APA Style Reference Guide

APA, which stands for American Psychological Association, is a formatting style primarily used in the social sciences in fields like nursing, education, and leadership. This resource offers information and examples for the general format of APA, abstracts, headings, in-text parenthetical citations, and reference page. The Writing Center hosts free APA Style Workshops for Lewis University students every semester — for additional information please contact the Writing Center at 815-836-5427.

Please note that this guide is in accordance with the 6th edition of APA.

General Document Guidelines

- The page margins should be one inch on all sides.
- Use 12 point Times New Roman or another readable font.
- All pages should be double spaced, including block quotes and reference pages.
- All pages should contain a header that includes a shortened version of the paper title in all caps on the upper left corner of the page and a page number in the upper right hand corner.
- The header for the title page should include the words “Running head:” prior to the all caps shortened version of the title.
- The title page should have the title, author name, and affiliation centered towards the top third of the page.

The Four Major Sections

APA papers have four basic sections:

- The title page contains your identifying information centered and placed in the top 1/3 of the page. This information includes your title, name, and affiliation.
- The abstract is a 150-250 word summary of your work, with keywords for searching. Some instructors may not require an abstract.
- The main body of the paper is where you develop your ideas using citations and data. It can be divided up by headings. The information presented should be clear, concise, and should be backed by evidence.
- The references page provides a comprehensive list of sources used. This should start on its own page and should be labeled “Reference” or “References”, depending on the number of sources being used.

Please note that some professors may not request all of these sections.
Title Page

The title page has a different header than the rest of the paper. Here are the steps to create the headers:

1. Double click the top of the page to view your header options. Go to the top menu bar and click the box that says “Different First Page.”

2. Click the “Header” icon and select “Blank (Three Columns).” Your first column should have your title in all capital letters. For the title page, make sure the words “Running head:” appear prior to your title. Make sure to use an the same font throughout the paper.

3. Delete the second column by hitting the “Backspace” key three times. On the third column, click the “Page Number” icon and select “Current Position” from the menu. Then select the “Plain Number” option.

4. Click the “Close Header and Footer” option to go back to your title page. About 1/3 of the page down, centered, include the following information on their own line: full paper title, name, and affiliation. Your affiliation will most often be the name of the university or course name. Make sure to use an APA recommended font.

5. To insert a new page, go to the “Insert” tab on your Word menu and select the “Page Break” option. This will create the page where you can begin to type your abstract (if required). You can also use this tool to insert a new page for your main body and references sections.

6. Repeat steps 2 and 3 on the second page of your document, without including “Running head:” in the first column.

Abstract

An abstract is a one paragraph summary of your paper that provides your reader with important elements of your paper. It typically includes the piece’s purpose, main points, methods of research, and findings. It should not explain results or analyze information. Not all papers require an abstract — check with your professor to see if one is needed. Consider writing the abstract after writing the paper as this will make it easier to summarize what you wrote, rather than what you think you will write about.

The abstract is on page two of your document and should begin with the word “Abstract” centered on the first line of the page. The paragraph summary should:

- Be between 150-250 words in length and should be double-spaced.
- Begin flushed to the left margin with no indentations.
- Include information written in active voice, using clear, concise, and plain language.

You may also be required to include a “keywords” section directly underneath the abstract. This can be done by writing “Keywords:” in italics and indented on a new line after the abstract. After the colon, type 3-5 key terms that are relevant in your paper. This gives your reader an idea of main concepts your paper will address.
Level Headings

Headings help organize your writing and give it a hierarchical organization. Works such as literature reviews and research proposals make extensive use of them as they provide quick access to salient points, like the Discussion or Methods sections. Shorter papers may not use all the heading levels (or any at all). Note that the higher the level of a heading, the more specific the information typically is. Unless your instructor or rubric specify otherwise, the title of your paper should appear centered and non-bolded at the top of the main body’s first page. This serves as the introduction section of a paper.

All subsequent level headings follow the format below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level #</th>
<th>How it’s formatted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>Centered, Bold, Uppercase and Lowercase</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Your text should begin on the line below your header. Remember to indent each</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><strong>Left-aligned, Bold, Uppercase and Lowercase</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Your text should begin on the next line on your document. Make sure you indent each</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td><strong>Indented, bold, lowercase with a period.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Your text should begin right after your heading.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td><strong>Indented, bold, italicized, lowercase with a period.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Your text should begin right after your heading.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td><strong>Indented, italicized, lowercase with a period.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Your text should begin right after your heading.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Types of APA Papers

While APA can be used for any paper written in your courses, there are two common types of APA papers: literature reviews and experimental reports.

A literature review is a critical summary the most recent, relevant, and renowned research in a given field. The purpose of the literature review is to demonstrate to the reader that the writer is knowledgeable about previously written research relating to the writer’s chosen topic.

An experimental report is a report of research conducted by the author. It includes information on research design, methodology, sampling, results, validity and reliability, and discussion on findings. A review of literature can also be a part of an experimental report.

Click here for additional information regarding literature reviews and lab reports.

Examples of in-text heading format:

- Literature Review (Level 1)
- Method (Level 1)
- Procedures (Level 2)
- Sample (Level 2)
- Control Group. (Level 3)
- Experimental Group. (Level 3)
- Variables. (Level 4)
- Prior variable in studies. (Level 5)
- Results (Level 1)
- Discussion (Level 1)
- Findings (Level 2)
- Reliability. (Level 3)
- Future Research (Level 2)
APA Stylistics: Basics

When writing in APA, it is important to keep in mind the stylistics of your writing, from the tone to the point of view to the voice you use. Generally, you want to make sure the information you are providing is clear, concise, and in plain language, meaning that you do not use poetic language, abstractions, or colloquial phrases. However, there are other things to keep in mind:

Point of View and Voice
It is recommended to use the first person point of view when discussing your research and when referring to yourself and any co-authors within your piece. Use first person when discussing research steps; this can be done by using “I” or by using terms such as “the author.” The association recommends avoiding the editorial “we” — if “we” is used in your piece, make sure that it is referring to you and your co-authors.

When writing in APA Style, it is recommended to use active voice over passive voice. Active voice occurs when the subject completes the action whereas passive voice has the subject of the sentence acted upon. Active voice is more direct and to the point, helping reduce wordiness.

Clarity and Conciseness
Clarity and conciseness are important factors when writing in APA Style as it is essential to not misinterpret the details of a study or confuse your readers with unneeded words. Be as specific as you can when explaining concepts and avoid vague descriptions and explanation when possible.

Avoiding Bias
Papers written in APA often include research-based information involving a variety of participants or discussing diverse populations. As such, it is important to ensure that these populations are not stereotyped by labels or other forms of biased language. APA Style has some recommendations for dealing with biased language:

- **Adjust labels:** when you must label a population in order to account for their identity, use the terminology preferred by the population (Black vs African American) and be weary of common language that contains bias (“normal,” “disabled,” etc.).
- **Avoid gendered pronouns:** be clear about the sex identity of your participants, but do not use gendered terms when they are not necessary (ex. not using “men” as when referring to both sexes)
- **Use alternative descriptors:** look at the parameters of your research population to avoid unintentional bias. Consider describing your participants by measures used in the experiment (“average BMI group” vs “high BMI group”)

Remember to **always cite** when you use:

- Another person’s idea, opinion, or theory regardless of you paraphrasing it or directly quoting it.
- Any facts, statistics, graphs, or drawings gathered from another person’s work.
- Information that you already know. You must cite it with a peer-reviewed source if it is not common knowledge for your intended audience.
- Quotations or paraphrase of another person’s actual spoken or written words.
In-Text Citations

All information that is not common knowledge and is gathered from your sources should be cited within your piece. All citations, whether they are paraphrased or quoted, are required to have the **author(s) last name(s) and the year of publication**. For direct quotes, also include the page or paragraph numbers in which the information was found. You should use **p. # if citing a page number or para. # if citing a paragraph number**. As with other format styles, you should ensure page numbers that are cited appear within the document itself; if your source is not originally paginated, then you must use the paragraph number instead.

One of the main traits of APA in-text citations is the inclusion of years of publication. These years can often be found in the copyright page towards the front of books, the covers of printed journals, or by the top/bottom margins in a journal retrieved online. Sources like websites may not often include years of publication. **If no year of publication is available** for a source, you should use **n.d.**, which stands for no date, in your citation.

How to Cite Information

You can cite information within your text in a couple different ways: in a parenthetical citation at the end of a sentence or in a signal phrase. When creating your parenthetical citations and signal phrases, it is important to keep in mind the number of authors the source has. Remember that you should not rearrange the order in which the authors of your sources appear.

- **One or two authors:** always mention both authors in a citation
- **Three to five authors:** only mention all authors the first time that source is cited. Subsequent citations should only include the first author’s last name and the words **et al.**, meaning “and more.”
- **Six or more authors:** use the first author’s last name plus **et al.** beginning from the first time the source is used

Some examples of signal phrases are:

- According to Author and Author (year), ...
- Author (year) found that...
- As Author, Author, Author, and Author (year) state, ...

Note that the year of publication is always found within parenthesis and is located right after the author(s) information. You can find examples of parenthetical citations below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Citing one or multiple authors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>One author:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Two authors:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>⇒ In-text:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Three to five authors:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>⇒ In-text:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>⇒ In-text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Six or more authors:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>⇒ In-text</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Citing Sources With No Author Name
There might be instances where the source does not have an author. If the source is published directly by a credible organization or government department, you may use their name as the author. For example, when citing a document or webpage from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, you may use the CDC as your author. Your citation would then be: (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, n.d.).

If your source is not from a reputable or well known organization or government entity, you should use the first few words of the title of your article, chapter, or webpage as your author. Your citation should look something like (“APA Reference Guide,” 2019) instead of (“APA Reference Guide: A Shortened Guide for Students,” 2019).

Citing Sources with the Same Author an Publication Year
If you have two or more sources from the same author(s) published in the same year, you must include a letter after the year to denote that they are different sources. For example: (Lewis, 2019a) and (Lewis, 2019b). Your sources should have an a, b, c, etc. based on the alphabetical order of the title of the article/book.

Citing Secondary Sources
There might be times when you want to include information in your essay that your source cited from another source. While it is recommended to avoid using secondary sources as they do not provide a first-hand account of the information, these can still be used and cited as support. When citing these sources, give credit to the original author but also note that the information was cited by your source:

⇒ (OriginalAuthor, as cited in YourSource, year)
⇒ (LaLonde, as cited in Lewis, 2019)

Citing Personal Communications
Personal communications are sources such as emails, interviews, and personal letters. These are not included in the references section, but should be cited within your text. The general personal communication format is the following:

⇒ (F. AuthorName, personal communication, month day, year)
⇒ (C.B. Lewis, personal communication, February 14, 2019)

Citing Paraphrased Information
Paraphrasing means rephrasing someone else’s ideas into your own words. In order to paraphrase properly, you should change more than just a couple of words or rearranging the original wording or structure of a sentence. You are required to provide credit to the original author when you paraphrase information by including the author last name and year of publication in your citation. You can cite this information either by including a signal phrase or a parenthetical citation.

Here are a couple of tips to help you as you paraphrase your information:

• Take notes on a notebook or in the margins of your sources and write from those notes as you paraphrase instead of looking at the original sentence
• Read the material you are trying to paraphrase out loud and summarize the idea without looking back at the original source

You can find additional information on paraphrasing and summarizing sources here.
Citing Short Quotes

When you quote from a source it means that the information is verbatim from the original source. A short quote is less than 40 words and can be integrated within the paragraphs in your essay. This information is placed within quotation marks (“ ”) and includes the page or paragraph number in its citation. When citing a short quote within a parenthetical, the page or paragraph number should be included after the year of publication:

⇒ When citing page numbers — (Author, year, p. #) or (Author, year, p. #–#)
⇒ When citing paragraph numbers — (Author, year, para. #)

To cite a short quote using a signal phrase, include your author and year information prior to your quote and include the page or paragraph number after the closing quotation marks:

⇒ According to Author and Author (year), “this is the quote” (p. #).
⇒ As Author (year) states, “this is the quote” (para. #).

*Please note that the punctuation mark comes after the parenthesis.

Citing Block Quotes

If the quote (verbatim) is 40 words or longer, it should start on a new line and should be entirely indented half an inch from the margin. Block quotes should not have quotation marks. As with short quotes, you are still required to cite it by including the author(s), year of publication, and page or paragraph number. For example:

Author (year) states that

This is a quote that is forty words or longer, and it includes pertinent information to my research. When omitting information from the middle of a sentence ... these three dots called ellipses can be used to denote that information is missing. Information can be omitted so long as it does not change the meaning of the original quote. (p. #)

Citing Graphics

Using graphics can help show your results in a more accessible manner. Graphics might include figures, images, pictures, or tables you created or that you found in your sources. Any graphic included in your piece should serve a purpose. If you are using graphics from a copyrighted source, you will need to ensure you have a copyrighted statement and a citation. Clip art is one of the only types of graphics that do not require a citation. Graphics you created do not require an in-text citation; however they should have a label to make them easier to incorporate within your text.

To cite a graphic, you should have your image and include a label, such as Figure #., followed your citation right below it. You may also include brief information you want to provide on the graphic if you created it. Make sure to that your cited images are included in your references section.

Figure 5. Face to face session. From “Types of Appointments,” by Lewis Writing Center, n.d. (https://lewisuwritingcenter.wordpress.com)
Reference Page Basics

Creating a reference page can be a daunting task, especially when you have a variety of sources. To make this process easier, there are some basic guidelines that can make this task less daunting. Here are some guidelines to assist you as you create your entries:

- Arrange your entries in alphabetical order by author last name. If no author is provided, use the title of book or article to alphabetize it. Please note that you should not rearrange the order of a source’s authors; include the authors in the order in which they appear in the original source.
- Use initials only for first and middle names. Follow the initials by a period.
- Omit credentials such as Ph.D., MD, RN, etc. in your reference entries.
- Place the year of publication in parenthesis after the author's last name or title of the book/article if there is not author provided.
- Use n.d. if no year of publication is available.
- Omit the quotation marks around article and chapter titles.
- Italicize volume numbers and include issue numbers within parenthesis. [ex. 20(19)]

**Capitalization Guidelines:**
The 6th edition of APA Style has various capitalization guidelines depending on the source:

- **Title of articles/chapters:** Capitalize the first word of the title, proper nouns, and word after a colon
- **Title of books:** Capitalize the first word of the title, proper nouns, and the first word after a colon. This title should be in italics.
- **Title of Journals:** Capitalize all words except for small words (i.e. the, an, for) unless they are at the beginning of the title or after a colon. This title should be in italics.

### How to include author information in reference page entries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>One author:</th>
<th>Lastname, F. M. (year of publication). Title of article.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Two authors:</td>
<td>Lastname, F. M., &amp; Lastname, F. M. (year of publication). Title of book.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three to seven authors:</td>
<td>Lastname, F. M., Lastname, F M., Lastname, F M., &amp; Lastname, F. (year of publication). Title of article.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **List the first six authors, add ellipses (…) and include the last author of the source**

| No author: | Title of book or Title of article. (year of publication). Place of publication. |

| Organization as author: | Name of organization. (year of publication). Title of article. Retrieved from URL. |
| ⇒ Example: | Lewis University. (n.d.) APA reference guide. Retrieved from URL. |
Reference Page Format and Examples

Below is information on how to cite the most common types of sources in accordance with APA Style. Please note that all entries in the references section should be alphabetized by last name and should include a hanging indent. A hanging indent has the first line flushed to the left margin while all subsequent lines are indented over .5 inches from the margin.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Article from a periodical with an assigned doi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>References Format:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lastname, F. M., &amp; Lastname, F. M. (year of publication). Title of article. <em>Title of Journal in Italics, volume number</em> (issue number), page-range. doi:##</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>⇒ Example:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Article from an online periodical with no doi (URL required)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>References Format:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>⇒ Example:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Book</th>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Edited Book</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>⇒ Example: (if no author) Lastname, F.M. (year of publication). <em>Title of book in italics</em> (Edition number [if applicable]). F.M. Lastname (Ed). Place of publication, state: Publisher.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Article or chapter in an edited book</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
# Reference Page Format and Examples

## eBook

**References Format:**

Lastname, F. M., & Lastname, F. M. (year of publication). *Title of book [version you are referencing, if applicable]*. Available from https://www.URL.com

**Example:**

*Use “Retrieved from” to note the place you downloaded it from and “Available from” to note the URL in which you can find the eBook if it is on a website or PDF*

## Website

**References Format:**

Organization Name. (year of publication). *Title of standalone page in italics [title of page part of greater whole un-italicized]*. Retrieved from https://www.url.com

**Example:**
- Lewis University. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://www.lewisu.edu

## Chapter/section of a web document or online book chapter

**References Format:**


**Example:**

## Online dictionary and encyclopedias

**References Format:**

Word defined or searched. (year of publication). In *Title of Dictionary online or Encyclopedia online*. Retrieved from https://www.url.com

**Example:**

## Lecture notes and presentations

**References Format:**

Lastname, F. M. (year of publication, month). *Title of lecture or presentation [Type of lecture/notes is applicable]*. Retrieved from https://www.url.com

**Example:**
- Lewis, C.B. *APA fundamentals workshop*. Lecture given in Writing Center 101 at Lewis University, Romeoville, IL.
# Reference Page Format and Examples

## Government website

**References Format:**

Governmental department or entity. (year of publication). *Title of webpage*. Retrieved on day month, year from https://www.url.com

**Example:**


## Government report from website

**References Format:**


**Example:**


## Government report in print

**References Format:**

Lastname, F. M. (year of publication). *Title of report* (Report No. ###). Place of publication: Publisher.

**Example:**


## Laws

**References Format:**

Title [if relevant], bill or resolution number, xxx Cong. (year).

**Example:**


**Example:**


**Example:**


## Court cases

**References Format:**

Party v. Party, Legal Citation (Court abbreviation year).

**Example:**


## Newspaper article

**References Format:**

Lastname, F. M. (year of publication, month day). Title of article. *Title of Newspaper*. pp.##-##.

**Example:**

## Reference Page Format and Examples

### YouTube video or Vlog

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>References Format:</th>
<th>Lastname, F. M. [Screen name]. (year of publication, month day). <em>Title of video in italics</em> [Video file]. Retrieved from <a href="https://www.url.com">https://www.url.com</a></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>⇒ Example:</td>
<td>Lewis, C. B. [WritingCenterLU]. (2019). <em>APA fundamentals</em> [Video file]. Retrieved from <a href="https://www.url.com">https://www.url.com</a> <em>Please note that screen name can use used as the author is no specific author name is available.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Blog post

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>References Format:</th>
<th>Lastname, F. M. (year of publication, month day). Title of the blog entry [Blog post]. Retrieved from <a href="https://www.url.com">https://www.url.com</a></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

*Please note that screen name or blog name can use used as the author is no specific author name is available.*

### Podcasts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>References Format:</th>
<th>Lastname, F. M. (year of publication, month day). Title of episode [Episode #]. <em>Name of Podcast</em>. Podcast retrieved from <a href="http://www.url.com">http://www.url.com</a></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Motion Picture

|--------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

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**Sources Consulted:** *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.), Purdue OWL, Purdue University Global, Baker College Writing Center, California State University.