APA (7th Ed.) FAQs

Formatting

Q: How do I format the title page?

A: While teachers may have certain preferences on format, the APA standard guide includes the following elements: running head, page number, title, author(s), author affiliation (including college or department), course number and name, instructor's name, due date, and author note. All parts of an APA report are double-spaced, beginning with the title page. The page header includes a running head (flush left) followed by the page number (flush right). The page header begins on the title page and appears on the top of every page of the report. The title will be in bold and centered with a blank line between the title and the author and course information. The author(s) name, author affiliation (including college or department), course number and title, instructor's name, and due date are listed beneath the title. *See pages 30–38 of the APA Publication Manual.*

Q: How do I format the paper after the title page?

A: APA papers follow the same basic formatting as other academic works: double spacing, one-inch margins, page numbers in the top right corner, etc. The inclusion of an abstract between the title and the body of the paper is at the professor's discretion (p. 38). The body of the paper starts on a new page after the title and abstract (p. 39). Headings organize and highlight the important items within the paper. The latest edition of the APA manual (7th ed.) calls for the title to be written on the first line of the first page in title case, bold, and centered (p. 39). Sources used for the paper should be listed on a References page after the body of the paper but before the appendices (p. 39–40). The sources on the References page should be listed alphabetically. *See pages 38–46 of the APA Publication Manual for an overview of formatting (including information on footnotes, appendices, and supplemental materials).*

Q: How do I format heading levels?

A: The organization of headings serves as an outline for an APA paper. There are five possible levels of headings. A basic outline would look like this:

<h3 style="text-align:center">**Level 1: Centered, Bold, Title Case**</h3>

For text in the body of the paper, indent and begin a new paragraph.

Level 2: Flush Left, Bold, Title Case

For text in the body of the paper, indent and begin a new paragraph.

Level 3: Flush Left, Bold, Italic, Title Case

For text in the body of the paper, indent and begin a new paragraph.

Level 4: Indented, Bold, Title Case, Ends With a Period. Text begins on the same line and includes the heading in the paragraph.

Level 5: Indented, Bold Italic, Title Case, Ends With a Period. Text begins on the same line and includes the heading in the paragraph.

** "Title Case" means that the first letter of all words will be capitalized except articles, like "a" or "the." ******

Here is an example of the divisions of headings and how each should be formatted:

<p style="text-align:center">**Amphibians**</p>

Tree Frogs

Tree Frogs in the Americas

Tree Frogs in the Amazon.

Blue Azureus Dart Frog.

Subjects of equal importance will be at the same level of heading. For example, the Method, Results, and Discussions should have the same level heading because they are of equal importance in a scientific study (p. 47). Do not number the headings. Note that if there is one subsection heading, there will be at least two subsections in that same level. *See pages 47–49 in the APA Publication Manual.*

Q: Do I need a heading for the introduction?

A: No. A Level 1 heading "Introduction" is not needed for the first few paragraphs because the paper title at the beginning of the paper serves as a de facto Level 1

heading. If the introduction has subsections, then still use Level 2 and Level 3 headings as needed. *See page 47 in the APA Publication Manual.*

Q: What should my headings say?

A: Headings are designed to give succinct organization to a paper. They highlight specifically what is discussed in a section so that a reader may easily navigate to the information they are most concerned with. Headings replace transition words like "secondly" and "in conclusion" within the body of a paper and should feature brief and concise keywords that state the topic featured in that section (such as **Tree Frogs** for a Level 2 heading). Headings should become more precise as a topic is divided into smaller subheadings (such as ***Tree Frogs in the Americas*** for a Level 3 heading)*.*

Q: What is a running head?

A: The running head is found as a header in the top left of every page of the paper, in line with the page number. It is written in all capital letters with a maximum of 50 characters (p. 37). For example: "THE EVOLUTION OF GENE THERAPY." A running head captures the main subject of the paper. It can contain words from the title, but it also does not have to align with the title word for word if the main subject can be captured more precisely. In APA 7th edition, a running head is not always required for student papers unless the instructor requests it (p. 37).

Q: Do you have to label the running head with the label "Running Head:" on the title page?

A: No. The explicit label "Running Head:" on the title page is an outdated part of 6th edition APA. The running head does ***not*** need a label in the latest 7th edition.

Citations

Q: How do I cite online sources, especially when there's no clear author?

A: Online sources will generally be cited in the same way as a source of the same type that is not found on the internet, with the addition of online retrieval information (such as the DOI or URL) to allow others to find the source. If no author of the website can be found or if the author is the same as the website

name, the title becomes the first thing noted in the citation. The website name is written in title case without italics, and the citation should include the retrieval date if the contents of the page are likely to change over time (pp. 298–301). Some examples are included below:

With an author:

Love, T. (2012, December 25). *The influence of the partridge on literature.* Retrieved December 31, 2012, from http://writtenhistory.edu

Without an author:

Tsunami creates damage in Japan. (2011, March 12). Retrieved March 22, 2011, from http://www.nationalgeographic.com/japan11/kdstt/

If the article has no author, the in-text citation should list the first few words in the source's title, e.g. ("Tsunami Creates Damage," 2011). Capitalize all of the words in the shortened title for in-text citations even though the citation on the reference page (cited above) uses sentence case instead. Online articles should not be italicized on the references page or in the text, but the titles of online reports will be italicized in both places. *See pages 264–265, 298–301, and 350–352 of the APA Publication Manual or the APA website: apastyle.apa.org.*

Q: How do I cite an interview?

A: There are three types of interviews: published, research participant, and personal. Published interviews are cited according to reference type (magazine article, podcast, etc.). Research participant interviews are interviews conducted as research for an original scientific study. Because they are part of the paper's original work, they are not necessarily cited on the references page but are still clearly cited and quoted within the text. (Please note that any study regarding research participants should establish clear ethical agreements about consent, confidentiality, and anonymity in the methodology section).

Personal interviews are considered a form of personal communication, which readers cannot recover (such as personal interviews, direct emails to the writer, unrecorded telephone conversations). Since someone using your sources cannot

retrieve the exact transcript of the interview, these interviews are not included in the APA References page (p. 260). It should be noted that they are included in an MLA Works Cited page. For both style guides, interviews are cited within the text, using the interviewee's initials and surname, the label "personal communication," and the most exact date possible. For example, (J. N. Doe, personal communication, May 6, 2016). *For more, see pages 259–260 and 278 of the APA Publication Manual.*

Q: How do I cite my professor's lectures?

A: If a professor's notes or PowerPoint slides are available online, you will include the professor's name, the publication year, the title of the lecture, the format of the lecture, and the URL it can be found at. If you are writing for an audience that can also access the lectures through the class website or learning management system (such as Canvas), include the name of the site too (p. 347). Here are a few examples:

Smith, B. (2015). *Human development: Cognition in early and middle childhood* [PowerPoint slides]. SlideOnline. http://www.slideonline.com/smithB45/human-development-earlymiddle-ppt

Rios, V. (1999). The rise and fall of cyberpunk [PDF document]. http://www.lecturenotes.edu/classes/socialscience/genre2010/rios

If the lecture materials cannot be found online, treat a lecture as a personal communication (see *How do I cite an interview?*).

In-Text Citations

Q: What information do I include in my in-text citations?

A: In-text citations will include the author's name, the year of publication, and a page number/page range. Here is an example of a parenthetical in-text citation with a page number and proper punctuation: (Smith, 2003, p. 97). If the information comes from multiple pages in the source, use the abbreviation *pp.* and an en dash to mark a page range: (Smith, 2003, pp. 97–100). If the source does not have page numbers, use the most recent section heading and the

paragraph number under the heading: (Smith, 2003, Tree Frogs section, para. 2). *See pages 261–278 of the APA Publication Manual.*

Q: How are APA in-text citations different from MLA?

A: The scientific disciplines are more strictly concerned with the timeliness of the source than MLA is. Therefore, in APA, the date is included within an in-text citation, and in MLA, it is not. *See pages 261–264 of the APA Publication Manual.*

Q: How do I format an in-text citation for a source with multiple authors?

A: Formatting an in-text citation with multiple authors will depend on how many authors there are. All authors should be accounted for. If there are one to two authors, both will be mentioned every time: (Ibsen & Red, 2001). If the same work by three or more authors is cited more than once, list the last name of the first author followed by *et al.* every time: (James et al., 2001). If there are multiple authors with similar last names and the reader would benefit from more clarity, write out as many names as needed then abbreviate the rest with *et al*. *See pages 263–268 of the APA Publication Manual for more complex questions about citing multiple, similar, ambiguous, or group authors.*

Q: How do I format an in-text citation for a sentence that uses multiple sources?

A: When citing multiple works in one sentence, place the in-text citations in the same parenthetical citation and separate sources with semicolons: (Hawthorn, 1994, p. 230; Smith, 2003, p. 97). The sources should be arranged in alphabetical order, so readers can easily find the corresponding source on the References page. *See pages 263–268 of the APA Publication Manual.*

Q: If my entire paragraph is another person's thoughts or ideas, how do I cite it?

A: The purpose of citations is to give credit where credit is due. The way you cite should make it clear where your thoughts end and someone else's begin and vice versa. If an entire paragraph is in or based on another author's work, the citation will go at the end of the paragraph. It is also playing on the safe side to begin that paragraph with a citation as well, for example: "In his book, Douglass states… [Your summary or paraphrase]" (Douglass, 1845). *See pages 269–270 of the APA Publication Manual for more about paraphrasing.*

Other

Q: Do I have to write differently than in other writing styles?

A: APA is generally the writing format of the sciences. This implies presentation of information that is concise, right to the point, and objective. Writing in APA style should communicate a point without giving superfluous details. In the sciences, an unbiased presentation is crucial. Do not give opinions or favor one side of an issue over another. Like all academic writing, wording should be professional and avoid slang and redundancy. *See pages 113–117 in the APA Publication Manual for more about clarity, conciseness, and academic tone.*

Q: What is the purpose of an abstract? Where does it go in my paper?

A: The abstract in an APA paper gives specific information about the paper's content. The abstract defines terms particular to the paper and includes the paper's main concepts and/or conclusions. The abstract is typically 150–250 words long, but the length can vary. The abstract should include the label "Abstract" in bold title case and center alignment. *See page 38 in the APA Publication Manual.*

Q: How do I represent numbers in my writing?

A: The general rule is to use numerals for numbers 10 and above and words for numbers below 10. Numbers will also be expressed in numerals when they are a unit of measurement (e.g., 13.5 cm). They will also be written in numeral form when they represent time, dates, ages, scores and points on a scale, ratios, decimal quantities, percentages, and exact sums of money, unless it is an approximation of days, months, or years. Use words for common fractions (one-third) and if the number begins a sentence, title, or heading. *See pages 178–181 in the APA Publication Manual for more statistical guidance.*

Q: How do I use DOIs in my references?

A: DOIs are digital object identifiers which make finding electronic documents easier. The DOI will be the last piece of information included at the end of a citation. In APA, DOIs and URLs should be included as hyperlinks. Generally, it's

okay to use the default display for hyperlinks (blue font, underlined) in APA (p. 299). Do not add a period after the hyperlink. An example is included:

Gozlan, R. E., eMarshall, W., eLilje, O., eJessop, C., Gleason, F. H., & eAndreou, D. (2014, February 01). Current ecological understanding of fungal-like pathogens of fish: What lies beneath? *Frontiers in Microbiology, 5,* https://doi.org/10.3389/fmicb.2014.00062

See pages 298–300 of the APA Publication Manual for more information on DOIs and URLs.

Q: Where is the DOI found in a reference?

A: DOIs are generally found on the first page of an online article, usually near the copyright information. They can also be found in the database records on that particular article. They usually contain the letters "doi" followed by a series of letters and numbers. *See page 298–299 of the APA Publication Manual for more information.*