

APA Style Essentials

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The *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (5th ed., 2001) provides a comprehensive reference guide to writing using APA style, organization, and content. To order a copy of the *Publication Manual* online, go to <http://www.apa.org/books/4200060.html>. 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://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html>.

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/uploadedfiles/faculty/ddegelman/prayer.pdf>. For an example of an undergraduate research proposal, go to <http://www.vanguard.edu/uploadedfiles/faculty/ddegelman/psychproposal.pdf>. To download a Microsoft Word template of an APA-style paper, go to <http://www.vanguard.edu/uploadedFiles/Faculty/DDegelman/psychapa.doc>.

I. General Document Guidelines

- A. **Margins:** One inch on all sides (top, bottom, left, right)
- B. **Font Size and Type:** 12-pt. font (Times Roman or Courier are acceptable typefaces)
- C. **Line Spacing:** Double-space throughout the paper, including the title page, abstract, body of the document, references, appendixes, footnotes, tables, and figure captions.
- D. **Spacing after Punctuation:** Space *once* after all punctuation. This includes using one space (not two!) following punctuation marks at the ends of 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 (except [Figures](#)), beginning with the title page.
- H. **Manuscript Page Header:** The first two or three words of the paper title appear five spaces to the left of the page number on every page (except [Figures](#)), beginning with the title page. Manuscript page headers are used to identify manuscript pages during the editorial process. Using most word processors, the manuscript page header 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](#), [Appendixes](#), [Footnotes](#), [Tables](#), [Figure Captions](#), [Figures](#)

II. Title Page

- A. **Pagination:** The Title Page is page 1.
- B. **Key Elements:** Paper title, author(s), author affiliation(s), and running head.
- C. **Paper Title:** Uppercase and lowercase letters, centered on the page.
- D. **Author(s):** Uppercase and lowercase letters, centered on the line following the title.
- E. **Institutional affiliation:** Uppercase and lowercase letters, centered on the line following the author(s).
- F. **Running head:** The running head is typed flush left (all uppercase) following the words "Running head:" on the line below the manuscript page header. It should not exceed 50 characters, including punctuation and spacing. The running head is a short title that appears at the top of pages of published articles.
- G. **Example of APA-formatted Title Page:** <http://www.vanguard.edu/uploadedFiles/psychology/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 manuscript page header)
- C. **Format:** The abstract (in block format) begins on the line following the Abstract heading. The abstract should not exceed 120 words. All numbers in the abstract (except those beginning a sentence) should be typed as digits rather than words.
- D. **Example of APA-formatted Abstract:** <http://www.vanguard.edu/uploadedFiles/psychology/abstract.pdf>

IV. **Body**

- A. **Page numbering:** 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 manuscript page header.
- C. **Introduction:** The introduction (which is not labeled) begins on the line following the paper title.
- D. **Headings:** Headings are used to organize the document and reflect the relative importance of sections. For example, many empirical research articles utilize Method, Results, Discussion, and References headings. In turn, the Method section often has subheadings of *Participants*, *Apparatus*, and *Procedure*. For an example of APA-formatted headings, go to <http://www.vanguard.edu/uploadedFiles/psychology/headings.pdf>
 - 1. **Main headings** (when the paper has either one or two levels of headings) use centered uppercase and lowercase letters (e.g., Method, Results, Discussion, and References).
 - 2. **Subheadings** (when the paper has two levels of headings) are italicized and use flush left, uppercase and lowercase letters (e.g., *Participants*, *Apparatus*, and *Procedure* as subsections of the Method section).

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 years of publication appear in parentheses, separated by semicolons. 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.]
- 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 and Harris (2000) provide 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 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 need 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 manuscript page header)
 - 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 three 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 seven or more authors, list the first six and then use "et al." for remaining authors. 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 given, 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 and volume numbers of periodicals.
 - D. **Example of APA References:** <http://www.vanguard.edu/uploadedFiles/psychology/references.pdf>
 - E. **Official APA "Electronic Reference Formats":** <http://www.apastyle.org/elecref.html>
 - F. **Examples of sources**
 1. **Journal article**
Murzynski, J., & Degelman, D. (1996). Body language of women and judgments of vulnerability to sexual assault. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 26*, 1617-1626.
 2. **Book**
Paloutzian, R. F. (1996). *Invitation to the psychology of religion* (2nd ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
 3. **Web document on university program or department Web site**
Degelman, D., & Harris, M. L. (2000). *APA style essentials*. Retrieved May 18, 2000, from Vanguard University, Department of Psychology Web site: http://www.vanguard.edu/faculty/ddegelman/index.aspx?doc_id=796
 4. **Stand-alone Web document (no date)**
Nielsen, M. E. (n.d.). *Notable people in psychology of religion*. Retrieved August 3, 2001, from <http://www.psywww.com/psyrelig/psyrelpr.htm>
 5. **Stand-alone Web document (no author, no date)**
Gender and society. (n.d.). Retrieved December 3, 2001, from <http://www.trinity.edu/~mkearl/gender.html>
 6. **Journal article from database**
Hien, D., & Honeyman, T. (2000). A closer look at the drug abuse-maternal aggression link. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 15*, 503-522. Retrieved May 20, 2000, from ProQuest database.
 7. **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 July 23, 2001, from PsycINFO database.
 8. **Journal article, Internet-only journal**
Bergen, D. (2002, Spring). The role of pretend play in children's cognitive development. *Early Childhood Research & Practice, 4*(1). Retrieved February 1, 2004, from <http://ecrp.uiuc.edu/v4n1/bergen.html>
 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: Oxford University Press.
 10. **Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders**
American Psychiatric Association. (2000). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (4th ed., text revision). Washington, DC: Author.

- VIII. **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-formatted Appendix:** <http://www.vanguard.edu/uploadedFiles/psychology/appendix.pdf>
- IX. **Footnotes:** Content footnotes are occasionally used to support substantive information in the text..
- A. **Pagination:** Footnotes begin on a separate page.
 - B. **Heading:** Footnotes is centered on the first line below the manuscript page header.
 - 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-formatted Footnotes:** <http://www.vanguard.edu/uploadedFiles/psychology/footnote.pdf>
- X. **Tables:** A common use of tables is to present quantitative data or the results of statistical analyses (such as ANOVA). See the *Publication Manual* (2001, pp. 147-176) for detailed examples. Tables must be referred to 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 manuscript page header. Double-space and type the table title flush left (italicized in uppercase and lowercase letters).
 - C. **Example of APA-formatted Tables:** <http://www.vanguard.edu/uploadedFiles/psychology/table2.pdf>
- XI. **Figure Captions and Figures:** A common use of Figures is to present graphs, photographs, or other illustrations (other than tables). See the *Publication Manual* (2001, pp. 176-201) for detailed examples. Figure Captions provide, on a single page, captions for the figures that follow.
- A. **Pagination:** The Figure Captions page is the final numbered page of the paper. The Figures that follow the Figure Captions page do NOT have page numbers or manuscript page headers.
 - B. **Heading for Figure Captions:** Figure Caption(s) is centered on the first line below the manuscript page header. Double-space and type *Figure 1*. (or 2 or 3, etc.) italicized and flush left, followed by the caption for the figure (not italicized), capitalizing only the first letter of the first word and any proper nouns.
 - C. **Example of APA-formatted Figure Caption and Figure:**
<http://www.vanguard.edu/uploadedFiles/Faculty/DDegelman/psychfigure.pdf>