Sample APA Paper for Students Interested in Learning APA Style Sixth Edition

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This sample paper will lay out some guidelines for papers written in the American Psychological Association (APA) style. Most academic papers are written in third person (“One can see…research shows…the author suggests…”); avoid first-person point of view (I, we, our, etc.) and second-person point of view (you) in academic papers. All of the paper is double-spaced, aligned left, and in Times New Roman, 12-point font. Margins are one inch. Two spaces after punctuation marks at the end of a sentence is (only) recommended (APA, 2010). The title on the first page is centered, double-spaced, and not bold. Each new paragraph is indented half an inch. Unless requested by the instructor, do not use a heading titled “Introduction” (APA, 2010). Write out acronyms the first time mentioned, such as American Psychological Association for APA.

**Headings Capitalize First Letters**

Here is the second paragraph. It is the beginning of a section with a heading. This sample paper only uses one level of headings, so each heading is centered and in boldface. See page 62 of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* if employing more than one level (APA, 2010). Do not capitalize articles (a, an, the) in headings unless they begin a title or follow a colon. Avoid contractions. Capitalize each main word in headings, including hyphenated compound words. Six-Year Study on Foxes and Self-Consciousness of a Vixen are examples of headings with compound words (FitzPat & Whaler, 1999).

Paraphrasing is stating an idea of another’s in one’s own words. Quoting is stating another’s exact words. Both need to be cited. Include the author(s) and year for paraphrases and the author(s), year, and page or paragraph number for direct quotes. Use *p.* (without italics) for one page and *pp.* for more than one. Use *para.* for one paragraph and * paras.* for
two or more. Separate non-consecutive page numbers with commas; separate different sets of authors with semicolons (Ames, 2003; Buggs & Miner, 1998; Duvall, Walker, & Jensch, 1996). Sources retrieved online that do not have page numbers (e.g., a web page) do not require page or paragraph numbers even when directly quoting.

“When paraphrasing or referring to an idea contained in another work, you are encouraged to provide a page or paragraph number, especially when it would help an interested reader locate the relevant passage in a long or complex text” (APA, 2010, p. 171). Duvall, Walker, and Jensch (1996) explain that when quoting or paraphrasing authors outside of parenthetical citations, one refers to them by their last names and joins the last author with the second-to-last author with the word and spelled out. Parenthetical citations and references join authors with an ampersand (&) rather than spelling out and (Duvall et al., 1996). Include the year in all parenthetical citations, even if it seems redundant (APA, 2010; Duvall et al., 1996).

In-Text Citations

According to Nadeem and Tewes (2006a), the names or titles of journals, books, CDs, television and radio programs, plays, films, and operas are italicized. Names or titles of articles, episodes of television programs, shows of radio programs, poems, chapters, website articles, and songs are surrounded by quotation marks. John Wright (2006) confirms in his article “Foxes Forever” that each word in a title in the text begins with a capital letter, except for a, the, in, etc., but in the References list, article and book titles are lowercased—except for the first word, the first word after a colon, and proper nouns. If an article does not have an author, use a shortened form of the title for in-text citations (“Time to Protect,” 1989). Periods are placed after the closing parenthesis, except with indented (blocked) quotes.
When more than one author or group of authors are cited parenthetically for the same point, separate them with semicolons (Gehan, 2003; Nadeem & Tewes, 2006b). Authors with more than one work published in the same year are distinguished by lower-cased letters after the years, beginning with a.

In-text citations list just the last names unless the authors share the same last name, in which case the initials of the first names are included (Iwaszek, T., & Iwaszek, S., 2000). Write out numbers one through nine, although there are exceptions (see pages 111-112 of the sixth edition of the APA manual for details). Numbers beginning sentences are always written out. Numbers are expressed in figures when they “represent time, dates, ages…and numerals as numerals” (APA, 2010, p. 124). The ellipsis indicates words are omitted.

Please note that all of the in-text and reference citations in this document are examples (not real sources), so please do not waste time trying to find them!

**Et al. for Three or More Authors**

When referring to material that comes from three, four, or five authors, include all of the authors’ last names in the first reference. Subsequently, use just the first author’s last name followed by the words *et al*. *Et al.* is a Latin abbreviation for *et alii*, meaning “and others.” APA italicizes words written as words. When a work has six or more authors in the paper body, cite only the last name of the first author, followed by *et al.* (Bryn et al., 2009). For seven or fewer authors in the references, write out authors’ last names with first- and middle-name initials, up to the seventh. For eight or more, write out authors’ last names with initials up to the first six, insert an ellipsis (…), and finish it with the last name and initial of the last author. C. Meadow (1996) and J. Meadow (2003) also stress that initials of the author’s first name precede the last name when outside of parenthetical citations, but are placed after the
last name when inside parentheses. See Meadows’ references for multiple entries and authors sharing last names.

**As Cited In/Secondary Sources**

When referring to someone’s ideas or words found in someone else’s material, both the original (who said it) and secondary (where the quote or idea was mentioned) sources should be included in the in-text citation information. Only the secondary source is listed in the References list. Use *as cited in* to indicate the secondary source. Merry Celeste suggests “Dreaming of a fox dancing on clouds indicates an unstable situation” (*as cited in* Edelen, 1995, p. 178). Celeste is the primary source (she said it) and Gustavo Edelen is the secondary source (he said she said it). Only the secondary source is listed in the References list (Edelen and not Celeste) because if readers want to confirm the quote, they know to go to Edelen’s book on page 178. The arctic fox dances differently than the red fox (Johnson, *as cited in* Zilcher, 2006).

**Indenting Quotes Longer than 40 Words**

When a quote is 40 words or longer, block it by indenting all of the quote one inch; do not use quotation marks. According to Taylor (1995), “Do not change the line spacing to single.” Here is one way to indent quotes of 40 words or more:

Highlight the quote, grab the indentation handle on the ruler at the top, and drag both top and bottom handles to one-half inch. The first paragraph is not indented more.

Indent a second paragraph of the same blocked quote an additional half inch.

Placing the period *before* the opening parenthesis with blocked quotes is the exception to the APA rule of placing the period only after the closing parenthesis. Since the last sentence was still part of the *same paragraph*, it was not indented. Avoid beginning or
ending paragraphs with quotes. It is good to “sandwich quotes,” which means writing one’s own words, illustrating or backing up the point with a quote and remarking on or following up on the quote with one’s own words again. (Wright, 2006, pp. 11-12)

**Personal Communication**

According to E. Mandel (personal communication, March 3, 2001), if one references information obtained through personal communication (such as an interview, an email, a telephone call, a postcard, a text message, a letter, or a valentine), include it in the body of the text but not on the References page. APA explains its exclusion from the References page is because the average reader will not be able to go to the source to confirm the legitimacy of the material. The source can be mentioned either inside or outside of the parenthetical citation (E. Mandel, personal communication, October 21, 2000). Note the citation uses only the first initial of the name (before the last name).

**Citation and Reference Formatting**

Italicize book, journal, television and radio program, film, lecture, conference, and presentation titles, but put article, song, chapter, handout, single web page, and episode titles in quotation marks. Page 186 of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (as cited in Ames, 2003, p. 23) suggests that when “referring to a brochure, chart, photograph, video webcast, lecture, artwork, or map,” cite it as if it were a book, but follow the title in the References list with a bracket clarifying what the material is to help with identification and retrieval. If the piece has no author or artist, list the citation first by the complete title in the References list and by the first three or so words of the title (if it is lengthy) in the in-text citation (“Animals Can Dance,” n.d.).

Handouts, lecture notes, and PowerPoint presentations are treated like personal
communications unless they are published in places where the material is retrievable, such as on a public website or in a hard copy that is available to all readers (Zilcher, 2006). When citing a PowerPoint presentation, list the author, the copyright year (or n.d. if there is no date), and the slide number if it is a direct quote: “Vixens can leap higher than male fox” (Stinchfield, 2006, Slide 2).

Koobel’s Model of Experiential Learning (M. Teacher, personal communication, September 6, 2007) is a handout from class, so it is treated as a personal communication. “Foxes tire of dancing,” according to an online forum comment posted by Ming (2005).

Words from dictionaries have an interesting format: the word is first in the References entry, not italicized. Next comes the date; if there is no date, put n.d. in parentheses (not italicized). This is followed by the word In and the name of the book or website. After that comes the publisher location, a colon, and the publisher. If it is an online source, the URL (web page address) is listed after the words Retrieved from without italics (“Wily,” 2010).

**Electronic Sources**

The Internet is a proper noun and so should be capitalized, but when it is an adjective (internet source, internet connection, etc.), the word internet is not capitalized. Do not include website addresses (URL [Uniform Resource Locator]) in in-text citations. Cite the author or organization, or if there is neither, the name of the web page. For example, an article on dance steps, “Dance of the Fox,” might be written by Charles Pritz and appear on the website Animal Lovers Online. The citation would look like this: (Pritz, n.d.). Article titles move to the author position when there is no author. In text, the first two or three words of the article would appear in quotation marks (“Animals Can Dance,” n.d.).

It is best to provide a DOI (Digital Object Identifier) in the References entries when
available. “DOIs are archived articles that will not be changed due to updates or lost because website links are broken” (Meadow, 2003). See Wright in references for an example of DOI formatting. If there is no DOI, write Retrieved from (not italicized) and the home page of the journal/magazine. “It is not necessary to include database information” and one need not “include retrieval dates unless the source material may change over time” (APA, 2010, p. 192). URLs should be black and not underlined (highlight, right click, and select Remove hyperlink). There is no period after the URL. APA encourages breaking long URLs with soft returns (Shift and Enter keys simultaneously) at forward slashes, periods, or underscores to avoid unsightly gaps.

**Conclusion**

Insert a page break at the end of the paper so the References section begins at the top of a new page. The word References is centered and not bold or italicized. Items in the References list are alphabetized and are formatted with hanging indents.
References


