, para. 1)
Direct Quotations

• Lopez (1993) found that “the effect disappeared within minutes” (p. 311).

• The author stated, “The effect disappeared within minutes” (Lopez, 1993, p. 311), but she did not say which effect.
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”.
• http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/02/
Authors
Barta (2012) contends that a Global English Language Academy would be antithetical to the fluid and organic nature of language evolution.

According to Barta and Nash (1950), “the best result will come from everybody in the group doing what's best for herself—and the group” (p. 1).

**Reference**

The work of Lennon, McCartney, Starkey, and Harrison (1969) suggested that individuals with disparate personalities can work together effectively. Lennon et al. (1969) established a precedent for subsequent research.

6-7 Authors

• **In-Text**
  Dopey et al. (1937) posited that seven heads are better than one.

• **Reference**
A groundbreaking study by Barta et al. (2013) presented a convincing argument that further study in linguistics will no longer be necessary.


Language Issues

• What empirical studies (and their investigators) can do:

• What empirical studies (and their investigators) cannot do:
Language Issues

• What empirical studies (and their investigators) **can** do:
  
  - find
  - investigate
  - suggest
  - demonstrate
  - illustrate
  - hypothesize
  - support
  - indicate

• What empirical studies (and their investigators) **cannot** do:
  
  - feel
  - think
  - believe
  - state
  - write
  - say
  - confirm
  - prove
Language Issues

Nunca, nunca, nunca do results conclude.
(Never, never, never)
Language Issues

• **Passive** verbs are sometimes acceptable, but **active** verbs are preferred:

  “The experiment was designed by Smith to...”

  = “Smith designed the experiment to...”
Language Issues

Don't use contractions. (;-)

The use of “I” and “we” is becoming more common, so ask your instructor or consult the journal guidelines.
Language Issues

• “Data” (plural)
  These data show that...
  This datum provides further evidence...

• “Data” (collective)
  This data shows...
  This piece of data provides further evidence...
Language Issues

• Affect
• Effect
Language Issues

• **Affect (verb)**
  The debate may **affect** my decision.

• **Effect (noun)**
  The debate had an **effect** on my decision.
Language Issues

• **Affect (verb)**
  The debate may affect my decision.

• **Affect (noun)**
  The candidate's affect showed that he was dismayed.

• **Effect (noun)**
  The debate had an effect on my decision.

• **Effect (verb)**
  The candidate promised that her law would effect change in the country.
Additional Style Notes

• Use qualifiers to allow for exceptions to your claims (may, might, possible):
  – One possible explanation is...
  – One explanation might be ...
  – One interpretation may be...
  – The data suggest...
  – The results appear...
Additional Style Notes

• Use transitions:
  – Notably,...
  – In contrast,...
  – Similarly,...
  – First,... Second,... Third,... (avoid using firstly, secondly, thirdly)
Additional Style Notes

• Do not use “this study,” “this present study” or “the current study” to refer to someone else’s work—use them to refer to your own study.

• Use past tense for results.

• Use present tense for conclusions.
Additional Style Notes

Find primary sources when possible.
If unable to locate the primary source:

• In-text

• Reference
Additional Style Notes

Break URL [and I assume doi] before most punctuation (exception is http://); do not add a hyphen.

Additional Style Notes

• Generally, direct quotations should be used sparingly (or not at all) in APA papers (varies with discipline).

• Studies are summarized and results are paraphrased, except when the author's original words are unique and difficult to put into different words.
Always Give Credit

• Document ALL sources accurately and completely

• Include in-text citations

• Create a reference page
Support Resources

Center for Writers
• Location: Room No. 6, Main Library
• Telephone: (701) 231-7927
• Email: ndsu.cfw@ndsu.edu
• Website: http://www.ndsu.edu/cfwriters/
Online Resources

• The APA homepage at [http://www.apa.org/](http://www.apa.org/) has a “Quick Link” to “Quick Answers.”


• Basic APA Style online tutorial: [http://flash1r.apa.org/apastyle/basics/index.htm](http://flash1r.apa.org/apastyle/basics/index.htm)

• CFW website links to online handbooks and this presentation: [http://www.ndsu.edu/cfwriters/documenting_sources/](http://www.ndsu.edu/cfwriters/documenting_sources/)

• Purdue OWL: [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/)
Online Resources

• The Center for Writers website includes a handy guide called “APA Style in a Nutshell”
  http://www.ndsu.edu/cfwriters/documenting_sources/

  “Documenting Sources”
  ↓
  “American Psychological Association (APA) for Social Sciences.”
  ↓
  “APA Style in a Nutshell”
Questions?