# APA Style Guidelines – 6$^{th}$ Edition

The American Psychological Association (APA) published the 6$^{th}$ Edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* in October 2009. An updated 7$^{th}$ Edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* was published in October 2019.

***Please note:*** your institution or instructor may have transition to the 7$^{th}$ Edition of APA. Be sure to carefully review your syllabus, assignment instructions, or professor expectations to determine which edition you should be using. If you need the 7$^{th}$ Edition, you can use the ***Brainfuse APA Style Guide – 7$^{th}$ Edition*** for assistance.

## Example Essay

You can download a sample essay describing and adhering to APA Style (6$^{th}$ Edition) here:

https://www.brainfuse.com/curriculumupload//1514393148097.pdf

## General Layout

**Title Page:** This page should include the running head, full title, your name, and the name of the college that you attend. Make sure to center your full title, name, and college.

**Page Numbering:** Add page numbers to the top, right-hand corner of each page.

**Running Head:** Add a version of the title to the header of each page. The letters should all be capitalized, and there should be no more than 50 characters. Include "Running head:" before the header on the title page (but omit these words on all other pages).

**Text Style:** Use a readable font such as Times New Roman. Font size must be 12pt.

**Spacing:** APA style requires all papers to be double-spaced with 1" margins on all sides.

**Headings:** APA style has five heading levels. Writers can use as many headings as they deem necessary for their papers, though levels may not be skipped.

### Level 1 Headings Are Centered and Written in Boldface Using Uppercase and Lowercase Heading

Indent to begin the paragraph below the Level 1 heading.

- Do not use "Introduction" as the title of your first heading, as that should be implicit.

**Level 2 Headings are Flushed Left and Written in Boldface Using Uppercase and Lowercase Heading**

Indent to begin the paragraph below the Level 2 heading.

**Level 3 headings are indented as a paragraph heading and written in boldface using lowercase; they end with a period.** Start the paragraph after the Level 3 heading.

***Level 4 headings are indented as a paragraph heading, italicized, and written in boldface using lowercase; they end with a period.*** Start the paragraph after the Level 4 heading.

*Level 5 headings are indented as a paragraph heading, italicized, and written using lowercase; they end with a period.* Start the paragraph after the Level 5 heading.

## Style Conventions

**Serial Commas:** APA requires using the serial, or Oxford, comma when writing series.
- Cities in Spain include Madrid, Barcelona, and Valencia.

**Lists:** When writing numbered or bulleted lists, writers should incorporate a comma, semicolon, or period after each item. They should add periods—but no parentheses—after numbers. In terms of in-text lists, writers should use letters within parentheses.

- Athletes who suffer from knee injuries can facilitate the recovery process by (a) attending physical therapy sessions regularly, (b) refraining from playing sports until they completely heal, and (c) taking necessary medication.

**Avoiding bias in language:** APA discourages using gender terms when they are not necessary. Writers should not write "he," "men," or "his" when the sex of a human is not clear. Recommended methods of avoiding gender bias include rephrasing sentences, using nouns, or dropping the pronoun if possible.

## Abstract

Start the abstract on a new page after the title page and include the page header. The header on all pages after the title page should no longer contain the words "Running head." It just lists the title of the paper.

On the first line of the page, center the word "Abstract" (no bold, formatting, italics, underlining, or quotation marks).

The abstract is a double-spaced, single paragraph of 150–250 words. The paragraph is not indented. Summarize the key points of the paper including the research topic, research questions, participants, methods, results, data analysis, and conclusions.

Writers often list their papers' keywords under the abstract. To add this, type *Keywords:* and list them. Indent the keywords line as if you were beginning a new paragraph.

## In-text Citations

All data, indirect quotes, direct quotes, and ideas from other sources need an in-text citation. You can follow this format:

> (Smith, 2003, p.100)
> Smith (2003) formulated this hypothesis: "……." (p.100)

The standard format for all internal citations is (Author, Year). In the text, you may use the general format: Kenneth (2000) explained...

**Multiple authors:**

For three to five authors, write out all of their last names in the first in-text citation:

> (Bills, Cummings, & Sabine, 1986)

Write the following citations using the first author's name and "et al.":

> (Bills et al., 1986)

If there are six or more authors, the citation should include the first author's name before "et al.":

> (Gott et al., 2016)

**Unknown Author and Unknown Date:**

If no author or date is given, use the title in your signal phrase or the first word or two of the title in the parentheses and use the abbreviation "n.d." (for "no date").

o Example: Another study in higher education contexts finds that students achieve greater success with tutoring ("Tutoring," n.d.).

When referencing direct quotations, page numbers are normally used for most source types. However, do not use page numbers for website quotations. (Pagination will change depending on individual computers and browsers.) Instead, refer to a paragraph number or heading section and paragraph number. Use the abbreviations "para." and the number ("Tutoring," n.d., para. 6). Or for longer website texts broken into sections ("Tutoring," n.d., Higher Education, para. 6).

- **Quotations under 40 words** in length should be incorporated into the text using quotation marks.
- **Quotations over 40 words** should be written in block format without quotation marks.

## References

- The word "References" (no quotations) is centered at the top of a new page and is not bolded, italicized, or underlined
- References are listed in alphabetical order by the author's name
- Every line after the first of each entry is indented
- This page is double-spaced just like the rest of the paper
- Capitalize only proper nouns and the first word of the title/subtitle of a chapter in a book
- Put the titles of books in italics
- Provide the issue number for periodicals that are paged by issue
- Do not put the name of a chapter in italics
- Do not put the edition number of a book in italics
- Provide page numbers for print articles

Below are examples of common APA reference page entries. Notice that the title of the document has only the first word capitalized and is italicized. Also note that there is no period after the web address.

- **Book:**

Author, A. A. (Publication Year). *Title of work: Capital letter also used for subtitle*. Location:

Publisher.

- **Book with two or more authors:**

Author, A.A., & Author, B.B. (Year). *Title of work: Capital letter also used for subtitle.* Location:

Publisher.

- **Journal Article:**

Author, A. A., Author, B. B., & Author, C. C. (Year). Title of article. *Title of Periodical, volume*

*number*(issue number), pages.

- **Generic web page:**

Author, A. A., & Author, B. B. (Date of publication). *Title of document*. Retrieved from

http://Web address

- o Note that date of publication is different from the date you retrieved the information. Look for a copyright or other line of date.  If none is available, put (n.d.) in the parentheses for no date.
- o If an author is not listed, begin with the title of the entry followed by the date in parentheses.

- **Blog:**

Author, A. A. (year, month day). Title of entry: Not every word capitalized. [Web log

comment]. Retrieved from http://www.etc.org

- o Note that if an author is not available, begin with the title of entry followed by the date in parentheses.  If no date is given (unlikely for a blog) you would use (n.d.). The phrase [Web log comment] just like that is the term used for a blog.  Other options in those brackets could include [Video file] or [Power point presentation] as applicable.

- **Collaborative Websites (Wikis):**

Title of document. (n.d.). Retrieved Month day, year from the Name of Wiki:

http://wiki.address.org//etc

- o Note that Wikis are not considered valid academic sources.

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*To browse frequently asked questions by topic and view specific information on writing style and usage not addressed in this guide, visit:* [*http://www.apastyle.org/learn/tutorials/basics-tutorial.aspx*](http://www.apastyle.org/learn/tutorials/basics-tutorial.aspx)