



# Assignment Writing and Presentation Guide

## *APA Style*

APA Sixth Edition Style to be used for all citations and references  
For assistance, refer to the [Avondale Reference Guide for APA](#)

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## ASSIGNMENT WRITING AND PRESENTATION

There are three major areas to be considered when preparing an assignment at tertiary level. These are content, format and referencing.

### 1. Content

When writing a formal assignment it should not be written in point form but should follow a series of logical steps. Here are some tips for writing a top scoring essay:

#### 1.1 Answer the essay topic

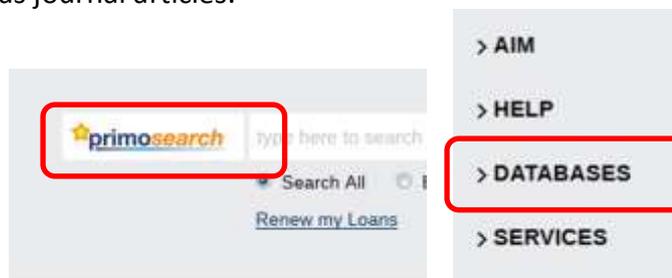
Make sure you understand the topic and identify the main points to be answered. In particular, note terms such as outline, describe, discuss, contrast, compare, analyse, what or why, and present the information accordingly.

#### 1.2 Be well informed

Read widely. Look at both sides of an issue and avoid bias. Ensure that material is relevant to the topic. Your lecturer or Unit Information/Unit Outline may provide guidance on the number of references you should use, but generally the quality of references is more important than the quantity. Aim to use a range of resource types, such as books and journal articles.

There are a number of options for locating information. This includes not only websites and PrimoSearch (the Library Catalogue), but also databases, which require you to use your student log-in and password if you are not already logged in to an Avondale computer. Remember that PrimoSearch also accesses material from most of the databases and will retrieve book titles as well as journal articles.

On the library homepage select either Primo Search or, for a more detailed search, select individual Databases to find information.



#### 1.3 Select only reputable websites

Ensure that material is from a reputable site. For example if you are researching diabetes, a Google search will bring up a wide range of sites. In the following two examples, both have official-sounding titles but are quite different, with the first one being a member-based organisation while the second is a professional association and is therefore more likely to have reliable information.

- *Diabetes NSW and ACT* (<http://diabetesnsw.com.au/>)  
We work to improve lives of people affected by diabetes. Read More!
- *Diabetes Australia* (<https://www.diabetesaustralia.com.au/>)  
National peak body for *diabetes* providing a collective voice for people living with *diabetes*, their families and carers.

The first site is not as authoritative as the second site, but both sound official.

#### **1.4 Organise ideas logically**

Collect data from various sources and present the information in logical steps so that it is easy for the reader to follow your ideas. Link ideas together and show clearly how the information relates to the overall topic. Do not just take slabs from various references, place them in sequence, and then add a conclusion. Make frequent use of *transitional phrases* to help keep the reader informed of the direction you are taking.

#### **1.5 Comply with the word limit**

Make sure you meet the word limit, but do not exceed it. Usually a latitude of 10% either side is allowed. The total number of words is made up of the actual essay itself and does not include the cover page, abstract, references used in the actual essay, reference list or appendix. Direct quotes are also excluded from this count.

#### **1.6 Structure the content**

The essay should have an introduction, a body and a conclusion:

##### ***The introduction***

The introduction forms the first paragraph and it should clarify the topic of the essay, define major terms and outline what *will be* presented in the essay. It should be written in such a way that it encourages the reader to read on.

##### ***The body***

This is where the topic statement or question is actually answered. The main points of the topic should be presented in logical order and each point elaborated on separately. Factors such as relevance, word constraints and the purpose of the essay need to be considered.

##### ***The conclusion***

The conclusion of the essay constitutes the final paragraph and should bring together, in summary, the major points presented in the body of the essay. The purpose is to sum up and reflect on the information found in relation to the topic. No new ideas should be presented in the conclusion. Avoid concluding with a quote.

#### **1.7 Formal Language**

Tertiary assignments should be presented as professional papers. Please take particular care with the use of formal language, punctuation, sentence structure, spelling and tense. As an Avondale student you may access a premium Grammarly account to assist with writing. For more information see <http://www.avondale.edu.au/library/information-skills/grammarly/>

Use formal language and terms in essays, avoiding jargon, clichés and slang. When identifying people in the text of the essay, do not refer to them by first name only. Surnames may be used on their own; first names may be used with surnames, if desired. As a rule, write essays in the *third person*, avoiding the use of first and second person pronouns such as 'I', 'we', 'us', 'our', etc., unless the topic asks you to share your own experience. Use *gender neutral language* as appropriate.

#### **1.8 Punctuation**

Ensure that all punctuation is correct. Special care needs to be taken with the use of *apostrophes*, especially in relation to their use to depict ownership. Remember to place the

apostrophe after the actual owner/s. For example, the pupil's classroom versus the pupils' classroom. Be aware also of the use of an apostrophe in the word it's. It's refers to "it is", whereas, its refers to "the possessive case singular of it", for example 'Hold the book by its spine.' Take care to also differentiate between your (belonging to you) and you're (you are). Do not use contractions such as can't, haven't etc.

## 1.9 Sentence Structure

As a general rule, material in tertiary essays should be presented in complete sentences. Ensure that correct *grammar* is used, and check that each sentence contains a *subject* and a *verb* and is constructed as a complete sentence.

## 1.10 Spelling

There should be no spelling errors. Use a dictionary or spell check to ensure that spelling is correct. Be consistent - do not mix American and Anglicised forms e.g. color and colour.

## 1.11 Use of tense

Avoid changes of tense within an assignment, and certainly within the one paragraph. Write in the tense appropriate to the topic e.g. an essay on an historical topic should be written in the past tense, but one describing the status quo would be in present tense.

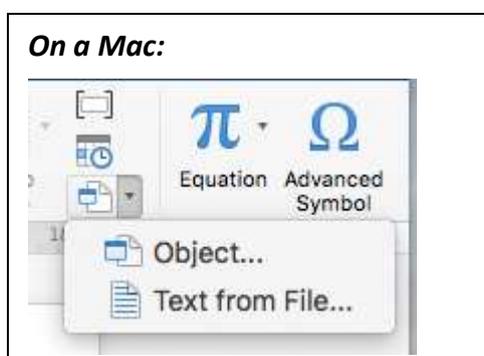
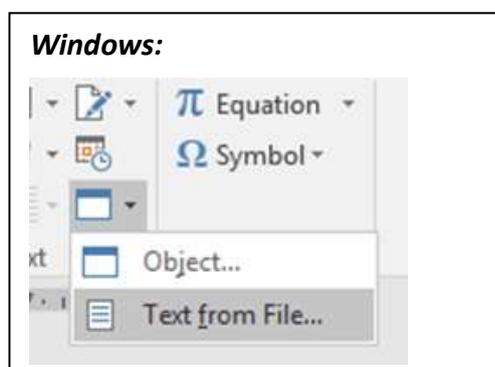
# 2. Format

An assignment should be submitted in a form that makes it a pleasure to read and grade. Untidy presentation and inconsistency in format is not acceptable and can result in a reduced grade. Follow these guidelines when preparing the final draft for submission.

## 2.1 Cover page

A cover page is to be placed at the front of the assignment and must include the required signed statement regarding plagiarism and ownership of work. Use the cover page template from the Library website under *Assignment Style Guides*. Attach a cover page even if you are submitting an assignment through Turnitin.

To insert a cover page into your assignment, place your cursor at the beginning of your assignment, then go to *Insert* and select: *Object – Text from File*.



You will have already completed and saved your title page somewhere on your computer – select it now from your files.

Make sure it does not have a page number on it. You will probably need to insert a page break to prevent the title page starting with Page 1. The first page of your assignment will start with Page 1.

Some lecturers ask for the assignment rubrics to be attached, or they may ask for an abstract.

See the sample essay under *How to Reference* on the library homepage for an example of a completed essay.

## **2.2 Line spacing, margins, numbering pages, and footers**

Typed assignments must be double-spaced, including references. Handwriting is not acceptable. On occasion you may be required to print an assignment rather than submit it electronically. In that case print on one side of the paper only. Preferred fonts, in black only, are Times New Roman 12 point, Arial 12 point, and Calibri 12 point, or a font and size specified by your lecturer. Different sizes, 8-14, may be used in figures.

A margin of approximately 2.54 centimetres all round, on the left and right edges of the page, as well as the top and bottom, is essential. Each page, except the cover page, should be numbered. Your lecturer may give further guidance e.g. where to place the numbering. Your student ID number should be included in a footer.

**Note:** See section 3.3 for instructions on the settings to use in Word.

## **2.3 Paragraphs**

Indent the first line of each paragraph (See settings in section 3.3). A paragraph is a group of sentences that develops one main point or idea. Generally, the idea is introduced in the key sentence and the successive sentences explain or illustrate the point that the paragraph is making.

Ensure that there is continuity between paragraphs with one paragraph flowing logically on from the previous one. Each paragraph should end in a way that leads into the next. The length of a paragraph may vary depending on assignment type, but a paragraph should generally have at least three sentences. As a guide a paragraph should be around 100 - 150 words in length, and while it can be longer, it shouldn't be excessively so.

## **2.4 Capitalisation of words**

Any proper nouns such as names of medications, organisations, etc. should begin with a capital letter when referred to in the assignment.

## **2.5 Abbreviations, numbers and numerals**

Abbreviations may be used but only after they have initially been identified in full when first used. For example: ...the blood pressure (BP). His BP was subsequently...

Spell out whole numbers less than 10 and any numbers used to begin a sentence; otherwise numerals are used. For example:

“There were five apples on the plate.”

“There were 50 apples on the bench.”

“Fifty five apples were provided.”

## 2.6 Using quotes

All quoted material must be identified as being quoted. Direct quotation occurs when you use “word for word material directly quoted from another author’s work” (APA, 2010, p. 173). There are two methods of doing this depending on the length of the quote.

Where a quote is *shorter than 40 words* in length it is to be included in the text of the essay and identified by *double* quotation marks at the beginning and end of the actual quoted material. The source of the quote must also be given within the sentence or at its conclusion. Please note the placement of the full stop at the end of the sentence. For example:

Researchers have observed that “falls are frequently reported adverse events in the adult inpatient setting” (Perry, Potter, & Elkin, 2012, p. 37).

Alternatively, the author’s name can be used as part of the actual sentence. For example:

Perry et al. (2012, p. 37) observe that “falls are frequently reported adverse events in the adult inpatient setting.”

(Note the use of et al as the authors have previously been cited above)

Or, if you paraphrase what the author has said it would appear as:

Falls are particularly dangerous in the elderly and Perry et al. (2012, p. 37) note that they can become deeply traumatic experiences.

Indent and double space quotes which are 40 words or longer in length. Quotation marks are *not* used. For example:

**Hint:** There is no point in quoting from standard textbooks!

The authors emphasise that:

Assessment of respiratory function is one of the most critical assessment skills because alterations can be life threatening. Routine assessment is essential; changes in respirations or breath sounds can occur quickly as a result of a variety of factors, including immobility, infection and fluid overload. (Perry, et al., 2012, p. 37)

*Note* the placement of the full stop in a block quotation. Compare this to the placement of the full stop in a short quotation at the end of the sentence (see above).

Quotes should not be used in excess. They should be reserved for such items as definitions, brief extracts that cannot be expressed adequately in another way, or for special emphasis. As a general guide, quotes should constitute less than 10% of an essay.

When quoting, copy the original wording *exactly* and use the same spelling and punctuation as is used in the original. If there is an error in the original this can be identified in the quote by placing [sic] after the error. When including a quote in the text of an essay, make sure that the sentence is grammatically correct. If it is necessary to include an extra word or phrase in a

quote to ensure correct sentence structure, place the word or phrase in square brackets.

If you omit part of the original work within a quote then indicate this with three spaced periods, (. . .) with another full stop added (. . .). if this is at the end of a sentence or between two sentences.

## 2.7 Paraphrasing

Be especially careful with paraphrasing, or putting ideas in your own words. Just changing one or two words in a sentence is *not* paraphrasing.

Reading this sentence, “The man puffed as he ran up the hill” and changing it to “The man panted as he ran up the steep hill” is not good enough. You would need to change it substantially to something like “The hill posed a tough challenge to the exhausted man.”

When you paraphrase you will retain the meaning but change the entire structure of the sentence or paragraph. You must still include reference details.

## 2.8 Plagiarism

Please familiarise yourself with the Avondale College policy on [plagiarism](#) or view the [online tutorial](#). (See [www.avondale.edu.au](http://www.avondale.edu.au) under *Information/policies/academic integrity* or view the online tutorial at *Library>Info Skills>Online Tutorials>Avoid Plagiarism*).

The APA guide for referencing (APA, 2010) clearly indicates that you cannot present another’s ideas as your own. It must be noted that “Whether paraphrasing, quoting an author directly, or describing an idea that influenced your work, you must credit the source” (APA, 2010, p. 172). This infers that the reader should *never* be confused or in doubt as to where the information or ideas have been sourced. It is best to reference more often than not.

Use *Turnitin* to check your work for inadvertent plagiarism. Allow plenty of time before your assignment is due to submit, check and then resubmit if necessary.

If you fail to adequately reference in an academic paper, an investigation will determine if it constitutes poor scholarship or plagiarism. Where instances of plagiarism are established, penalties as outlined in the [Academic Integrity Policy](#), sections 6.7 and 6.8 will be applied.

## 2.9 Appendices

Material which is deemed necessary to support information in the text of the assignment but which is not considered appropriate for inclusion in the actual essay may be included as an appendix. Generally such items as letters, tables, graphs, questionnaires etc. would be placed in the appendix. Appendices are placed at the back of the assignment, after the reference list. Each appendix must be referred to in the actual text of the essay.

## 2.10 Order of sections

The various sections of an assignment are to be bound together in the following order:

Title Page  
Rubric (if required)  
Abstract (if required)  
The actual essay  
References  
Tables  
Figures  
Appendix/Appendices (if applicable)

## 2.11 Photocopies

As a general rule, do not include photocopied material in an assignment. If it is necessary to include such material, ensure that it is referenced correctly. It is usually appropriate to include photocopied material as an appendix rather than part of the actual essay.

# 3. Referencing

Material quoted from another author's work needs to be acknowledged in the body of the assignment and in the reference list.

Referencing correctly is important for a number of reasons:

- It shows you have read widely and provides credibility to your paper
- It shows you understand the issues involved
- It provides the information necessary for someone to locate the sources
- It avoids plagiarism

### **Bibliography vs References**

Remember that a bibliography is a list of everything you have read for an assignment while a reference list is a list of only the items you have quoted from or referred to in your assignment.

## 3.1 Reference list format

1. Begin the first line at the left margin and indent subsequent lines by 1.27 cm. All references should be double spaced—between references as well as within references if it runs into two or more lines
2. The author's surname appears first; use only initials for other names e.g. Smith, C.
3. If there is no author, begin with the title.
4. Specify the complete title, including subtitles  
e.g. *Early history: A complete timeline*

APA does not allow many abbreviations in its reference lists, but the following are allowed:

Chapter	chap.	Part	Pt.
Edition	ed.	Number	No.
Revised edition	Rev. ed.	No date	n.d.
Editor	Ed.	Page	p.
Second edition etc.	2nd ed.	Pages	pp.
Translated by	Trans.	Volume	Vol. (e.g., Vols. 2-5)
Supplement	Suppl.	Volumes	vols. (e.g., 3 vols.)

EndNote and Zotero are programs to assist you with your referencing, or you may prefer to use [www.citefast.com](http://www.citefast.com). The college librarians can help you learn how to use these tools.

A complete [guide](#) to APA referencing can be found on the Library Website under *How to Reference* where you will find many useful examples.

### 3.2 Tables and figures

These must be referred to in the text of your essay. Do not refer to the ‘table below’ or the ‘figure above’ or specify a page number as these often change with the final printing.

#### **Tables**

Refer to tables by their number: e.g. As shown in Table 4, the results were conflicting...

*Table number:* e.g. Table 1, Table 2 is determined by the order in which that table is referred to in your essay. Do not bold or italicise the table number.

*Title:* Leave a line then write the title directly below the table number; capitalise each word; italicise without a full stop.

Table 1

*Height (in cm) of Three Children at Ages 0-3 Years*

Child's name	Age (years)			
	0	1	2	3
Charlotte	40	60	82	91
Jackson	61	82	96	106
Alannah	54	73	86	99

## Figures

Examples: Graphs, charts, maps, drawings or photographs. Refer to Figures by their number: e.g. As shown in Figure 4, the temperature rose quickly ...

*Figure number:* e.g. Figure 1, Figure 2 is determined by the order referred to in your essay. Place the figure number **BELOW** the figure.

*Title:* The figure should not have a title.

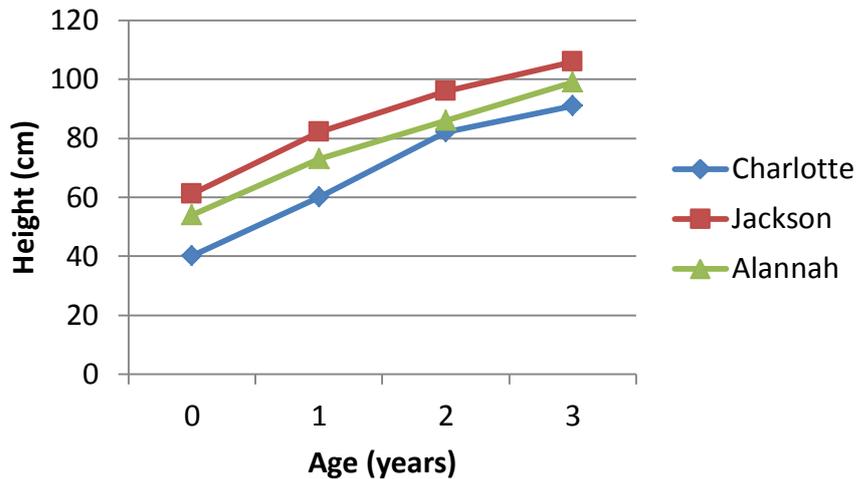
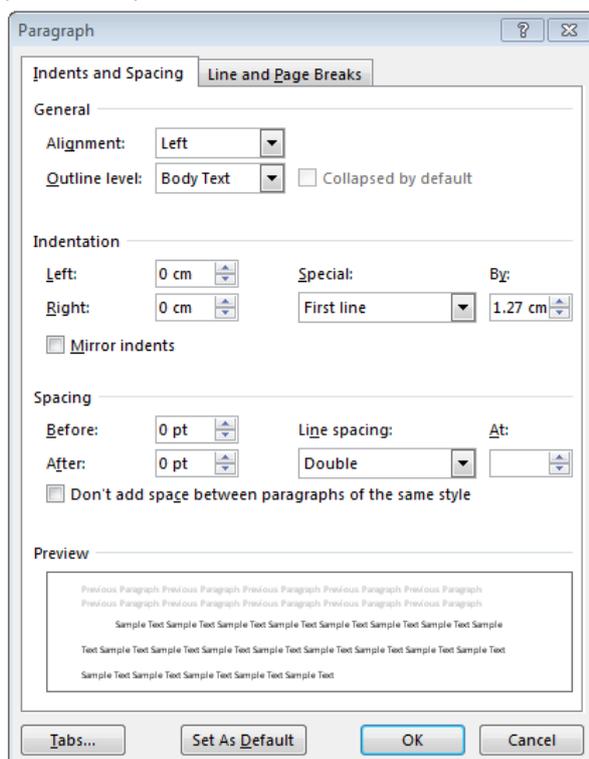


Figure 1. Height (in cm) of three children at ages 0-3 years

### 3.3 Paragraph Settings

Use these paragraph settings to format your **Assignment** correctly.

(Windows)

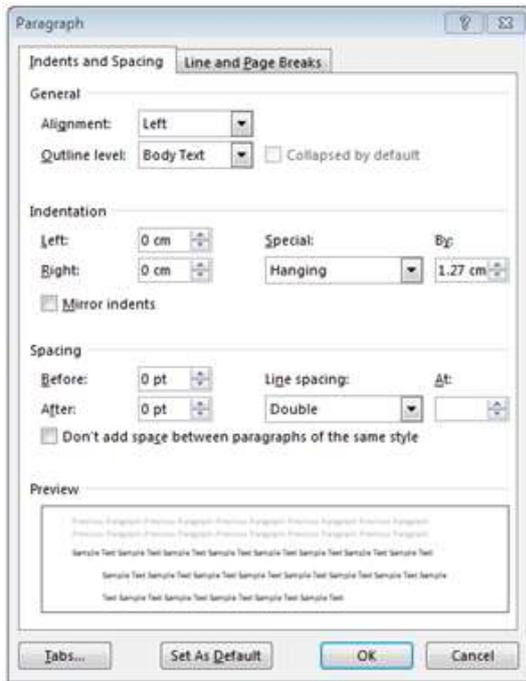


(Mac)

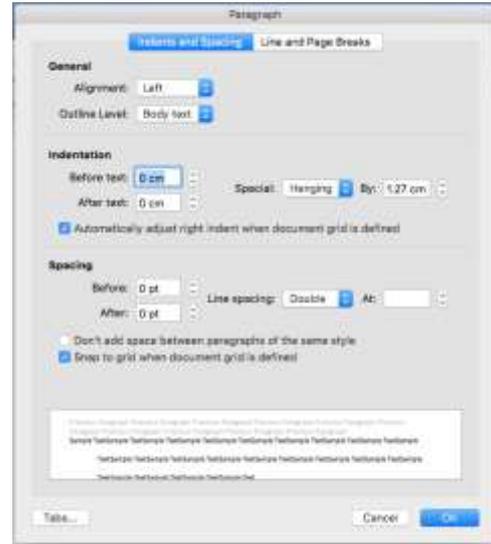


Use these paragraph settings to format your **References** correctly.

**Windows:**



**Mac:**



**3.4 Extra rules**

1. Do not right justify your essay or hyphenate words at the ends of lines e.g., hamm-ering
2. If you are quoting something within a quote, use single quotation marks e.g., “Some observers refer to a ‘risk epidemic’ in the medical literature.”
3. References must begin on a new page. Centre (do not bold or underline) the title at the top of page.
4. All sources cited must appear both in-text (in your assignment) and on the reference page.
5. Titles of books, journals, magazines and newspapers should be in italics.
6. If there is more than one item by the same author, order them by date, from oldest to most recent e.g. in this order 2003, 2010, 2014.
7. When an author appears as both a sole author, and as the first author of a group of authors, list the single author entry first in your reference list.
8. If the same author has written several items in the one year, identify each item with a letter in both reference list and citations. Example: (Smith, 2012a) (Smith, 2012b).

9. If there is no author, alphabetise by title. Shorten the title for in-text citations.
10. If the author is an organisation with a long name, quote the name and acronym in the first citation, and then just the acronym. Example: (Sydney Adventist Hospital [SAH], 2003) and then just (SAH, 2003).

## 4. Slide Presentation Assignments

For a guide to preparing high quality slide presentations, click [here](#). This guide is quick and easy to look through and gives many practical tips to ensure your slides look good and are easy to read.

### 4.1 Referencing in slide presentations

In addition to considering the above presentation tips, you must remember to reference in a slide presentation assignment just as you would in an essay. If the text of your slides uses any quotes or other authors' ideas, you should reference these in-text citations as you would in an essay.

The information below is taken from Avondale's [Copyright in PowerPoint presentations](#) guide (Down, 2016):

#### **Do I need to include a Reference List at the end of my presentation?**

Maybe. You can either put full bibliographic details on each slide, or you can make a brief reference to the item and then include the main details in a Reference List on the last slide of your presentation.

## Bibliography

American Psychological Association. (2010). *Concise rules of APA style* (6th ed.). Washington,

DC: Author.

Down, M. (2016) *Copyright in PowerPoint presentations* [PDF document]. Retrieved from

<https://www.avondale.edu.au/Departments/Library/Powerpoints-and-copyright.pdf>

Perrin, R. (2015). *Pocket guide to APA style* (5th ed.). Stamford, CI: Cengage Learning.

Perry, A. G., Potter, P. A., & Elkin, M. E. (2012). *Nursing interventions & clinical skills* (5th ed.).

St Louis, MI: Elsevier Mosby.

*PowerPoint Presentation: Some good advice!* (n.d.) [PDF document]. Retrieved from

<https://www.avondale.edu.au/Departments/Library/Making-good-powerpoints.pdf>