

## APA Style and Grammar

This is a handout regarding *basic* aspects of APA style. Students are encouraged to consult the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.) for further details. Writing accurately in APA style requires more information than is shared here.

### APA Paper Format

APA style means the paper will include a title page, appropriate format and citations, and a reference page. The remaining pages are the body of your paper. Sometimes an abstract and appendix is included.

The title page is counted as page 1 and the running head is on all pages, including the title page. Some instructors will want an abstract on the next page. Next comes the pages that are the body of your paper; the title should be listed again at the beginning of the first page of the body of the paper. The last page of the paper is the reference page. The word "References" should be centered at the top of this page (without the quotation marks). APA style does not use "Works Cited" or "Bibliography."

Pages are to have specific format. Margins should be 1 inch; you may have to change this in your document "page set up" as it is often automatically set at 1.25 inches. Font should be Times New Roman or similar. The font should be a "serif" font, meaning that there are tails on the letters (for example the bottom of "t" or the ends of the horizontal bar on "T"). Point size is 12 point. The entire paper should be double spaced. There are no additional spaces between paragraphs. You may have to turn off the function to "add space" before/after paragraphs.

### APA Citations

In a paper, any time you write about something you learned while researching, you have to cite where you learned that information. Information that the average person-on-the-street knows does not have to be cited. There are two ways to cite.

One way to cite is to write the information exactly the way your source did. This is called a direct quote. Anytime you have three or more words in order the same way your source does you **MUST** cite this. If you do not cite this, then you are committing plagiarism. With direct quotes you must cite the name of the author, the year of publication, and the page where you found the quotation. Commas and periods go in specific places. Examples follow.

Some researchers argue that "Violent media is causally related to short-term and long-term expressions of aggression," (Davis and Palladino, 2010, p. 206).

According to Davis and Palladino (2010), "Violent media is causally related to short-term and long-term expressions of aggression," (p. 206).

Davis and Palladino state "Violent media is causally related to short-term and long-term expressions of aggression," (2010, p. 206).

Another way to cite is to paraphrase the information. Paraphrasing is restating and rewording information from a source. Citations for paraphrasing include the author and year of publication. Commas and periods go in specific places. Examples follow.

Researchers Davis and Palladino (2010) report that exposure to violent media causes aggressive behaviors.

Some researchers implicate violent media as a causal factor in certain aggressive behaviors (Davis and Palladino, 2010).

## APA References

The reference page lists the sources of the information (i.e., the cites). The list is in alphabetical order. Entries are to follow a specific format, which includes order of information, punctuation, upper and lower case letters, etc. Generally speaking, the entry includes some combination of the author, year of publication, title of piece, publisher, place of publication, volume, edition, digital object identifiers (dois), and page or paragraph numbers, depending on the type of source. Below are some common examples. It is important that you consult the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.) for further details as there are various special circumstances in reference list citations. (Please note these should have a hanging indent, but it is difficult to transfer the format here.)

Book, print or on-line

Christiansen, N. C., & Redd, D. W. (1995). *Introduction to psychiatry* (2nd ed.). Washington, D.C.: American Psychiatric Association.

For on-line books include the doi at the end of the entry.

Journal, print or on-line

Cazare, C. (2001). A new look at psychoneuroimmunology. *Monitor on Psychology*, 32(10), 34-36.

For on-line journal articles, include the doi at the end of the entry.

Other sources on-line

Griffin, R. (2009, May). Science and ethics: Psychologists respond to misusing research. *Monitor on Psychology*, 37(6). Retrieved from <http://www.apa.org/monitor/>

## Grammar

I often see multiple students making the same grammar errors. Listed below are the most commonly made errors.

1. Do not use contractions in formal writing.

Example:      use  
                  *do not*  
                  instead of  
                  *don't*

2. Put punctuation inside of quotation marks, unless it is misleading to the reader.

Example:      use  
                  He said "I think *so*."  
                  instead of  
                  He said "I think *so*".

3. Be sure pronouns (e.g., he, we, them) agree in number with antecedents (e.g., child, people, children). Pronouns and antecedents should all be singular or all be plural.

Example:        use  
                       The *students* need to hurry and get *their* schedules finalized.  
                       instead of  
                       The *student* needs to hurry and get *their* schedules finalized.  
                       The *students* need to hurry and get *his* schedule finalized.

4. Do not end sentences with prepositions. Prepositions are words that fit in the following blank: "The squirrel ran \_\_\_\_\_ the tree." Examples of prepositions are up, around, at, toward, for, with, behind, etc.

Example:        use  
                       He had to clean *up* the mess.  
                       He had to clean.  
                       instead of  
                       He had to clean *up*.

5. Each paragraph should have no fewer than 3 sentences. Two sentences is not a paragraph. Paragraph length should also be limited to less than a page.

6. When you are referring to humans in writing (e.g., people, children, researchers) reference them with *who* not *that*.

Example:        use  
                       Women *who* are married often schedule appointments for the family.  
                       instead of  
                       Women *that* are married often schedule appointments for the family.

7. Avoid using the word "thing" in formal writing; instead be specific.

Example        use  
                       The researchers examined several variables.  
                       instead of  
                       The researcher examined several *things*.

8. Avoid overuse of the word "that."

Example        use  
                       Edwards (2009) thinks students should use mnemonics.  
                       instead of  
                       Edwards (2009) thinks that students should use mnemonics.

9. Avoid using the word "you" in formal writing.

Example        use  
                       People need to think about their lifestyle, especially diet and exercise.  
                       instead of  
                       *You* need to think about *your* diet and exercise.

10. Use *since* to refer to time passed and *because* to refer to reasons.

Example      use  
He has had two sodas *since* 9:00.  
He had a soda *because* he wanted some caffeine.  
instead of  
He had a soda *since* he wanted some caffeine.

11. If a number is 10 or above, use numerals. If a number is below 10, use words. There are exceptions for measurements, mathematical functions, dates, times, ages and money.

Example      use  
She had *three* sandwiches.  
It took 83 tries.  
He is 7-years-old.  
instead of  
She had 3 sandwiches.  
It took *eighty-three* tries.  
He is *seven* years old.

12. In general, avoid abbreviations.

Example      use  
*versus*  
instead of  
*vs.*

## References

American Psychological Association (2010). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). Washington DC: American Psychological Association.

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