

APA STYLE

Study Guide



This study guide will equip you with the knowledge needed to succeed in using proper APA formatting. Familiarize yourself with these details, as proper application of APA style is crucial in academic writing.

UNDERSTANDING APA STYLE

- **APA Style Overview:**

- APA stands for the American Psychological Association. It's a set of guidelines for writing and formatting papers, commonly used in the social sciences, including psychology, education, and sociology.
- **Purpose:** Ensures consistency in presentation, improves readability, and helps to avoid plagiarism by properly citing sources.

FORMATTING BASICS

- **Font Style and Size:** Use Times New Roman, 12-point font throughout your paper. This ensures readability and uniformity.
- **Title Page Components:**
 - Running Head: A shortened version of your paper's title (no more than 50 characters), placed in the header on the left, starting with "Running head:" on the title page only.
 - Title of the Paper: Centered, bolded, and in title case (capitalize major words).
 - Author's Name: Centered beneath the title, followed by the institutional affiliation (e.g., your university).
 - Page Number: Right-aligned in the header on every page, including the title page.
- **Title Alignment:** The title of your paper should be centered on the title page.
- **Header (Running Head):** Include the running head and page number on every page. The title page includes "Running head:" before the title, but subsequent pages include just the title and the page number.
- **Paragraph Indentation:** The first line of every paragraph should be indented 0.5 inches. Use the Tab key to ensure consistency.

IN-TEXT CITATIONS

- **Format:**
 - When you use a direct quote to reference a source in your text, include the author's last name, the year of publication, and, if applicable, the page number in parentheses. Example: (Smith, 2024, p. 45)
 - When you paraphrase a source in your text, include the author's last name and the year of publication in parentheses. Example: (Smith, 2024)
- **Multiple Authors:**
 - 2 Authors: Cite both names every time (e.g., Smith & Jones, 2024).
 - 3 or More Authors: Cite the first author followed by "et al." (e.g., Smith et al., 2024). "Et al" means and others.
- **Quotations:**
 - Short Quotations: For quotes less than 40 words, incorporate the quote into the text and enclose it with double quotation marks. Provide the author's name, year, and specific page number.
 - Block Quotes: For quotes of 40 words or more, use a block format (indented 0.5 inches from the left margin) without quotation marks.

REFERENCES LIST

- **General Formatting:**
 - Spacing: The reference list should be double-spaced.
 - Indentation: Use a hanging indent, where the first line of each reference is flush left, and subsequent lines are indented by 0.5 inches.
- **Order:** References should be listed alphabetically by the last name of the first author of each work.
- **Reference Elements:**
 - **Book:**
 - Author(s). (Year). Title of the book. Publisher.
 - Example: Smith, J. (2024). Understanding APA. Academic Press.
 - **Journal Article:**
 - Author(s). (Year). Title of the article. Title of the Journal, volume number(issue number), page range. DOI or URL
 - Example: Smith, J. (2024). APA formatting guidelines. Journal of Writing, 12(3), 45-67.
<https://doi.org/10.1234/abc123>
- **Special Formatting:**
 - Journal Titles and Volume Numbers: These should be italicized.
 - Article Titles: Should be in sentence case (only the first word of the title and subtitle, and any proper nouns, are capitalized).
- **DOIs and URLs:**
 - DOI: Include a DOI for journal articles when available, formatted as <https://doi.org/xx.xxx/yyyy>.
 - URLs: For online sources without a DOI, include the full URL and, in some cases, the retrieval date if the content is likely to change.

SPECIFIC RULES AND EXCEPTIONS

- **No Publication Date:**
 - Use "n.d." (no date) when the publication date is not available.
- **Multiple Authors in References:**
 - For works with up to 20 authors, list all authors. For works with more than 20 authors, list the first 19 authors followed by an ellipsis (...) and the final author's name.
- **Online Sources Without a DOI:**
 - If an online source lacks a DOI and is from a reliable, stable source (e.g., government or academic website), provide the URL without a retrieval date.
 - If the source content is likely to change, include the retrieval date.

RELIABLE ACADEMIC SOURCES

- **Key Idea:** Reliable sources are authoritative, accurate, and credible, essential for supporting your arguments in academic writing.
- **Characteristics of Reliable Sources:**
 - Peer-reviewed journals: Articles reviewed by experts in the field.
 - Academic books: Published by reputable academic presses.
 - Government or educational websites: Official reports and statistics.
- **Example of a Reliable Source:** The Journal of Environmental Science, an academic journal with peer-reviewed articles.
- **Unreliable Sources:** Personal blogs, Wikipedia entries, or unverified social media posts.

ADDITIONAL TIPS

- **Abstract:** If required, the abstract should be a single paragraph, typically no more than 250 words, and placed on a separate page after the title page.
- **Headings:** Use APA's five-level heading structure to organize your paper, with Level 1 headings centered and bolded, Level 2 headings left-aligned and bolded, and so on.