Checklist on APA Style

A list of common errors often made in APA Style is provided below. Review all of them as you write your papers and be sure your submission is free of these errors.

☐ The list of sources at the end of the paper is labeled References, not Works Cited or Bibliography. All items in the list are arranged in alphabetical order.

☐ Every point of fact or claim in your paper/project must have a citation to a reference of a source that backs it up. Do not say anything without a source unless it is strictly a personal opinion, an explanation, or a connecting comment to tie parts of the paper together.

☐ Direct quotes should be used sparingly. If you have a direct quote in the paper, you must provide the page number in the in-text citation (e.g., Smith, 2006, p. 24). Do not include a page number if you are paraphrasing (e.g., Smith, 2006). See pages 173-176 of the Concise Rules for more information

☐ The in-text citation must match the start of the entry in the References list. For example, in text (Smith, 2006) would match Smith, J. (2006) in the References list; (Oklahoma Statutes, 1974) would match Oklahoma Statutes (1974) in the References list. This is to make it easy for the reader to locate the source for the information presented.

☐ The first line of an entry in the reference list is flush with the left margin. All following lines for that entry are indented five spaces from the left margin. You may set your computer to use hanging indent and this will be done automatically (Paragraph Tool in Word).

☐ All citations in the text must refer to an entry in the References list at the end. Similarly, only references actually cited in the text are included in the References list.

☐ In the References list, put spaces between authors’ initials (e.g., Smith, J. S.).

☐ Do not put authors’ degrees (e.g., Ph.D., M.D.) in the References list.


☐ The next to last name and the last name in a list of authors should be connected by the use of the word “and” in the text (e.g., Smith, Jones, and Miller) and by the use of an ampersand (&) in the citation (e.g., Smith, Jones, & Miller, 2008) in the text as well as in the list of references (e.g., Smith, A., Jones, B., & Miller, C., 2008…).

☐ Only the first word of the title and the subtitle (generally follows a colon) of a book or the title of a journal article are capitalized as well as all proper nouns.
- Book titles and the names of journals are italicized.

- You must have complete information on published articles that you reference (year, volume, pages, journal title, author, etc.), not just the Internet address of where you found it.

- Include the doi number in the References list, if one is available (see example above). If no doi is available, include the URL of the journal homepage in the following format: Retrieved from https://www.americannursetoday.com/

- For reports published on the Internet, see pages 226-229 of the Concise Rules of APA Style for examples of correct format. To refer to a Web site as a general source of information, simply put the address in parentheses in the text (no References list entry required in this situation).

- For how to handle multiple authors of articles/books and proper use of et al., see pages 195-196 and page 216 (example 2) of the Concise Rules of APA Style.