

# American Psychological Association (APA) Style

The basic reason we cite sources is to give credit to the people and sources used in research. Again, you are crediting the sources you have personally used, not any sources the reference information might have used. If you cite your sources and they cite their sources, all is well in the world. It is the best way to avoid any sort of plagiarism, intentional or otherwise.

All the information is from the 6<sup>th</sup> edition of the American Psychological Association (APA) Publication Manual.

## Layout

The recommended basic style is double-spaced, 12-point, Times New Roman font with 1-inch margins.

If a **title page** is necessary, make sure to have a running head at the top. It should have the title of your paper or, if your title is overly long, a shortened but recognizable version. The title is in caps, with “Running” capitalized:

Running head: MY WICKED AWESOME TITLE

The rest of the title page should include the title (in full), author, and university affiliation (in this case, University of North Texas). If your professor asks for extra information (date, class, etc.) include that as well. The information should be centered and center-aligned:

My Wicked Awesome Title

Author Name

University of North Texas

Date (This and the ones below are optional)

Class

Etc.

After the title page, the running head should only include your title and should be in the header along with page numbers.

An **abstract** (if required) is a shortened version of your paper, and it describes the basic premise of your paper. It should be one paragraph, not indented, and between 150 and 250 words. This is the main way that people will search for and decide whether or not to use your article, and it should use keywords and give readers the most comprehensive view of the paper in as few words as possible.

From here, you can get into your actual paper. You should state the problem early in the introduction and state your argument (thesis) soon after.

If your paper has multiple issues or sections, use different levels of headings. The first, or main, headings should be bold, centered, and all key words capitalized (title case). The second level should be left-aligned, bold and title case. The third level should be indented, bold, and only the first letter of the heading should be capitalized. It should also end with a period:

### **First and Main Heading Level**

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### **Second Level is Similar**

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**Third level of headings.** Nulla dignissim tincidunt sem, in sagittis massa vulputate eget. Aenean eleifend semper orci nec gravida. Vestibulum ante ipsum primis in faucibus orci luctus et ultrices posuere cubilia Curae; Suspendisse sagittis arcu lectus. Aenean lobortis vestibulum sapien non bibendum.

For any more levels, consult [the APA Manual](#).

### **Notes**

- Capitalize nouns that have numerals or letters after them (Day 6, Model 3, Figure A, etc.) that are part of a specific series.
- Do NOT capitalize nouns with common parts or variables (page 100, row/column 11, result  $x$  etc.) following them.
- Use italics for major titles (books, films, TV Shows, works of art, etc.), new or technical terms, periodical name and volume number.
- Do NOT use italics solely for emphasis.
- Use numerals for number 10 and above, as well as decimals.

### **In-Text Citations**

When using the APA style guide, paraphrasing is often used, if not encouraged. If you paraphrase from a source, you still need to cite where the information came from. APA citations in the text include Author, Year, and Page/Paragraph. If you use the source in the sentence, the paraphrase will look like the following:

According to the UNT Writing Lab website (2011), paraphrasing is a good thing to use in APA papers (para. 2).

If there is no mention of the source in the sentence, the full citation comes at the end:

Paraphrasing is a good thing to use in papers (UNT Writing Lab, 2011, para. 4).

When quoting directly, you still use the same formats. If you use the source in the directly quoted sentence, it looks like this:

According to the UNT Writing Lab website (2011), “paraphrasing is often used, if not encouraged” (para. 2).

If the source is not in the sentence, it looks like this:

Paraphrasing, in APA, is “often used, if not encouraged” (UNT Writing Lab, 2011, para. 4).

You do not want to put a whole sentence in quotes. You want to give the reader some idea about why this quote is used and why it is used in the specific location. In your papers, this will help you to support your arguments with quotes. You want the quotes and other authors to work for you argument as opposed to the other way around.

If a source has more than one author, you can cite this in two ways. The first way is to list out the authors:

(One & Two, 2011, p. 1)

(One, Two, & Three, 2011, p. 1)

Notice that in the parenthetical citation, you use the ampersand (&) in between the author names. If you have the author names in text, you use “and” spelled out.

If the source has three or more authors, you can shorten the list using the abbreviation “et al.” after the first time the names appear. Notice that there is a period after “al” before the comma. If a source has six or more authors, this should be used every time the source is cited:

(One, et al., 2011, p.1)

If the author of a work is unknown, use the title for citations:

(“APA Citations,” 2011, para. 1)

If citing more than one source, put them in alphabetical and chronological order, using semicolons in between the individual sources. If an author has more than one publication in a given year, use letters to distinguish:

(One, 2011a, 2011b; Two, 2009, 2011)

The most important thing to keep in mind is that this is to help the person reading your paper understand where your information comes from and what sources you use.

## Reference List

The APA style guide uses “References” as the title of the collected citations. If the source is cited in the paper, it should appear on this list (with certain exceptions like personal communications, which are not published). The list should be alphabetized and chronological, and the order follows the “nothing precedes something” rule.

## Print Sources

One, A. (2011).

One, A. & Two, B. (2009).

One, A. & Two, B. (2011).

One, A., Two, B., & Three, C. (2011a).

One, A., Two, B., & Three, C. (2011b).

One, Z. (2009).

If there is no author listed, use the title. If the author is listed as “Anonymous,” use it:

Anonymous. (2011).

“APA Citations.” (2011).

If there are only editors and no authors, use them followed by “(Ed.)” or “(Eds.)” depending on number. If there is an author listed (as in the author of a story in an edited collection or an author of a chapter in a collected book), use the author first. This same rule applies to translations. If there are translators and editors, the translators go first:

One, A. (Ed.) (2011).

One, A. (2011). Title of shorter work. In B. Two (Ed.), *Title of whole work*.

One, A. (2011). Title of shorter work (C. Three & D. Four, Trans.). In B. Two (Ed.), *Title*.

Titles of longer works (books, artworks, films, etc.) are italicized. Titles of shorter works (articles, short stories, etc.) are punctuated normally, except for only capitalizing the first letter of the title or subtitle. Proper nouns are also capitalized. After this, the volume (in parenthesis, italicized) and issue numbers (not), page numbers (if not the whole book), and publisher information (name and place) make up the rest of the citation. A full citation looks like this:

One, A. (2011). Here comes my title: My paper about Denton, Texas. *Stuff About Texas*, 1(1), 1-2. Denton, TX: UNT Press.

## Web Sources

Online sources follow the same format, but they also include information about where the source was found and how to find it again. If it has a DOI number (digital object identifier) assigned to it, use it in your citation. There is no space between “doi” and the number and “doi” is not capitalized. If there is not a DOI number, you show where the source was retrieved. If you do not know the DOI, you can find it using a site like [crossref.org](http://crossref.org).

One, A. (2011). Here comes my title: My paper about Denton, Texas. *Stuff About Texas*, 1(1), 1-2. doi:12.34.56.7.

One, A. (2011). Here comes my title: My paper about Denton, Texas. *Stuff About Texas*, 1(1), 1-2. Retrieved from <http://www.unt.edu/writinglab/>

Again, all of this is to demonstrate to the reader that the information found is valid and attributed. This is a basic APA resource format. Keep in mind that every new edition of the APA style guide can include changes to this format. Again, this is using the 6<sup>th</sup> edition, published in 2010.

## Final Notes

IF YOUR PROFESSOR SAYS TO DO SOMETHING THAT IS NOT STRICT “APA” FORMAT, IT IS WISE TO FOLLOW YOUR PROFESSOR’S INSTRUCTIONS. Often, the instructor has a very good reason for making a style guide personalized, whether for grading purposes or simply out of preference. Individual publications often have their own rules for the same reasons. Use the style manual for what it is: a guide.

For more information, use the APA [website](#) or come to the Writing Lab.