Introduction to APA
What is APA?

In most science and social science classes you will be required to write your papers and presentations in APA style. But, what is APA?!

APA is:
• A style manual published by the American Psychological Association
• Used in the sciences and social sciences
• Governs how we format our papers and ensures consistency

• Includes elements such as:
  • selection of headings, tone, and length;
  • punctuation and abbreviations;
  • presentation of numbers and statistics;
  • construction of tables and figures,
  • citation of references;
  • and many other elements that are a part of a manuscript.
The APA manual is the end all be all when it comes to formatting your papers and citations in APA style!

While there are many helpful online APA resources out there, sometimes they deviate from the manual. **When in doubt follow the manual!**

You may want to consider purchasing this manual if you plan to take a lot of science or social science classes (it is currently about $29 new from Amazon). We also have copies available at the reference desk in the library.
What is a citation?

APA governs how we format our citations. But what is a citation and why is it needed?

• A citation provides your reader with the information he or she would need to find a particular source again (such as the author’s name, title, date, etc.). It is like a road map to a particular source.

• Citing allows you to share with your readers where you got the information you are quoting, paraphrasing, or summarizing within the body of your paper so that they can verify what you've written or follow up on an interesting idea, and it protects you from any charges of plagiarism.

• REMEMBER: Every source that you use in your papers MUST be cited in APA style whether you are directly quoting the source, paraphrasing, or summarizing!
Parts of an APA citation

There are two parts to a proper APA citation:

• The citation "in text," letting your readers know when an idea comes from someone other than yourself within the text of your paper.

• The separate “References" page where you will list complete information about each of those sources, which comes at the end of your paper.

• Let’s look at an example ...
APA in-text citation

The in-text citation within the body of your text, provides the author's name, year of publication, and page number/s on which the material you are citing is found. For example:

According to Jones (1998), "Students often had difficulty using APA style, especially when it was their first time." (p. 199).

Introduce a source within the body of your text with a signal phrase. The signal phrase introduces a source and “signals” to your reader that the material to follow comes from someone other than yourself. The signal phrase here is “According to Jones...” Jones is the author’s last name.

After the signal phrase, put the year of publication in parentheses.

Finally list the page number/s preceded by a p. (or pp. for multiple pages) on which the material you are citing is found. This is required when using a direct quote. It is optional when paraphrasing or summarizing, however it is preferred.
APA in-text citation

If the author is not named in a signal phrase, place the author's last name, the year of publication, and the page number in parentheses after the quotation, summary, or paraphrase. For example:

She stated, "Students often had difficulty using APA style" (Jones, 1998, p. 199), but she did not offer an explanation as to why.

The author’s last name, year of publication, and page number are all listed after the quotation, summary, or paraphrase in parentheses. This is an alternative to using a signal phrase.

NOTE: Many instructors prefer that you use a signal phrase when introducing a source within the body of your text. Ask your instructor what his/her preference is.
The References list entry, which lists the **complete information for the source**, is provided at the **end of your paper** in your **References** list. For example:


**NOTE:** Not all articles will have a DOI. If an article does not have a DOI, use ‘Retrieved from’ with the journal’s **home Website URL (not the database’s URL).** For example,

Retrieved from http://www.ednet.org/journals
APA also governs how we format our papers. Here are some of the general expectations for an APA paper:

• Your essay should be typed, double-spaced on standard-sized paper (8.5" x 11") with 1" margins on all sides. You should use a clear font that is highly readable. APA recommends using 12 pt. Times New Roman font.

• Include a page header (also known as the "running head") at the top of every page. To create a page header/running head, insert page numbers flush right. Then type the TITLE OF YOUR PAPER in the header flush left using all capital letters. The running head is a shortened version of your paper's title and cannot exceed 50 characters including spacing and punctuation.

• Your essay should include four major sections: the Title Page, Abstract, Main Body, and References.

• Let’s look at an example ...
APA title page format

Your running head will go in the upper left corner. Format it like this: Running head: [YOUR TITLE IN ALL CAPS].

NOTE: The words “Running head” only appear on the title page, each subsequent page will just have your title in all caps.

Type your title in upper and lowercase letters centered in the upper half of the page. (NOTE: Your title should be no more than 12 words).

Beneath the title, type your name.

Beneath your name, type the institutional affiliation (i.e. Tacoma Community College).

NOTE: Use double-spacing throughout.

You may or many not be required to provide an author’s note. Ask your instructor.

Page numbers go in the upper right corner of your paper.
Begin a new page. Your abstract page should already include the page header.

NOTE: Not all instructors will require an abstract. Ask your instructor what his/her expectations are.

On the first line of the abstract page, center the word “Abstract” (no bold, formatting, italics, underlining, or quotation marks).

Beginning with the next line, write a concise summary of the key points of your research, using double-spacing throughout.

Can medication cure obesity in children?

Abstract

In recent years, policymakers and medical experts have expressed alarm about the growing problem of childhood obesity in the United States. While most agree that the issue deserves attention, consensus dissolves around how to respond to the problem. This literature review examines one approach to treating childhood obesity: medication. The paper compares the effectiveness for adolescents of the only two drugs approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for long-term treatment of obesity, sibutramine and orlistat. This examination of pharmacological treatments for obesity points out the limitations of medication and suggests the need for a comprehensive solution that combines medical, social, behavioral, and political approaches to this complex problem.
Begin a new page. It should already include the page header.

On the first line, center your title (no bold, formatting, italics, underlining, or quotation marks).

On the next line begin the text of your paper. Remember that your paper should be double-spaced with 1" margins on all sides. You should use a clear font that is highly readable. APA recommends using 12 pt. Times New Roman font.
Begin a new page. It should already include the page header.

On the first line, center the word References (no bold, formatting, italics, underlining, or quotation marks).

On the next line begin listing the complete citation information for EVERY source used in your paper.

The list should be alphabetized by the author’s last name OR by the title if there is no author.

The first line of an entry is flush left; subsequent lines are indented .5”. This is called a “hanging indent.”

Double-spacing is used throughout.

References


Questions?

Ask a librarian!