Writing a Bibliography: In APA Format (Basic)

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Abstract:

Many book and scholarly journal editors as well as grant reviewers and others require that manuscripts they consider for publication be prepared in APA (American Psychological Association) format. This is true in many disciplines, by no means limited to psychology or even the broader social sciences. What is APA format? Why is it used in areas outside of psychology? And what do writers need to do in order to get their manuscripts into this format?

APA format is a standard set of conventions for formatting manuscripts. It contains detailed instructions for in-text citation references, references lists, pagination, margins, hierarchy of subheadings, running heads, etc. It has been adapted across a large number of disciplines (notably not including medical texts and journals, which have their own set of standardized conventions) for two reasons. First, there is a recognized need for standardization of these formatting parameters in order to make it easier for readers to be able to understand scholarly texts with the greatest possible ease and efficiency. Second, given this need, APA has developed an extremely thorough and comprehensive manual to accomplish this, and editors in other disciplines don't need to waste time reinventing the wheel by developing alternative parallel formats. In addition, APA is conscientious about periodically updating their format manual, for example to incorporate references to material found on the World Wide Web, which did not exist when the first version of the manual was published.

The APA format manual is lengthy and complex but well-indexed and very explicit. It can be purchased online from a variety of sources and is available at most university bookstores. Brief guides may also be purchased and found online through your favorite search engine using keywords 'APA formatting'.

Investing in your future by hiring an editor who is an expert in APA formatting as well as in the correct use of the English language can turn an average thesis into an excellent thesis. It pays to ensure that what many people consider to be one of the most important writings of their lives is of the highest quality possible.

Keywords: *Article, APA, Bibliography, Formatting, Manuscript, Research paper, References*

1. Introduction

"In 1928 editors and business managers of anthropological and psychological journals met to discuss the form of journal manuscripts and to write instructions for their preparation. The report of this meeting . . . was published as a seven-page article in the February 1929 issue of the Psychological Bulletin, a journal of the American Psychological Association (APA). The group agreed that it would not dictate to authors; instead, it recommended "a standard of procedure, to which exceptions would doubtless be necessary, but to which reference might be made in cases of doubt." From the Foreword to Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 4th Edition. For a more comprehensive look at APA documentation guidelines, please consult the 5th edition of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association. Copies are available in the Writing Center and the Rensselaer Library. In using APA style, sources are acknowledged in two locations in the document: a References Page and within the body of your paper using In text Citations. All examples of citations are from the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 4th and 5th Editions.

2. What is APA Style?

- The **A**merican **P**sychological **A**ssociation (APA) referencing style is the most commonly used referencing style at the University of Waikato.
- The latest edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (2010)* is now available in the Library.
- Corrections to the first printing can be found on the APA website: Corrections to the first printing (PDF) and Corrected sample paper (PDF).

3. Basics

Your list of works cited should begin at the end of the paper on a new page with the centered title, *References*. Alphabetize the entries in your list by the author's last name, using the letter-by-letter system (ignore spaces and other punctuation.) Only the initials of the first and middle names are given. If the author's name is unknown, alphabetize by the title, ignoring any *A, An*, or *The*.

For dates, spell out the names of months in the text of your paper, but abbreviate them in the list of works cited, except for May, June, and July. Use either the day-month-year style (22 July 1999) or the month-day-year style (July 22, 1999) and be consistent. With the month-day-year style, be sure to add a comma after the year unless another punctuation mark goes there.

4. Underlining or *Italics*?

When reports were written on typewriters, the names of publications were underlined because most typewriters had no way to print italics. If you write a bibliography by hand, you should still underline the names of publications. But, if you use a computer, then publication names should be in italics as they are below. Always check with your instructor regarding their preference of using italics or underlining. Our examples use italics.

5. Hanging Indentation

All APA citations should use hanging indents, that is, the first line of an entry should be flush left, and the second and subsequent lines should be indented 1/2".

6. Capitalization, Abbreviation, and Punctuation

The APA guidelines specify using sentence-style capitalization for the titles of books or articles, so you should capitalize only the first word of a title and subtitle. The exceptions to this rule would be periodical titles and proper names in a title which should still be capitalized. The periodical title is run in title case, and is followed by the volume number which, with the title, is also italicized.

If there is more than one author, use an ampersand (&) before the name of the last author. If there are more than six authors, list only the first one and use *et al*. for the rest.

Place the date of publication in parentheses immediately after the name of the author. Place a period after the closing parenthesis. Do not italicize, underline, or put quotes around the titles of shorter works within longer works.

7. Format Examples
7.1 Books
7.1.1 Format
Author's last name, first initial. (Publication date). Book title. Additional information. City of publication: publishing Company. First line without indent and all next lines are writing with four space indention with a to z sequence. Remove Dr., Mr., Ms., Miss., Mrs. Prof. etc. from author's name.

7.1.2 Examples
1. Allen, T. (1974). Vanishing wildlife of North America. Washington, D.C.: National Geographic Society.
2. Boorstin, D. (1992). The creators: A history of the heroes of the imagination. New York: Random House.
3. Nicol, A. M., & Pexman, P. M. (1999). Presenting your findings: A practical guide for creating tables. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
4. Searles, B., & Last, M. (1979). A reader's guide to science fiction. New York: Facts on File, Inc.
5. Toomer, J. (1988). Cane. Ed. Darwin T. Turner. New York: Norton.

7.2 Encyclopedia & Dictionary
7.2.1 Format
Author's last name, first initial. (Date). Title of Article. Title of Encyclopedia (Volume, pages). City of publication: Publishing company.

7.2.2 Examples
1. Bergmann, P. G. (1993). Relativity. In The new encyclopedia Britannica (Vol. 26, pp. 501-508). Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica.
2. Merriam-Webster's collegiate dictionary (10th Ed.). (1993). Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster.
3. Pettingill, O. S., Jr. (1980). Falcon and Falconry. World book encyclopedia. (pp. 150-155). Chicago: World Book.
4. Tobias, R. (1991). Thurber, James. Encyclopedia Americana. (p. 600). New York: Scholastic Library Publishing.

8. Magazine & Newspaper Articles
8.2.1 Format
Author's last name, first initial. (Publication date). Article title. Periodical title, volume number (issue umber if available), inclusive pages.

Note: Do not enclose the title in quotation marks. Put a period after the title. If a periodical includes a volume number, italicize it and then give the page range (in regular type) without "pp." If the periodical does not use volume numbers, as in newspapers, use p. or pp. for page numbers.

Note: Unlike other periodicals, p. or pp. precedes page numbers for a newspaper reference in APA style.

8.2.2 Examples
1. Harlow, H. F. (1983). Fundamentals for preparing psychology journal articles. Journal of Comparative and Physiological Psychology, 55, 893-896.
2. Kalette, D. (1986, July 21). California town counts town to big quake. USA Today, 9, p. A1.
3. Kanfer, S. (1986, July 21). Heard any good books lately? Time, 113, 71-72.
4. Henry, W. A., III. (1990, April 9). Making the grade in today's schools. Time, 135, 28-31.
5. Trillin, C. (1993, February 15). Culture shopping. New Yorker, pp. 48-51.

9. Website or Webpage
9.1 Format
9.2.1 Online Periodical
Author's name. (Date of publication). Title of article. Title of Periodical, volume number, retrieved month day, year, from full URL.

9.2.2 Online Document
Author's name. (Date of publication). Title of work. Retrieved month day, year, from full URL

Note: When citing Internet sources, refer to the specific website document. If a document is undated, use "n.d." (for no date) immediately after the document title. Break a lengthy URL that goes to another line after a slash or before a period. Continually check your references to online documents. There is no period following a URL.

Note: If you cannot find some of this information, cite what is available.

9.2.3 Examples
1. Devitt, T. (2001, August 2). Lightning injures four at music festival. The Why? Files. Retrieved January 23, 2002, from http://whyfiles.org/137lightning/index.html
2. Dove, R. (1998). Lady freedom among us. The Electronic Text Center. Retrieved June 19, 1998, from Alderman Library, University of Virginia website: http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/subjects/afam.html

Note: If a document is contained within a large and complex website (such as that for a university or a government agency), identify the host organization and the relevant program or department before giving the URL for the document itself. Precede the URL with a colon.

1. Hilts, P. J. (1999, February 16). In forecasting their emotions, most people flunk out. New York Times. Retrieved November 21, 2000, from http://www.nytimes.com
2. Fredrickson, B. L. (2000, March 7). Cultivating positive emotions to optimize health and well-being. Prevention & Treatment, 3, Article 0001a. Retrieved November 20, 2000, from http://journals.apa.org/prevention/volume3/pre0030001a.html
3. GVU's 8th WWW user survey. (n.d.). Retrieved August 8, 2000, from http://www.cc.gatech.edu/gvu/usersurveys/survey1997-10/
4. Health Canada. (2002, February). The safety of genetically modified food crops. Retrieved March 22, 2005, from http://www.hc sc.gc.ca/english/protection/biologics_genetics/gen_mod_foods/genmodebk.html

10. Conclusion

The APA format is a standardized system for formatting research papers and citing resources. By following its rules, you can write a paper that conforms to standard guidelines, your paper will appear professional and scholarly and readers will easily understand how to find your resources. Although there are many other academic formats, APA is perhaps the most common. It is frequently used by "researchers in education, social work, nursing, business, and many other behavioral and social sciences" (American Psychological Association). Hence, students in those subjects are commonly required to use this format. The American Psychological Association began setting standards for research paper format and citations (as well as primary research methods and ethics, general use of language, and style of writing) in order to help scholars all over the world follow coordinated guidelines. Standardized papers are easier to read, understand, compare, and study. Since researchers often build upon past studies, these guidelines help make that progress smooth.

References

1. http://ezinearticles.com/?What-is-APA-Format-and-Why-is-it-Important?&id=235442
2. http://www.ehow.com/facts_6115741_importance-apa-format-research-papers.html
3. http://library.uoregon.edu/guides/citing/apa.html
4. http://www.ccc.commnet.edu/library/apa.pdf
5. www.docstyles.com/apacrib.htm
6. sociology.morrisville.edu/.../APA-General-Format-Research-Papers.