

How to Format Your Papers in APA

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University (for example, George Mason University)

Course Name and Number (for example, SOCW 678) or Optional Author Note

Instructor's Name (for example, Dr. Emily Ihara)

Assignment Due Date (for example, October 1, 2021)

How to Format Your Papers in APA

Why should you learn to format in APA? According to Mages and Garson (2010), the American Psychological Association (APA) citation format is a professional method of reporting; it prevents accidental plagiarism, by properly crediting sources; this is a critical component of college writing. APA is the standard format used in the social sciences. If you are from a discipline that uses MLA (or another format), after mastering one style of formatting (such as APA), you can follow general rules and insert another style (such as MLA) as needed.

Running heads are no longer required for students (APA, 2020), yet an example is provided at the top of this page, along with the cover page example, in case you prepare manuscripts for publication. Running heads contain up to the first fifty characters of the paper's title in all capital letters. The words "Running head" are no longer used. Similarly, while abstracts are used for publication, they are generally not required for students, unless otherwise noted. Meanwhile, notice the full association name in the first paragraph, as this is the first time it is referenced, yet it is noted as "APA" then after. Also recall that citations are provided the first and final times information from a given source is used in each paragraph (APA, 2020), such as in first and sixth sentences of this paragraph. This diligence in citation is needed within each paragraph that draws from information found in an outside source for student papers as well.

Heading Level One (For Example, 'Method')

First level headings are bold, centered, and are in upper and lowercase (APA, 2020). Authors are cited by their last names and the date of their publication. If there are two authors, both must be cited, such as "Hand and Park (2014)" or "(Hand & Park, 2014)" when in parentheses. If no publication date is listed, "n.d." is used to indicate "no date," which could look like "Hand and Park (n.d.)." For three or more authors, all surnames will no longer be cited in

your writing, as “Hand, Park and Bennett (2014)” have been prior to the 7th edition. Instead, always use the first author’s name followed by “et al.” or for example, “Hand et al. (2014)” for in-text citations (APA, 2020). Lectures can be cited as personal communication, such as “(M. Hand, Class Lecture, February 16, 2014)” or “(M. Hand, personal communication, February 16, 2014)” and no references section citation is required for this, per the 6th edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (2010). Yet for lecture slides, in-text and references section citations are needed (*Publication Manual*, 2010).

Heading Level Two (For Example, ‘Participants’)

To quote a source, begin by noting who is responsible for the quote and the year of publication, then end with its page or paragraph number (APA, 2020), as shown in the next sentence. For example, Hand (2014) has shared “APA is a standard format used in the social sciences” (p. 2). When there are no numbered pages, cite the paragraph number; in this case, as “(para. 1)” (*Publication Manual*, 2010). If you use a quote from a secondary source, try to find the original work. Otherwise, cite the author who provided the quote, such as: according to Doe (2015), Hand maintains “the words ‘Running head’ are no longer used” (p. 2). You may also paraphrase, such as: Hand noted that running heads are shorter (as cited by Doe, 2015).

If your quote is 40 words or longer, you will need to format it into a block quote (APA, 2020). For example, Hand (2014) suggests that learning this is important, as she notes:

APA is a standard format used in the Social Sciences. If you are from a discipline that uses MLA (or another format), after learning one style of formatting well (such as APA), you can follow the general rules and insert another style (such as MLA). (p. 2)

Block quotes are indented, with the page number cited after the last period rather than before it. Also remember second level headings are flush left, emboldened, and in upper and lower case

(APA, 2020). Further, note that I stated “Hand (2014) suggests...” in lieu of “the document suggests.” Avoid writing that an article argues something, as the author(s) should be credited.

Heading Level Three (For Example, ‘Child Participants’)

Level three headings are italicized, emboldened, and in upper and lowercase, in a line above the first paragraph in the subsection they describe (APA, 2020). Also recall that APA formatting calls for unbiased language, one-inch margins and indented paragraphs that are double spaced, in a consistent font, such as a serif font, or 12-point Times New Roman, 11-point Georgia, or 10-point Computer Modern font; or a sans serif font, such as an 11-point Calibri or Arial, or a 10-point Lucida Sans Unicode font (APA, 2020).

Heading Level Four (For Example, ‘Preschool Children’). If these headings are used, they are indented, emboldened in upper and lowercase, and end in a period (APA, 2020).

Heading Level Five (For Example, ‘Preschool Girls’). If you use these headings, please note that they are indented, *italicized*, emboldened and in upper and lowercase, ending in a period (APA, 2020). Always include a references section in APA as well, beginning on a new page. See page five for an example of this, followed by several citation examples.

While the word “you” is used for formatting instruction in this document, please refrain from using the word “you” in most college papers. Note however that “they” is used when a gender is not known, rather than “he or she,” and person-first language is prioritized, such as “a woman suffering from alcoholism” rather than “alcoholic” (APA, 2020). Please also see en.writecheck.com/ways-to-avoid-plagiarism/ after reviewing the references section for this paper, as avoiding plagiarism is critical. Thus, **never copy and paste unless you are providing a quote** (using quotation marks), **summarize information in your own words and always cite your sources** the first and last times you share information from them in each paragraph.

References

American Psychological Association. (2020). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.). <https://doi.org/10.1037/0000165-000>

Mages, W. K. & Garson, D. S. (2010). Get the cite right: Design and evaluation of a high-quality online citation tutorial. *Library & Information Science Research* 32(2),138-146.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lisr.2009.10.004>

Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (6th ed.). (2010). American Psychological Association.

Further References Section Examples

Articles

Source or Surname, First initial. Second initial if used. (Year). The first word in the title is capitalized yet the rest of it is in lowercase, aside from proper nouns: Or the first word after a colon, such as ‘or’ in this case. *Journal*, Vol. Number(Issue), pages. [Source link](#).

Article Citation Sample: A Specific Example of a Properly Cited Article

Kaiser, M., Hand, M. & Pence, E. (2020). Individual and community engagement in response to environmental challenges experienced in four urban neighborhoods. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 17(6), 1-21.

<https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17061831>

Articles with Eight or More Authors

Hand, M., Park, J., Bennett, R., Wang, X., Kaloga, M., Rusch, D., Lee, G., Liu, C., Beauchman, J., Barnhart, S., Gibson, A., Linley, J., Bailey, B., Lee, M., Dabelko, H., Mengo, C., Kaiser, K., Anderson, K., Nineteenth, G., ... Sweeney, S. (Year). The “...” is between the 19th and final author for more than 20 authors. *Journal*, Vol. No.(Issue), pages. [Link](#).

Blogs: Note That Headings Begin on New Pages if No Text is Beneath Them

Last name, First initial. (Year, Month Date). Title [Blog post]. [Link to the source](#).

Blog Citation Sample: A Specific Example of a Properly Cited Blog

Hoffman, J. (2020). 11 Tips for Creating a Schedule that Works for You. [Blog post].

<https://www.toddleronthetenuretrack.com/blog/2018/12/4/scheduling-basics>

Books

Author's Surname, First initial. Second initial. (Year). *Title of the book (ed.)*. noting the location is no longer needed since the 7th edition changes. Publisher. Doi or URL if available

Book Citation Sample

Hooyman, N. R., & Kiyak, H. A. (2018) *Social gerontology: A multidisciplinary perspective (10th ed.)*. Allyn & Bacon.

Chapter in a Book

Author's Last Name, First initial. Second. (Year). Chapter title. In First initial. Second. Editor & First initial. Second. Editor (Eds.), *Title of book* (pages of chapter). Publisher.

Book Chapter Citation Sample

Kaiser, M. L., Pence, E. K., Burleson, K., Hand, M. D., Gherman, W., Stanich, N., Sydnor, M. & Weeber, J. (2021). Food justice. In K. Benner, D. Loeffler, and N. D. Pope (Eds.). *Social, Economic and Environmental Justice: Building Social Work Practice Skills*. Springer.

Electronic Books

Author's Last Name, First initial. Second initial. (Year). *Title*. Publisher. [Link to the source](#).

Electronic Book Citation Sample

Mahajan, S. (2010). *Street-fighting mathematics; The art of educated guessing and opportunistic problem solving*. MIT Press. <https://mitpress.mit.edu/books/street-fighting-mathematics>

Chapter in an Electronic Book

Last Name, First initial. (Year). Chapter title. In First initial. Editor & First initial. Second. Editor (Eds.), *Title* (pages of chapter). Publisher. [Link to the source](#).

Citation Sample of an E-Book Chapter

Maruna, S. (2010). Mixed methods research: Why not go both ways? In A. Piquero, & D. Weisburd (Eds.), *Handbook of Quantitative Criminology* (pp. 123-140). Springer. https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007%2F978-0-387-77650-7_7

Dissertations

Author's Last Name, First initial. Second initial. (Year). *Title of the work* (Publication No. xxxx if available) [Doctoral dissertation, Institution]. Name of the Data Base. [Link](#)

Dissertation Citation Sample

Mauck, S. E. (2016). *Perceiving sexual consent: The effects of gender and alcohol use on perceptions of sexual consent* [Doctoral dissertation, University of Tennessee]. Tennessee Research and Creative Exchange. https://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_graddiss/3945

Images

Author, J. (Year). Title. [Type of work, such as 'Photograph']. Source. [Link to the source](#).

Image Citation Sample

McGuire, R. (2020). Trash bag street. [Photograph]. *Gratisography*. <https://gratisography.com/photo/trash-bag-street/>

Master's Theses

Author's Last Name, First initial. Second initial. (Year). *Title of the work* (Publication No. 1234567) [Master's thesis, Institution]. Name of the Data Base. [Link to the source](#)

Master's Thesis Citation Sample: One Citation Should Not Be Divided Between Two Pages

Rubenstein, B. (2016). *The effects of racial bias on perceptions of intimate partner violence scenarios* [Master's thesis, University of South Florida]. Scholar Commons.

<https://scholarcommons.usf.edu/etd/6372/>

Motion Pictures

Director's Surname, First initial. Second. (Directors). (Year). *Title* [Motion picture]. Studio Name.

Motion Picture Citation Sample

Curtis, R. (2013). *About time* [Motion picture]. Universal Pictures.

Motion Pictures with Limited Availability

Director's Surname, First initial. Second. (Director). (Year). *Title* [Motion picture]. (Production company or where you retrieved the film, such as 'Available from the Ohio State University College of Social Work, 1947 College Road North, Columbus, Ohio, 43210).

Online Sources that are Not classified as Periodicals (Thus, Not News or Magazines)

Author's Last Name, First initial. Second initial. (Year). *Title of the work*. [Link to the source](#).

Online Source or Organizational Report Citation Sample

Berliner, L., Fine, D. & Moore, D. (2001). *Sexual assault experiences and perceptions of community response to sexual assault: A survey of Washington State women*.

<https://depts.washington.edu/hcsats/PDF/research/sexualassaultexpr2001-11.pdf>

Online Sources with No Author Listed

Website name. (Year, Month). *Title of the work*. [Link to the source](#).

Online Source with No Individual(s) Cited as the Author: Citation Sample

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2019). *Elder abuse: Definitions*.

<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/elderabuse/definitions.html>

Online Periodicals

Author's Last Name, First initial. Second initial. (Year, Month Day). Title beginning in a capital letter followed by lower case letters with the exception of proper nouns: Or the first letter of the first word after a colon. *Magazine or Newspaper Title*, pages. [Link to the source](#).

Online Periodical Citation Sample

Ellis, B. & Hicken, M. (2017, February 22). Sick, dying and raped in America's nursing homes. *CNN Health*. <https://www.cnn.com/interactive/2017/02/health/nursing-home-sex-abuse-investigation/>

Podcasts

Producer's Last Name, First initial. Second initial. (Producer). (Year, Month Day or 'n.d.' for 'no date'). *Title of the podcast* [Audio podcast]. Website. [Link to the source](#).

Podcast Citation Sample

Costello, M. (Producer). (n.d.) *Batch #1, Jar # 4: Obsessions, love Affairs and other seedy stories* [Audio podcast]. The Pickle Shelf Radio Hour. <https://www.pickleshelfradio.com/>

PowerPoint Slides

Author's Last Name, I. I. (Year). *Title* [PowerPoint slides]. [Link to the source](#).

PowerPoint Slide Citation Sample

Mages, W. K. (2009). *APA exposed: Everything you always wanted to know about APA format but were afraid to ask* [PowerPoint slides]. Retrieved August 8, 2015 from https://www.gse.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/apa_tutorial_slide_handout.pdf

Reports or Manuals Obtained Online

Author's Last Name, First initial. Second initial. (Year). *Title of report*. [Link to the source](#).

Online Research-Informed Manual Citation Sample

Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape (PCAR) (2004). *Elder sexual assault technical assistance manual*. <https://pcar.org/resource/elder-sexual-assault-technical-assistance-manual>

Laws and Statutes

Name of the Federal Statute, Title number Source § Section number(s) (Year).

Laws and Statutes Citation Sample: For the References Section

Elder Justice Act of 2009, 18 U.S.C. §§ 2241-2242 (2009).

Laws and Statutes Citation Sample: For Within Text

Elder Justice Act of 2009 (2009) or (Elder Justice Act of 2009)

Enacted Congressional Bills

Title, Pub. L. No. Public law number, Congress number Stat. (Year).

Enacted Bills Citation Samples

Older Americans Act Amendments of 2006, Pub. L. No. 109-365, 120 Stat. 252 (2006).

Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013, 42 U.S.C. § 13925 (2013).

Television Broadcast or Series Episode

Writer's Surname, First Initial. Second. (Writer), & Director's Surname, First initial. Second.

(Director). (Year, Original air date). Episode title (Season number, Episode number). [TV

series episode]. In First initial. Producer's Surname (Producer), *Television Series Name*.

Production Company; Or Companies after a Semicolon.

Single Episode Citation Sample

Favreau, J. (Writer), & Filoni, D. (Director). (2019, November 12). Chapter 1 (Season 1, Episode

1) [TV series episode]. In J. Favreau, D. Filoni, K. Kennedy, & C. Wilson (Executive

Producers), *The Mandalorian*. Lucasfilm; Golem Creations.

Videos (Obtained Online; For Movies, see ‘Motion Pictures’)

Author’s Surname, First initial. Second. [Screen name if applicable]. (Year, Month Day). Title of the video [Video]. Website name. [Link to the source.](#)

Online Video Citation Sample

Green, H. [How to adult]. (2017, May 3). A self-care action plan [Video]. Youtube.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w0iVTQS8ftg>

Tables and Figures in APA

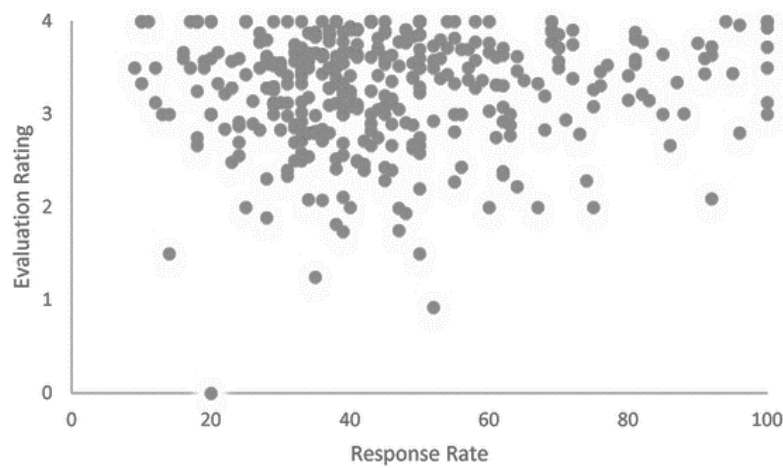
Table 1: Table Example

Table Example

Heading A	Heading B
Text	Text
Text	Text
Text	Text

Figure 1: Scatter Plot Example

Scatterplot Example



Note. Note example.