APA Documentation Style

The APA format for referencing source materials was established by the American Psychological Association. It is used by psychologists, sociologists, and other social scientists. This information sheet explains the basic principles in using APA. For more complex references, see the Writing Center or your instructor, or use the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association 7th ed. (2020).

Some exemplary content and explanation on this handout are drawn from the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association 7th ed. (2020).

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Manuscript Structure and Content

1. Leave uniform margins of at least one inch on the top, bottom, and sides of each page.

2. Number all pages, including the title page, consecutively with the numbers appearing at least one inch from the right-hand edge of the page in the space between the top edge of the paper and the first line of the text—header space. (The default setting in most word-processing software for the header is $\frac{1}{2}$ inch from the top of the page, which is acceptable.)
   a. The title page is numbered as page 1.
   b. The abstract page, if there is one, is numbered as page 2.
   c. Continue to use Arabic numerals, beginning with 3, for the rest of the paper.

3. Running Head: A running head is no longer required for student papers.

4. The title page, like all other pages, should have the page number (page number 1) within the top margin.
   a. Double space and center the full title for the paper both horizontally and vertically on the page (upper- and lower-case letters).
   b. Beneath the title, which should be in bold face, also double space, center horizontally, and list on separate lines the following information:
      i. author’s name;
      ii. college affiliation;
      iii. course title: course section number;
      iv. instructor’s name;
      v. date in parentheses in this order, day month year; for example, 9 June 2021. [This format is a standard one approved by faculty at LLCC.]

5. On the first page that begins the text for the paper, also include the complete title at the top of the page in bold.

6. The *Publication Manual of the APA* recommends selecting from the following font types “because they are legible and widely available and because they include special characters such as match symbols and Greek letters” (2020, p. 44): 11-point Calibri, 11-point Arial, 10-point Lucida Sans Unicode, 12-point Times New Roman, 11-point Georgia, or normal (10-point) Computer Modern. The same font should be used throughout the text.

7. A note about self-plagiarism as clarified in the *APA Manual* (2020): “Some institutions may consider it self-plagiarism if a student submits a paper written for one class to complete an assignment for another class without permission from the current instructor; using the same paper in multiple classes may violate the academic integrity policy, honor code, or ethics code of the university. However, incorporating previous classwork...and building on one’s own existing writing may be permissible; students who wish to do this should discuss their ideas with their instructor or advisor.
and follow their university’s honor code, ethics code, or academic policies when reusing their previous work” (p. 256).

See the last page of this document for visuals of the title page and the first page of text.

Also see the following link to Purdue University’s Online Writing Lab (OWL) for a full sample APA paper: https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/apa_sample_paper.html

Citing References in Text

Whenever you summarize, paraphrase, or quote from sources, you must credit them with a reference citation in the text that corresponds to a source list at the end of the paper.

Identify source materials that you are paraphrasing by citing the author’s last name and the publication date, either in your sentence or in within parentheses. You must also cite page numbers when available for quotations, but you do not have to use them for paraphrases.

Distinction between “primary” and “secondary” sources: As stated in the APA Manual (2020), “a primary source reports original content; a secondary source refers to content first reported in another source” (p. 258).

Distinction between “parenthetical” and “narrative” citations: The APA Manual (2020) states, “In parenthetical citations, the author’s name and publication date (or equivalent information…) appear in parentheses. In narrative citations, this information is incorporated into the text as part of the sentence” (p. 262).

Citations in parentheses

- Citations in parentheses should appear immediately after you mention the source or information. Here is an example: As ideal as help-seeking might sound, it “is a risky detection behavior according to the gain- and loss-framing taxonomy” (Lueck, 2017, p. 594).

Author’s name and publication date in sentence

- If you mention the author’s name and the publication date in your sentence, you will not need any additional citation. It is common and acceptable to state only the author’s last name even on first mention. Here is an example: Lueck (2017) asserts that professionals must consider how they frame the necessity of a diagnosis for individuals anxious about seeking psychological care.

Author’s last name in sentence

- If you mention the author’s last name in your sentence, place the date of publication in parentheses right after the name. The example used previously reflects this format as well; Lueck (2017) asserts that professionals must consider how they frame the necessity of a diagnosis for individuals anxious about seeking psychological care.

No author’s name or publication date in sentence

- If you do not mention the author’s name or the publication date in your sentence, put both inside parentheses with a comma between them. Here is an example: Professionals must consider how
they frame the necessity of a diagnosis for individuals anxious about seeking psychological care (Lueck, 2017).

Two works by an author in the same year
- If you use two works by an author in the same year, cite them within the parentheses with the date and then a or b. Also, put the a or b by the date in your bibliography entries, arranging alphabetically by the title (excluding the articles “A” or “The”) that follows the date. Here is an example; Lueck (2018a) evaluated the reasoned action framework to encourage individuals to seek help.

Two authors with the same last name
- If you cite two authors with the same last name, use their first initial (and middle one if given) within the parentheses. The following are examples:
  a. (J. A. Lueck, 2017)
  b. (B. Lueck, 2019)

A work with two authors
- If a work has two authors, combine the names with and in your sentence. Use an ampersand (&) instead of and in a parenthetical citation. Following are examples:
  a. Zochil and Thorsteinsson (2018) conducted a study among university students to assess how mental health problems and poor sleeping habits affects their motivation to seek professional help.
  b. One study assessed the relationship between university students’ struggle with mental health and poor sleeping habits and their motivation to seek professional help (Zochil & Thorsteinsson, 2018).

A work with three or more authors
- If a work has three or more authors, include only the last name of the first author followed by “et al.” in every citation, including the first one, unless doing so would create ambiguity. [See the next bullet point.] Following are examples of three or more authors:
  b. A study conducted among a population of undergraduate university students in northern India determined no significant difference in internet addiction between genders (Gupta et al., 2018).

Two or more works with three or more authors and the same publication year
- The APA Manual (2020) points out that “sometimes multiple works with three or more authors and the same publication year shorten to the same in-text citation form…which creates ambiguity” (p. 267). In such situations, to avoid this problem, “write out as many names as needed to distinguish the references, and abbreviate the rest of the names to ‘et al.’ in every citation” (2020, p. 267). The following examples are for illustration purposes only, not references to actual sources:
b. (Gupta, Jackson, Boehm, Langon, et al., 2020).

A work with no author

- If a work has no author, cite it by the first two or three words of the title, starting with the first important word. For a journal article or an essay, use a shortened version of its title—not the title of the journal or the book—and place these two or three words in quotation marks. If you are citing a book, supply a shortened, italicized version of the title. The first source reference is in parentheses at the end of the paraphrase. The second example of a title as the source reference shows up at the beginning of the sentence’s content.

  a. Research involving the transplant of fecal matter from rats with no spinal injuries or consequent gut complications and anxious behavior to rats with spinal injury and gut issues has shown such transplants successful in improving gut health and easing anxiety in the sick animal (“Therapeutic ‘Poop Pills,’” 2020).


A quotation from an indirect source

- If you use a quotation from an indirect source, precede the secondary source information in the parenthetical citation with the words “as cited in.” In the reference list, include an entry only for the secondary source. Here is an example: The International Association of Human-Animal Interaction Organization defines the practice of animal-assisted intervention (AAI) as a “goal-oriented intervention that intentionally includes or incorporates animals in health, education, or human services ... for the use of therapeutic gains in humans” (as cited in Adams, et al., 2017, p. 315).

Two or more works by the same author in one parenthetical citation

- If you cite two or more works by the same author in one parenthetical citation, give the author’s name, followed by the years in chronological order, separated by commas. Here is an example: (Williams, 2016, 2017)

Two or more works by different authors in one parenthetical citation

- If you cite two or more works by different authors in one parenthetical citation, give the works in alphabetical order and separate them with semicolons. Here is an example: (Adams, et al., 2017; Beetz, 2017)

Personal communication

- If you cite a personal communication such as a letter, a telephone conversation, an interview, an email message, or a social media post, you do not need to include a reference list entry because the information is not accessible to your readers. Cite the communication in the text by giving the initials as well as the last name of your source and as exact a date as possible. Here is an example: According to building manager R. Smith (personal communication, November 15, 2018), the renovations will be completed by May 2019.
Quotations of fewer than 40 words

- Quotations of fewer than 40 words should be incorporated within your paragraphs; they should not be indented separately. To document them, include the author’s name and the date of publication as you would for a paraphrase. You should also cite the page number(s), using the abbreviation p. or pp. inside the parentheses immediately after the quotation. Following are some examples:
  
a. Otu et al. (2020) report, “As the novel SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus pandemic sweeps rapidly across the globe, it is undoubtedly having immense psychological impacts on communities” (p. 1).

b. In order to adhere to state and local guidelines, “social media and other communication technologies can be our allies” (Otu et al., 2020, p. 4).

Quotations of over 40 words

- Quotations of over 40 words are block-indented about 0.5 inches (five spaces) from the left margin and typed without quotation marks. The entire quotation should be double spaced. Do not indent the first line more than the rest; however, the first line of any subsequent paragraphs within the quotation should be indented an additional ½ in. (five spaces). The page reference and the author and the date (if they are not mentioned in the text) appear in parentheses at the end of the quotation, outside the final period. Long quotations are also generally introduced by a colon. Following is an extended example, showing both the preface to the directly quoted passage and the passage itself of over 40 words:
  
a. Per the World Health Organization (WHO) guidance on recognizing and addressing mental and psychosocial distress during the pandemic, Otu et al. (2020) single out the following practices from the WHO recommendations:
    
i. Health workers should be trained to identify early signs of undue stress/burnout at work and seek help immediately. Other practical measures include incorporating rotations from higher-to lower stress tasks and team “huddles” to ease tensions within the workplace. Regular clinical screening for anxiety, depression and other mental health issues might be useful for both health workers and patients infected with COVID-19. Multidisciplinary mental health and crisis teams will need to be constituted and made accessible by health workers, patients and community members. Provision of psychological counselling hotlines and online channels may help to boost access to such teams by the above groups. (p. 4)

Direct quotation of material with no page numbers

- Direct quotation of material that has no page numbers means that another way of locating the quoted passage must be included in the parenthetical or narrative citation. The next bullet point provides some examples.

Citing specific parts of a source

- In citing specific parts of a source in the text of your document, provide an author-date citation for the work plus information about the specific part. However, in the reference list, provide an entry for
the entire work (not only the part that you used). Following are some examples of citing specific parts in text, either parts that are paginated or parts that are not:

a. (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2019, p. 10)

b. (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2017, “What Can You Do” section)

c. (Gecht-Silver & Duncombe, 2015, Osteoarthritis section)

d. (Shimamura, 2017, Chapter 3)

e. (Armstrong, 2015, pp. 3-17)

f. (Shadid, 2020, paras. 2-3)

g. (DeAngelis, 2018, Musical Forays section, para. 4)

h. (Kovacic & Horvat, 2019, Table 1)

i. (Thompson, 2020, Slide 7)

j. (Beck Institute for Cognitive Behavior Therapy, 2012, 1:30:40)

k. (King James Bible, 1769/2017, 1 Cor. 13:1)

l. (Aristotle, ca. 350 B.C.E./1994, Part IV)

m. (Shakespeare, 1623/1995, 1.3.36-37)

Quoting material that contains embedded citations

- When quoting material that contains embedded citations, include the citations within the quotation. Do not include these works in the reference list unless you cite them as primary sources elsewhere in your paper (Publication APA Manual, 2020, p. 276). Here is an example: Actors “are encouraged to become immersed in a character’s life (Stanislavski, 1936/1948, 1950), an activity that calls for absorption” (Panero et al., 2016, p. 234).

a. On the reference list, the complete citation for Panero should be listed; however, unless you also cited directly from Stanislavski elsewhere in the text, the only mention of that source would be the embedded reference in the quote from Panero’s work.

b. Footnotes or endnote number callouts in the quoted material can be omitted with no explanation (Publication APA Manual, 2020, p. 276).

c. If citations appear at the end of material you want to quote, it is common practice to end the quotation before the citations and to cite only the work you read (p. 276).
Reference List

Each source cited in parenthetical reference in the text of the paper must be given a complete bibliographic entry in a works cited list. APA heads this page “References,” placing this title in bold, centered, at the top of the page (minus quotation marks around it).

Alphabetize the entries by the authors’ last names or by the first important word of the title of works that have no author. If two or more works by an author were written in the same year, arrange them alphabetically by title and differentiate them by adding a letter after the year (for example, 2001a and 2001b).

Often, other people contribute greatly to the creation of a work, like editors. In such cases, their name may stand in place of an author’s. The role is placed in parentheses after the inverted surname and initials to make this distinction. Put a period at the end of the author element. Following are two examples. The first is a source with one editor while the second is a source with two editors.

- Schulz, O. P. (Ed.).
- Wong, C. T., & Music, K. (Eds.).

Double-space both within and between entries; indent the second and subsequent lines of each entry five spaces (a hanging indent), meaning that the first line of each reference begins at the left margin and subsequent lines are indented by 0.5 inches.

In reference lists, capitalize only the first word, the first word after a colon or a dash, and proper nouns.

Regarding the format of titles, the following information (Publication Manual, 2020, pp. 291-292) notes some differences:

Works that are part of a greater whole

- Examples include journal articles and edited book chapters. Do not italicize the title or use quotation marks, and capitalize it using sentence case. That is, only the first word of the title and first word of the subtitle should be capitalized along with any proper words within the title.

Works that stand alone

- Examples include books, reports, web pages and websites. Italicize the title, and capitalize it using sentence case.

Book and report references

- Enclose in parentheses after the title any additional information given in the publication for its identification and retrieval (e.g., edition, report number, volume number). Do not add a period between the title and the parenthetical information, and do not italicize the parenthetical information. If both edition and volume information are included, separate these elements with a comma, placing the edition number first. Remember to italicize the title. Following is an example:


Material referenced that is not scholarly (peer-reviewed academic)

- APA recommends a brief description in square brackets after the title and before the period to help your readers more easily access the source. Examples of this material include the following: gray
literature (e.g., press releases), audiovisual works (e.g., films, YouTube videos, photographs), software and mobile apps, and dissertations. When in doubt, include a description. Following is an example:

- Comprehensive meta-analysis (Version 3.3.070) [Computer software].

Works without a title

- Include a description of the work in square brackets instead, and specify the medium in the description (e.g., map) so that you are not creating two bracketed descriptions back to back. Following is an example:

  - [Map showing the population density of the United States as of the year 2010].

Individual entries that follow specific patterns

- Common patterns appear below. For less widely used source types, consult your instructor or the APA Publication Manual.

Books

Book by one or two authors with no DOI, meaning a digital object identifier number.

- The first item in the entry for a book consists of the author’s last name followed by a comma and just the initials of their first and middle names with a period after each initial. If the book has two authors, the author’s name listed first on the book’s title page should be listed first in the reference. Immediately following the period after the author’s initial should come a comma and then the ampersand sign before starting over again with the same order and punctuation marks for the second author’s name.

- The publication year inside parentheses comes after the author’s information followed by another period.

- The title of the book comes after the publication year with a period at the end. Remember to italicize the title.

- The final piece in the entry is the name of the publisher with a period after it. Following is an example:


  - UP is the abbreviation for University Press.

Book by One or Two Authors (with a DOI, meaning a digital object identifier number)

- The first item in the entry for a book consists of the author’s last name followed by a comma and just the initials of their first and middle names with a period after each initial. If the book has two authors, the author’s name listed first on the book’s title page should be listed first in the reference. Immediately following the period after the author’s initial should come a comma and then the ampersand sign before starting over again with the same order and punctuation marks for the second author’s name.
• The publication year inside parentheses comes after the author’s information followed by another period.

• The title of the book comes after the publication year with a period at the end. Remember to italicize the title.

• The next piece in the entry is the name of the publisher with a period after it.

• Finally, since the source has a DOI, its address appears last in the entry, but do not place a period at the end. Following is an example:


Book or Other Source by Three to Twenty Authors

• The first item in the entry for a book consists of the author’s last name followed by a comma and just the initials of their first and middle names with a period after each initial. However, if the book has three authors and no more than twenty, all their names should be listed using the format of last name and initials. Immediately following the period after the next-to-last author’s initial should come a comma and then the ampersand sign before citing the final author.

• Following is an example of a source that has five authors:


A Book or Other Source by More Than Twenty Authors

• When a book consists of more than twenty authors, list the first nineteen names in the proper order. Then add an ellipsis and list the final author’s last name followed by a comma and the initial of the author’s first name.

An Edited Book

• When a book has an editor in place of an author, list the editor’s last name and initial per the standard format. Following the initial of the first name or first and middle names, place the abbreviation of Ed. inside parentheses. Following is an example:


An Edition Other Than the First

• When a book source is an edition other than the first one, the number of the edition is place in parentheses following the book’s title. Following is an example:


An Essay, Article, or Chapter in an Edited Book

• Essays, articles, or chapters within an edited book are often written by different authors. Consequently, the author or authors of that section within the book should be cited first, with the
publication year in parentheses and a period, followed by the title of the section (not italicized) and then another period. Next comes the word “In” with the first initial and last name of the editor or editors if more than one. The abbreviation Ed. or Eds. in parentheses follows the names with a comma after the parenthetical piece. Then the title of the book is listed in italics with the page numbers of the specific section in parentheses. The initials pp. come in front of the page number range. A period follows the parentheses. The final piece of the citation consists of the publisher with a period and then the documentation number if applicable.

- Following is an example:


An Article in an Encyclopedia or Other Reference Book

- Specialized encyclopedias and other reference material often comprise selections either written by specific authors or organized by specific entry titles. Consequently, that author’s last name and initial or title of entry, if no author, comes first in the citation followed by the publication year in parentheses and a period. For entries credited to a particular author, the title of the entry comes next (no italics) followed by a period. Then comes the word “In” with the first initial(s) and last name of the editor, a comma, and the title of reference book in italics. After the title comes the page numbers in parentheses and a period. The publisher’s name is the final piece followed by a period.

- Following is an example:


Reports

Government documents

- The first item in the entry for a government document usually consists of the government sponsor followed by a period. The publication date follows in parentheses and then a period. Next, the title of the document is italicized with only the first word capitalized and ending with a period. The DOI or URL is the last item.

- However, a report or document number, if there is one, should appear within parentheses immediately after the title; for example, (DHHS Publication No. ADM 90-1679).

- Following is an example of a government citation with no report number:

Periodicals
Magazines and Journals

- Constructing the citation for a periodical source is very similar to citations for books that consist of chapters by different authors.
  - The first item in the entry for an article in a scholarly journal with a DOI is the author’s information and publication information following the same format as other source citations.
  - The article’s title is not italicized and has only the first word of the title and subtitle, if applicable, capitalized. The complete title is followed by a period.
  - The title of the journal in italics with all main words capitalized comes next, with a comma at the end.
  - The next piece consists of the volume number and issue number. The volume number is in italics with the issue number in parentheses, no italics immediately following the volume. In other words, no space should come between the two numbers, but a comma follows the parentheses.
  - Page numbers for the article follow with a period at the end. The number range should not be prefaced with the abbreviation of pp. The final item in the citation is the DOI.
  - Following is an example:

An Article in a Journal or Other Periodical from Most Academic Research Databases

- Use the same format as for other articles; however, if the academic research database provides no author and/or DOI number, omit that information from the citation.
- Following is an example that has neither an author nor a DOI number. Note that the article title will come first, followed by a period, and the date of the article will come next in parentheses, also followed by a period.

Electronic Media

Authors using and citing Internet sources should observe the following two guidelines:

- Direct readers as closely as possible to the information being cited—whenever possible, reference specific documents rather than home or menu pages.
- Provide addresses that work.

At a minimum, a reference of an Internet source should provide a document title or description, a date (either the date of publication or update or the date of retrieval only if the source material may change over
time), and an address (in Internet terms, a uniform resource locator, or URL). Whenever possible, identify the authors of a document as well.

The URL is the most critical element. If it doesn’t work, readers won’t be able to find the cited material, and the credibility of your paper or argument will suffer. Use care in transcribing the URL correctly. Also remember to test the URLs in your references regularly—when you first draft a paper, when you submit it for peer review, when you’re preparing the final version for publication, and when you’re reviewing the proofs.

In situations where you are not able to recover a source, APA rules clarify that such a source cannot be included in the reference list. When you are not able to find a source, then neither can your readers. Most of these sources, like personal emails and classroom lectures, should only be cited in your paper as personal communications. Conversely, if you have an online source that you can no longer access, APA rules advise searching for an archived version of it. If that fails, however, you should delete that source and substitute another one.

The following information from the *Publication Manual of the APA* (2020) clarifies the use of URLs:

- For works with DOIs from websites (not including databases), provide a URL in the reference (as long as the URL will work for readers). See page 299 of the *Publication Manual*.
- For works without DOIs from most academic research databases, do not include a URL or database information in the reference because these works are widely available...The reference should be the same as the reference for a print version of the work. See page 299 of the *Publication Manual*.

Additional information here offers explanation on the format of DOIs and URLs:

- Present both DOIs and URLs as hyperlinks (i.e., beginning with http:// or https://). See page 299 of the *Publication Manual*.
- It is acceptable to use either the default display settings for hyperlinks in your word-processing program...or plain text that is not underlined. See page 299 of the *Publication Manual*.

Gray Literature

APA refers to non-peer-reviewed work as “gray literature.” Examples include reports, brochures, fact sheets, press releases, and newsletter articles. List as many of the following elements as are available.

- Author’s name or name of group
- Date of publication (if no date, use “n.d.”)
- Title of document in italics
- Publisher’s name
- URL that will take readers directly to the source document
- Date of access only if the source itself has no date or if its content is likely to change
- Following are two examples. The first one has an author while the second has a group as the author.

**Government Agency or Other Organization Report**

- The same format applies as with other gray literature, but brackets around the type of source can be included immediately following the document’s title. The author for the document is usually the name of the government department and/or agency. See the following example:


**Blog Post**

- If possible, include writer’s real name and screen name. Put the real name first and the screen name following in brackets. If there is only a screen name available, do not use brackets. Following is an example:


**Podcast: audio, visual, and multimedia sources**

- Following are examples of a podcast and a Twitter post:


  - NPR [@NPR]. (2020, July 1). *When essential workers earn less than the jobless: ‘We put the country on our back’* @NPR [Thumbnail with link attached] [Tweet]. Twitter. https://twitter.com/NPR

**Personal Communications**

- Personal communications such as e-mail, personal interviews, and telephone conversations do not provide recoverable data; therefore, they are not included in the reference list. Cite personal communications in text only. Give the initials as well as the surname of the communicator, and provide as exact a date as possible.

- Following is an example:

  - (L. Simpson, personal communication, October 23, 2007)
Table 9.1 How to Create a Reference When Information Is Missing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Missing Element</th>
<th>Solution</th>
<th>Reference List Entry</th>
<th>In-Text Citation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nothing—all elements are present</td>
<td>Provide the author, date, title, and source.</td>
<td>Author. (Date). Title. Source.</td>
<td>(Author, year) Author (year)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Provide the title, date, and source.</td>
<td>Title. (Date). Source.</td>
<td>(Title, year) Title (year)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Provide the author, write the letters n.d. for no date, and then provide the title and source.</td>
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<td>Source</td>
<td>Cite as a personal communication or find another work to cite. See the Publication Manual for more information.</td>
<td>No reference list entry</td>
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