

Notes on APA Format

(based on the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, 5th ed.)

The interpretation of "APA format" varies from course to course. The *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* is precisely what the title suggests: a guide for scholars preparing articles for publication. Although the *Publication Manual* is also intended as "a major guide for authors, editors, students, typists and publishers" (p. xxiii-xxiv), its editors warn, "The student should find out whether (or in what respects) the university's or department's requirements for theses, dissertations, or student papers take precedence over those of the *Publication Manual*" (p. 324). Your course instructor (or, for advanced work, the Graduate School) is the final authority for the application of APA Guidelines to university papers.

General Manuscript Guidelines, Graduate/Undergraduate Paper (pp. 324-326)

This edition of the Manual treats student papers as "final" copy. Many former "requirements" are now "suggestions."

- Use durable paper; the UNB Graduate school and the Library set the standards for dissertation paper.
- Papers submitted for publication use uniform margins of 1 in. (2.54 cm) at the top, bottom, and sides of each page (pp. 286-287); theses and student papers may have a wider left-hand margin, usually 1.5 in. or 4 cm (p. 325).
- Left line justification with a "ragged" right margin is traditional, but full justification may be used.
- Hyphenation of words is permitted *only* with full justification. Do not break words at the end of a line in a ragged-right margin document.
- **Double-space** the main text of the document. **Single-spacing** may be used for table titles, captions, indented quotations, footnotes, and references (BUT double-spacing is required BETWEEN references).

Organization of a Manuscript (pp. 3-29)

- Parts of the manuscript:
 1. **Title page:** avoid title words "that serve no purpose," including "study" and "experiment"
 2. **Abstract:** dense with information but readable; 120 words or fewer
 3. **Introduction:** presents the problem and describes the research strategy
 4. **Method:** detailed explanation of how the study was conducted
 5. **Results:** data and analysis in sufficient detail to support the conclusions
 6. **Discussion:** if brief, it may be combined with the previous section: "Results and Discussion" or "Results and Conclusions" are common combined headings
 7. **References:** covers all citations made in the manuscript
 8. **Appendix:** includes material too distracting or bulky to include in the text
- Papers written for publication then include the Author note, which states institutional affiliations and financial acknowledgments.
- Place Arabic-style page numbers (1, 2, 3) in the upper right-hand corners; number the title page.

Punctuation and Spacing (pp. 290-91, 62-69)

- **Spacing:** Space once after a period, comma, colon, or semicolon.

- **Note:** do not space after the periods in an abbreviation such as e.g.
- **Commas:** Use commas
 - after ALL but the final element in a list of three or more (**the age, height, and weight of each participant**)
 - before a conjunction (e.g. and, but, for) joining two main clauses
 - to set off the year in MM-DD-YYYY dates (**September 11, 2001, is a crucial date**)
 - to divide the author name and year in parenthetical citations (**Tyson, 2001**).
- **Semicolons (p. 80):** Use semicolons
 - to join two sentences closely related in thought (he did not understand the instructions; he performed badly on the test)
 - to subdivide complex lists (**the breakfasts included bacon, eggs, and toast; cereal, fruit, and toast; and toast and jam**)
- **Colons (pp. 80-81):** Colons ONLY appear after complete sentences, and they introduce
 - definitions
 - lists
 - amplifications (**He did better than he expected on the examination: He earned a first-division mark.**)
 - **Note:** if the unit following the colon is itself a complete sentence with its own subject and verb, it begins with a capital letter; otherwise, the unit begins with a lowercase letter.
- **Dashes (pp. 81-82):** A dash is formed of two hyphens (--) or a full em-space dash character. No space separates the dash from the surrounding text.
- **Quotation marks (pp. 82-83):** Normally, double, not single, quotation marks are used; single quotation marks are usually used to mark a quotation *inside* a quotation.
 - to indicate an ironic tone or introduce a coined expression (**Their concept of “normality” diverged sharply from that of the general group.**)
 - to identify quoted material
 - to mark the title of an article or book chapter mentioned *in the text of your paper*:

Spacek’s (2003) article, “Geons and Grammar,” marked a breakthrough in education.
- **Note:** commas and periods are placed within these quotation marks unless a parenthetical citation follows.

Title Page (pp. 296-297; see the sample title page: p. 306)

- The title page includes FOUR elements: the page header, the running head, the title, and the byline/institutional affiliation.
 - **Page Header** (p. 288): the page header, which also appears on all subsequent pages, includes
 - (a) a much-abbreviated form of the title in upper/lowercase letters (see the note on Capitalization below),
 - (b) the page number, 1 in. (2.54 cm.) from the right-hand margin and approximately .5 inches (1.27 cm.) from the top edge of the page. Page numbers use the Arabic system (1, 2, 3) .
 - **The Running Head:** the running head is a short form of the title (max. 50 characters) which appears flush left below the page header and is set in uppercase text.
 - **The Title:** The manuscript's full title is typed below the running head; usually three blank lines separate the running head from the full title, which is centered between the margins. Double-space between the lines of a long title.

- **Note on Capitalization:** Capitalize the first letter of all key words in both the short and full titles. Conjunctions, articles, and short prepositions are not considered key words. However, if a conjunction, article or preposition is four letters long or longer, its first letter must be capitalized. If the short title begins with an article or preposition, the first letter must be capitalized even if that article or preposition is shorter than four letters.
- **The Byline/Institutional Affiliation:** The names of the authors are typed below the title; the names of universities follow the capitalization rules noted above.

Abstract (pp. 12-15, 298)

- The abstract is a concise (less than 120 word), self-contained, accurate description of the manuscript. Define all unique terms, abbreviations, and acronyms; include only information from the actual paper.
- Place the abstract on a new page; page number 2 should appear in the upper right-hand corner.
- The title *Abstract* is centered horizontally near the top of the page; the "A" should be capitalized and all subsequent letters should be lowercase. Do not italicize, set in bold, or surround by quotation marks the word *Abstract*.
- The text of the abstract should be typed as an unindented block of text and should not exceed 120 words.

Text (pp. 298-299):

- In a typical APA manuscript, the text of the paper begins on page 3.
- Remember that the running head, including the short title and page number, should appear on all pages of the document.
- The full title of the manuscript should appear near the top of page 3. The full title is not set in italics or boldface, nor should it be surrounded by quotation marks. The full title is centered horizontally and initial letters of key words should be capitalized; all other letters should be lowercase (**Note:** this applies as well to all titles named IN THE TEXT of the paper). If the full title is too long to occupy a single line of text, it can run into a second line. If the full title occupies more than one line of text, ensure that it is double-spaced.
- A single blank line should separate the full title from the body of the paper.
- Indent the first and all subsequent paragraphs five spaces.
- Do not provide additional spacing between paragraphs: a single blank line should appear between paragraphs.

Headings (pp. 90-93, 289-290)

The APA Online web site notes, "A new paragraph clarifies that APA's heading style consists of five possible formatting arrangements according to the number of levels of subordination. Although each level is numbered, the specific levels used are not necessarily consecutive." The sample THREE-LEVEL paper (pp. 306-316) provides a handy model for those struggling with non-consecutive levels; it uses these forms:

Centered Uppercase and Lowercase
<i>Flush Left Italicized Uppercase and Lowercase</i>
<i>Indented italicized lowercase, period-stopped and embedded.</i>

Embedded means that the title is part of the paragraph; the text continues after the period which concludes the heading.

- In the first sample paper in the *Manual* (pp. 306-316), the first-level format is applied to the major divisions: Method, Results, and Discussion. The standard paper elements (abstract, title of the paper, references, author note, footnotes use the same format (centred, initial capitals).
- Second-level titles include Participants, Materials, Design and Procedure, Scoring, EEG Data, and Recall Data.
- Third-level titles include Recall data, EEG data, Reading data, and Recall data.

The example below uses some of these headings to illustrate the different levels:

Method
<p><i>Participants</i></p> <p>Three groups were identified within a selected sample of first-year student writers. Individuals were identified as demonstrating learning disabilities (LD), attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), or comorbidity (LD+ADHD). All participants from these three categories were evaluated at the University of New Brunswick Learning Centre. Evaluation of participants included measures of overall ability, cognitive processing, oral language, achievement, and social-emotional functioning.</p> <p><i>Reading data.</i> Each participant across Groups 1 to 3 completed a reading task based on an expository text. The participants had been given several topics to choose from during their evaluation at the UNBLC. Two topics were identified as the most popular choices.</p>

- Two-level papers use only the *first two* of these three forms. Four-level papers add a new style between the first and second levels:

Centered Italicized Upper and Lowercase

- General Guidelines for headings:
 - Do not number or letter headings.
 - Do not set headings in bold font.
 - Do not surround headings with quotation marks.
 - Do not set headings in all-uppercase type.
 - Short manuscripts usually require only one or two levels of headings.

Seriation (pp. 115-117, p. 292)

- When it is useful to clarify a list of items *within* a paragraph, use lowercase letters surrounded by parentheses:
We were able to identify (a) their reasons for participating, (b) their fears regarding the outcome, and (c) their plans for future participation.
Note: normal punctuation (in this case, a comma after each item) is used!
- If the sequence involves separate paragraphs, use Arabic numerals followed by periods:

The results of the initial trial indicated that Geon-based instruction had the following advantages:	
1.	It greatly increased the speed with which participants mastered their material. Normally, students require at least [paragraph continues!]
2.	Geon-based instruction deepens students' understanding of the subject, even if their prior knowledge was extensive. None of the 87 participants [paragraph continues!]

Quotations (pp. 117-120)

- Short quotations:** Quotations of fewer than 40 words should be incorporated into the text of the manuscript and enclosed by double quotation marks.
- Long quotations:** Quotations of 40 words or more should be presented as an indented block *without quotation marks*. The block quote is set in about 0.5 inches (1.3 cm or 5 spaces) from the left margin and is *usually* double-spaced. The current *APA* editors comment, "When single-spacing would improve readability . . . it is usually encouraged" (p. 326).
- A quotation within a quotation is set
 - in *single quotation marks* if the outer quotation is in double quotation marks;
 - in *double quotation marks* if the outer quotation is an indented block.

Examples (see also below, “Reference Citations in Text”):

Direct quotation:

Johansson (2002) pointed out that in spite of the well-known difficulty of conducting empirical research in human psychology, “recent investigations have supported the validity of Erikson’s theory” (p. 9).

Quotation of passage containing quotation marks:

Johansson (2002) suggested that we “ask ourselves: ‘How can I use this treatment time to facilitate wholeness for this person?’” (p. 10).

Long quotation (55 words), block format, first reference to four-author study:

Early reports were so promising that they inevitably invited skepticism, if not scorn:
--

With regard to performance, preliminary data seem to show that individuals under polyphasic and ultrashort sleep schedules can function at levels equal to, or higher than, when they are under comparable amounts of monophasic sleep. It appears that polyphasic sleep-wake schedules are a viable solution to maintaining high levels of efficiency during continuous work situations. (Porcu, Casagrande, Ferrara, & Bellatreccia, 1998, p. 44)

The stress penalty associated with long-term polyphasic sleep is only now becoming evident.

Reference Citations in Text (pp. 207-214)

- APA citation style is an author-date method which enables the reader to locate the source of information in the alphabetized reference list at the end of the manuscript. The last name of the author and the year of publication are provided in the citation.
- If the text of a sentence includes the surname of a source, then only the year of publication is provided in parentheses, as in this example:

Pruisner (1995) found that the use of colour did not have an impact on the recall and retention of verbal information presented in graphic form.
--

Page numbers are only required if the author is quoted directly.

- If an author is quoted directly, then the verbatim material should be surrounded by double quotation marks. A page reference must be supplied at the end of the sentence. The page reference is surrounded by parentheses. The page number is preceded by the abbreviation "p.":

Riding and Mathias (1991) found that "wholists show a strong inclination to use the mode which corresponds most nearly to their verbal-imagery style" (p. 389).

Notice that the full-stop is placed *after* the closing parenthesis.

- If an author's surname is not incorporated into the sentence which refers to his or her work, then the surname, the publication year, and the page reference (if the author was quoted directly) are supplied within parentheses at the end of the sentence:

A later study concluded "wholists show a strong inclination to use the mode which corresponds most nearly to their verbal-imagery style" (Riding & Mathias, 1991, p. 389).
--

Here, a comma separates the authors' surnames from the year, and the year from the page reference. Notice that an ampersand (&) instead of "and" appears before the final author's surname when the source is cited parenthetically (but use *and* in the text!).

- When referring to a work by two authors, always include both authors' names in every citation.
- For a work written by three, four or five people, provide the authors' surnames (and the year of publication) in the first reference to the source. In subsequent citations, provide the first author's surname and the abbreviation et al. The year of publication is required only in the *first* reference to the source per paragraph.

First reference to a multi-author source:

Brown, Dial, Sherwood, and Fontana (1994) suggested that . . .
--

Subsequent first citation per paragraph:

Brown et al. (1994) found . . .

Second and subsequent citations:

Brown et al. found . . .

- If two multi-author sources published in the same year shorten to the same form, references should include the surnames of the primary authors and of as many of the subsequent authors as necessary to distinguish the two

sources. For example, "Dial, Brown, & Sherwood, 1994" and "Dial, Sherwood, Brown, & Fontana, 1994" both shorten to "Dial et al., 1994." Therefore, these studies should be cited respectively as "Dial, Brown, et al., 1994" and "Dial, Sherwood, et al., 1994." Remember that the first time either of these studies is cited, all four of the authors' surnames are required.

- If several sources are cited at once, alphabetize the sources by the surname of the first author. A semicolon should separate individual sources:

	Evidence suggests that imagery improves performance on recognition tests (Anderson & Kulhavy, 1972; Frost, 1972; Kulhavy & Swenson, 1975; Luria, 1966).
--	---

Reference List (pp. 216-281)

- The reference list should appear after the conclusion of the paper, before the appendices.
- The reference list appears on a separate page—not on the same page as the discussion or conclusion.
- All citations in the manuscript must appear in the reference list, and all references must be cited in the text. Personal communications, which other scholars *cannot* access, do *not* appear in the reference list.
- Entries in the reference list should be double-spaced. Double-space *between* entries and format them using *hanging indentations*.
- Authors' surnames are followed by their first initials, and entries must list *all* authors and their initials.
- The reference list entries should be arranged in alphabetical order by the surname of the first author.
- When alphabetizing reference list entries, remember that *nothing precedes something*. As the *Manual* notes, "Brown, J. R., precedes Browning, A. R." (p. 219).

Formatting a Reference Entry for an Article from a Periodical (p. 239)

Author's last name, initials. (year). Title of the periodical article. *Title of Periodical*, volume number, page number-page number.

Notice that only the first letter of the article's title is capitalized. However, if there is a colon in the article's title, the first letter to follow the colon should also be capitalized. The first letters of *key words* (all but articles, prepositions, and conjunctions) in the periodical title are capitalized. The periodical title is set in *italics*, as is the volume number.

Au, S. (1994). The effects of mnemonics training on test performance. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 65, 1304-1326.

Formatting a Reference Entry for a Book (p. 248)

Author's last name, initials. (year). *Title of the book*. City of publication, State/Province: Publisher.

Notice that only the first letter of the book's title is capitalized. However, if there is a colon in the book's title, the first letter to follow the colon should be capitalized; for example:

Bundy, B. (1996). *Mnemonics made easy: A concise guide*. Los Angeles, CA: Easy Street Publishing.

Formatting a Reference Entry for a Chapter, Article or Essay from a Book (p. 251)

Author's last name, initials. (year). Title of the chapter or article. In the name of the editor (Ed.), *Title of the book* (pp. number-number). Place of Publication: Publisher.

Notice that the first letter of the chapter title is capitalized. All other letters should be lowercase. If there is a colon in the chapter title, the first letter to follow the colon should be capitalized, as it is in this example:

Wislock, R. (1993). What are perceptual modalities and how do they contribute to learning? In D. D. Flannery (Ed.), *Applying cognitive learning theory: Adult learning* (pp. 5-15). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

The title of the chapter in this example is punctuated by a question mark. Unless the author has provided end-punctuation for a chapter title, a full-stop should follow the chapter title.

Formatting a Reference Entry for a Website (p. 274):

Author's last name, initials. (year). *Title of Website*. Retrieved Month day, year, from <http://www.web.address/pagename.html>

Here is an example of a reference entry for a document found on a university web site:

Spacek, Richard. (2002). *QuickNotes on APA format*. Retrieved October 7, 2002, from University of New Brunswick, UNB Fredericton Writing Centre Web site: <http://www.unb.ca/extend/wss/apa.htm>

Appendices (pp. 299-301)

- Appendices follow the reference list.
- Each appendix begins on a separate page.
- Arrange the figures, charts, diagrams in the order in which they are mentioned in the text of the manuscript. Title each appendix in alphabetical order.
- The word Appendix should be centered horizontally at the top of every appendix page. Do not italicize, surround by quotation marks, or set in boldface the word Appendix.

SPECIAL NOTES:

- The *Manual*'s advice for authors revising for publication is valuable: "strive for clarity; get rid of extraneous words; avoid excessive reporting and repetition; be explicit but not overly detailed; use the active voice; and, of course, use correct grammar" (p. 328).
- Most writers will find the detailed presentation of the two sample papers (pp. 306-320) among the most useful pages in the *Publication Manual*!