

APA Style Essentials

http://www.vanguard.edu/uploaded/research/apa_style_guide/apastyleessentials.pdf

Last modified November 7, 2017

Douglas Degelman, PhD
Vanguard University of Southern California



The *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed., 2010) and the APA Style web site (<http://www.apastyle.org/>) provide a comprehensive reference guide to writing using APA style, organization, and content. To order a copy of the *Publication Manual* online, go to <http://books.apa.org/books.cfm?id=4200066>. To view "PDF" documents referenced on this APA Style Essentials page, you need Adobe Acrobat Reader. To download the free Acrobat Reader, go to <http://get.adobe.com/reader/>.

The purpose of this document is to provide a common core of elements of APA style that all members of an academic department can adopt as minimal standards for any assignment that specifies APA style. This Web document is itself *not* a model of APA style. For an example of a complete article formatted according to APA style, go to http://www.vanguard.edu/uploaded/research/apa_style_guide/paper.pdf. For an example of an undergraduate research proposal, go to http://www.vanguard.edu/uploaded/research/apa_style_guide/proposal.pdf. To download a Microsoft Word template of an APA-style paper, go to http://www.vanguard.edu/uploaded/research/apa_style_guide/template.doc.

I. General Document Guidelines

- A. **Margins:** One inch on all sides (top, bottom, left, right)
- B. **Font Size and Type:** 12-pt. Times New Roman font
- C. **Line Spacing:** Double-space throughout the paper, including the title page, abstract, body of the document, references, appendixes, footnotes, tables, and figures.
- D. **Spacing after Punctuation:** Space *once* after commas, colons, and semicolons within sentences. Insert two spaces after punctuation marks that end sentences.
- E. **Alignment:** Flush left (creating uneven right margin)
- F. **Paragraph Indentation:** 5-7 spaces
- G. **Pagination:** The page number appears one inch from the right edge of the paper on the first line of every page, beginning with the title page
- H. **Running Head:** The running head is a short title that appears at the top of the pages of a paper or published article. The running head is typed flush left (all uppercase) at the top of all pages (including the title page). The running head should not exceed 50 characters, including punctuation and spacing. Using most word processors, the running head and page number can be inserted into a header, which then automatically appears on all pages.
 - I. **Active voice:** As a general rule, use the active voice rather than the passive voice. For example, use "We predicted that ..." rather than "It was predicted that ..."
 - J. **Order of Pages:** Title Page, Abstract, Body, References, Footnotes, Tables, Figures, Appendixes

II. Title Page

- A. **Pagination:** The Title Page is page 1.
- B. **Running Head:** The running head is typed flush left (all uppercase) following "Running head:"
- C. **Key Elements:** Paper title, author(s), institutional affiliation(s), author note.
- D. **Paper Title:** Centered uppercase and lowercase letters in the upper half of the page..
- E. **Author(s):** Uppercase and lowercase letters, centered on the line following the title.
- F. **Institutional affiliation:** Uppercase and lowercase letters, centered on the line following the author(s).
- G. **Author Note:** Provide information about the author's departmental affiliation, acknowledgments of assistance or financial support, and a mailing address for correspondence.
- H. **Example of APA-style Title Page:** http://www.vanguard.edu/uploaded/research/apa_style_guide/titlepage.pdf

- III. **Abstract:** The abstract is a one-paragraph, self-contained summary of the most important elements of the paper.

- A. **Pagination:** The abstract begins on a new page (page 2).
- B. **Heading:** "Abstract" (centered on the first line below the running head)
- C. **Format:** The abstract (in block format) begins on the line following the Abstract heading. The abstract word limit is set by individual journals. Typically, the word limit is between 150 and 250 words. All numbers in the abstract (except those beginning a sentence) should be typed as digits rather than words.
- D. **Example of APA-style Abstract:** http://www.vanguard.edu/uploaded/research/apa_style_guide/abstract.pdf
- IV. **Body**
- A. **Pagination:** The body of the paper begins on a new page (page 3). Subsections of the body of the paper do *not* begin on new pages.
- B. **Title:** The title of the paper (in uppercase and lowercase letters) is centered on the first line below the running head on the first page of the introduction (page 3).
- C. **Introduction:** The introduction (which is not labeled) begins on the line following the paper title.
- D. **Headings:** [Five levels of headings](http://www.vanguard.edu/uploaded/research/apa_style_guide/headings.pdf) are available to be used to organize the paper and reflect the relative importance of sections. For example, many empirical research articles utilize two levels of headings: Main headings (such as **Method**, **Results**, **Discussion**, **References**) would use Level 1 (centered, boldface, uppercase and lowercase letters), and subheadings (such as **Participants**, **Apparatus**, and **Procedure** as subsections of the Method section) would use Level 2 (flush left, boldface, uppercase and lowercase letters).
- E. **Example of APA-style Headings:** http://www.vanguard.edu/uploaded/research/apa_style_guide/headings.pdf
- V. **Text citations:** Source material must be documented in the body of the paper by citing the author(s) and date(s) of the sources. The underlying principle is that ideas and words of others must be formally acknowledged. The reader can obtain the full source citation from the list of references that follows the body of the paper.
- A. When the names of the authors of a source are part of the formal structure of the sentence, the year of publication appears in parentheses following the identification of the authors. Consider the following example:
- Wirth and Mitchell (1994) found that although there was a reduction in insulin dosage over a period of two weeks in the treatment condition compared to the control condition, the difference was not statistically significant. [**Note:** *and* is used when multiple authors are identified as part of the formal structure of the sentence. Compare this to the example in the following section.]
- B. When the authors of a source are *not* part of the formal structure of the sentence, both the authors and year of publication appear in parentheses. Consider the following example:
- Reviews of research on religion and health have concluded that at least some types of religious behaviors are related to higher levels of physical and mental health (Gartner, Larson, & Allen, 1991; Koenig, 1990; Levin & Vanderpool, 1991; Maton & Pargament, 1987; Paloma & Pendleton, 1991; Payne, Bergin, Bielema, & Jenkins, 1991). [**Note:** & is used when multiple authors are identified in parenthetical material. Note also that when several sources are cited parenthetically, they are ordered alphabetically by first authors' surnames and separated by semicolons.]
- C. When a source that has two authors is cited, both authors are included every time the source is cited.
- D. When a source that has three, four, or five authors is cited, all authors are included the first time the source is cited. When that source is cited again, the first author's surname and "et al." are used. Consider the following example:
- Reviews of research on religion and health have concluded that at least some types of religious behaviors are related to higher levels of physical and mental health (Payne, Bergin, Bielema, & Jenkins, 1991).
- Payne et al. (1991) showed that ...

- E. When a source that has six or more authors is cited, the first author's surname and "et al." are used every time the source is cited (including the first time).
- F. Every effort should be made to cite only sources that you have actually read. When it is necessary to cite a source that you have not read ("Grayson" in the following example) that is cited in a source that you have read ("Murzynski & Degelman" in the following example), use the following format for the text citation and list only the source you have read in the References list:
- Grayson (as cited in Murzynski & Degelman, 1996) identified four components of body language that were related to judgments of vulnerability.
- G. To cite a personal communication (including letters, emails, and telephone interviews), include initials, surname, and as exact a date as possible. Because a personal communication is not "recoverable" information, it is not included in the References section. For the text citation, use the following format:
- B. F. Skinner (personal communication, February 12, 1978) claimed ...
- H. To cite a Web document, use the author-date format. If no author is identified, use the first few words of the title in place of the author. If no date is provided, use "n.d." in place of the date. Consider the following examples:
- Degelman (2009) summarizes guidelines for the use of APA writing style.
- Changes in Americans' views of gender status differences have been documented ("Gender and Society," n.d.).
- I. To cite an entire website, give the address of the site in the text. Example:
- Eric Chudler's excellent Neuroscience for Kids (<http://faculty.washington.edu/chudler/neurok.html>) is definitely not only for kids! [**Note:** No entry in the References list is needed for the website.]
- J. To cite the Bible, provide the book, chapter, and verse. The first time the Bible is cited in the text, identify the version used. Consider the following example:
- "You are forgiving and good, O Lord, abounding in love to all who call to you" (Psalm 86:5, New International Version). [**Note:** No entry in the References list is needed for the Bible.]
- VI. **Quotations:** When a direct quotation is used, always include the author, year, and page number as part of the citation.
- A. A quotation of fewer than 40 words should be enclosed in double quotation marks and should be incorporated into the formal structure of the sentence. Example:
- Patients receiving prayer had "less congestive heart failure, required less diuretic and antibiotic therapy, had fewer episodes of pneumonia, had fewer cardiac arrests, and were less frequently intubated and ventilated" (Byrd, 1988, p. 829).
- B. A lengthier quotation of 40 or more words should appear (without quotation marks) apart from the surrounding text, in block format, with each line indented five spaces from the left margin.
- VII. **References:** All sources included in the References section must be cited in the body of the paper (and all sources cited in the paper must be included in the References section).
- A. **Pagination:** The References section begins on a new page.
- B. **Heading:** "References" (centered on the first line below the running head)
- C. **Format:** The references (with hanging indent) begin on the line following the References heading. Entries are organized alphabetically by surnames of first authors. Most reference entries have the following components:
1. **Authors:** Authors are listed in the same order as specified in the source, using surnames and initials. Commas separate all authors. When there are eight or more authors, list the first six authors followed by three ellipses (...) and then the final author. If no author is identified, the title of the document begins the reference.

2. Year of Publication: In parentheses following authors, with a period following the closing parenthesis. If no publication date is identified, use "n.d." in parentheses following the authors.
3. Source Reference: Includes title, journal, volume, pages (for journal article) or title, city of publication, publisher (for book). Italicize titles of books, titles of periodicals, and periodical volume numbers.
4. Electronic Retrieval Information: Electronic retrieval information may include digital object identifiers (DOIs) or uniform resource locators (URLs). DOIs are unique alphanumeric identifiers that lead users to digital source material. To learn whether an article has been assigned a DOI, go to <http://www.crossref.org/questquery/>.

D. **Example of APA-style References:** Go to http://www.vanguard.edu/uploaded/research/apa_style_guide/references.pdf

E. **Examples of sources**

1. **Journal article with DOI**

Murzynski, J., & Degelman, D. (1996). Body language of women and judgments of vulnerability to sexual assault. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 26*, 1617-1626. doi:10.1111/j.1559-1816.1996.tb00088.x

2. **Journal article without DOI, print version**

Koenig, H. G. (1990). Research on religion and mental health in later life: A review and commentary. *Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry, 23*, 23-53.

3. **Journal article without DOI, retrieved online [Note: For articles retrieved from databases, include the URL of the journal home page. Database information is not needed. Do not include the date of retrieval.]**

Aldridge, D. (1991). Spirituality, healing and medicine. *British Journal of General Practice, 41*, 425-427. Retrieved from <http://www.rcgp.org.uk/publications/bjgp.aspx>

4. **Book**

Paloutzian, R. F. (1996). *Invitation to the psychology of religion* (2nd ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

5. **Informally published Web document**

Degelman, D. (2009). *APA style essentials*. Retrieved from http://www.vanguard.edu/uploaded/research/apa_style_guide/apastyleessentials.pdf

6. **Informally published Web document (no date)**

Nielsen, M. E. (n.d.). *Notable people in psychology of religion*. Retrieved from <http://www.psywww.com/psyrelig/psyrelpr.htm>

7. **Informally published Web document (no author, no date)**

Gender and society. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.trinity.edu/~mkearl/gender.html>

8. **Abstract from secondary database**

Garrity, K., & Degelman, D. (1990). Effect of server introduction on restaurant tipping. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 20*, 168-172. Abstract retrieved from PsycINFO database.

9. **Article or chapter in an edited book**

Shea, J. D. (1992). Religion and sexual adjustment. In J. F. Schumaker (Ed.), *Religion and mental health* (pp. 70-84). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

10. **Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders**

American Psychiatric Association. (2013). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (5th ed.). Arlington, VA: American Psychiatric Publishing.

- VIII. **Footnotes:** Content footnotes are occasionally used to support substantive information in the text. A content footnote may be placed at the bottom of the page on which it is discussed or on a separate page following the References.
- A. **Pagination:** Footnotes begin on a separate page.
 - B. **Heading:** "Footnotes" is centered on the first line below the running head.
 - C. **Format:** Indent the first line of each footnote 5-7 spaces and number the footnotes (slightly above the line) as they are identified in the text.
 - D. **Example of APA-style Footnotes:** http://www.vanguard.edu/uploaded/research/apa_style_guide/Footnote.pdf
- IX. **Tables:** A common use of tables is to present quantitative data or the results of statistical analyses (such as ANOVA). See the *Publication Manual* (2010, pp. 128-150) for detailed examples. Tables must be mentioned in the text.
- A. **Pagination:** Each Table begins on a separate page.
 - B. **Heading:** "Table 1" (or 2 or 3, etc.) is typed flush left on the first line below the running head. Double-space and type the table title flush left (italicized in uppercase and lowercase letters).
 - C. **Example of APA-style Tables:** http://www.vanguard.edu/uploaded/research/apa_style_guide/table.pdf
- X. **Figures:** A common use of Figures is to present graphs, photographs, or other illustrations (other than tables). See the *Publication Manual* (2010, pp. 150-167) for detailed examples.
- A. **Pagination:** Figures begin on a separate page.
 - B. **Figure Caption:** "Figure 1." (or 2 or 3, etc.) is typed flush left and italicized on the first line below the figure, immediately followed on the same line by the caption (which should be a brief descriptive phrase).
 - C. **Example of APA-style Figure:** http://www.vanguard.edu/uploaded/research/apa_style_guide/figure.pdf
- XI. **Appendixes:** A common use of appendixes is to present unpublished tests or to describe complex equipment or stimulus materials.
- A. **Pagination:** Each Appendix begins on a separate page.
 - B. **Heading:** If there is only one appendix, "Appendix" is centered on the first line below the manuscript page header. If there is more than one appendix, use Appendix A (or B or C, etc.). Double-space and type the appendix title (centered in uppercase and lowercase letters).
 - C. **Format:** Indent the first line 5-7 spaces.
 - D. **Example of APA-style Appendix:** http://www.vanguard.edu/uploaded/research/apa_style_guide/Appendix.pdf