

# How to Use APA Format—A Brief Guide

APA format is used in social science (e.g. psychology, sociology), education, and some science classes. If you have problems with APA format or are confused, Purdue OWL is always a great place to go to have your questions answered (<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>). If you are still confused after going there, ask your professor.

**NOTE:** This is a basic guide to APA, based on the 6<sup>th</sup> edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. You should **always** follow your professor’s instructions about layout, style and citations and consult this guide as a reference.

## For the Title Page

If you are using Microsoft Word, double-click at the top of the page to open the header (A blue dotted line labeled “Header” should appear. Go to the INSERT tab and choose PAGE NUMBER. The page number should be aligned right. The title of the work must be located on the left hand side of the header. The title should not exceed 50 characters.

Running head: TITLE OF WORK		1
	Title of Paper	
	Name of Author	
	Institutional Affiliation	

## Layout of Paper

Here is a general sample of what the top of your paper should look like.

For the Header:

If you are using Microsoft Word, double-click at the top of the page to open the header (A blue dotted line labeled “Header” should appear. Go to the INSERT tab and choose PAGE NUMBER. The page number should be aligned right. The title of the work must be located on the left hand side of the header. The header should be on every page including the title page.

TITLE OF WORK		1
Text of essay begins here.		

## Abstract

For the Abstract:

The first line should have the text “Abstract” centered on the line. Beginning with the next line, write a concise summary of the key points of your research. (Do not indent.) Your abstract should contain at least your research topic, research questions, participants, methods, results, data analysis, and conclusions. You may also describe what the research shows and how it can be expanded in the future.

TITLE OF WORK	Abstract	1
Abstract text here.		

## Citations

For In-text Citations:

The in-text citation includes the last name of the producer of the work cited from followed by the year of publication. This information should be separated by a comma and in parenthesis at the end of the sentence before the ending punctuation. All in-text citations should be included in the reference page at the end of the paper.

TITLE OF WORK	1
(2008) describes remixing as collaging media from a variety of sources together, removing them from their original context and purpose, and repurposing them to convey some other message.	

## One Author

The author’s last name and the page number should be used when available.

For example:

“The fact that much of advertising’s power comes from this belief that advertising does not affect us. The most effective kind of propaganda is that which is not recognized as propaganda” (Kilbourne, 1999, p. 27).

You can also use the author’s name in the sentence as a signal phrase. When you use a signal phrase, you use ONLY the page number in the parentheses.

For example:

Kilbourne (1999) states that “much of advertising’s power comes from this belief that advertising does not affect us” (p. 27).

**Note:** p. or pp. (for multiple pages) are only required for direct quotes, but you may need to include them in all citations at your instructors request.

## Multiple Authors

With three or fewer authors, list all of the author’s names in the text or in the parenthetical citation:

For example:

Violence is deemed as an instance of physical force used to cause injury, destruction, or death (Anderson, Gentile, & Douglas, 2007).

If you have more than three authors, use the first author’s last name followed by et al.

For example:

The more students play violent video games, the more likely they are to become desensitized to violent material (Krahé et al., 2011)

## No Author

When you have no author, use a shortened version of the title of the source.

For example:

Part of society feels that these types of television shows are the reason that some children feel that being mean to others is okay; furthermore, they may feel that being violent to others is okay as well (CQ *Researcher*, 2001).

## References

Your reference list should have "References" typed and centered on the first line. After the first line of each citation, the lines should be indented an inch in which is known as hanging indentation. Each citation should have the author listed if the information is provided. The author name will be the first in the citation with the last name followed by a comma and the initial of the first name. The references should be alphabetized by the last names of the authors. For sources by the same author, list the references in chronological order from earliest to most recent. Make sure to keep the title of the work in the same format and punctuation. Italicize longer works, but do not modify smaller works.

**NOTE:** The first line of every citation should be justified left, NOT indented. ONLY THE LINES AFTER THE FIRST ONE ARE INDENTED.

See the example below.

TITLE OF WORK	Page Number
References	
Arola, K.L (2010). The Design of web 2.0: The Rise of the template, the fall of design. <i>Computers and Composition</i> . 27(1), 4-14.	
Devitt, A. J. (2004). <i>Writing genres</i> . Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.	
Kenneth, I. A. (2000). A Buddhist response to the nature of human rights. <i>Journal of Buddhist Ethics</i> , 8. Retrieved from <a href="http://www.cac.psu.edu/jbe/twocont.html">http://www.cac.psu.edu/jbe/twocont.html</a>	
Smyth, A. M., Parker, A. L., & Pease, D. L. (2002). A study of enjoyment of peas. <i>Journal of Abnormal Eating</i> , 8(3), 120-125. Retrieved from <a href="http://www.articlehomepage.com/full/url/">http://www.articlehomepage.com/full/url/</a>	

## Citing Articles

List the article's author, put the title of the article in quotation marks, and italicize the periodical title. Add the date of publication. The basic format is as follows:

Author(s). (Date of Publication). Title of article. *Title of Periodical* Volume, Number (Issue Number), Pages.

## Magazines

Author(s). (Year, Month Day of Publication) Title of Article. *Title of Periodical*, Volume (Issue) Pages.

For example:

Edwards, G. (2015, Feb. 8) Inside the Grammys 2015 Pre-Show: 74 trophies in 195 minutes. *Rolling Stone*, 8-12.

## Scholarly Journals

### *Print Journals*

Author(s). "Title of Article." *Title of Journal* Volume.Issue (Year): pages. Medium of publication.

For example:

Gentile, D. A., Coyne, S., & Walsh, D. A. (2011). Media violence, physical aggression, and relational aggression in school age children: A short-term longitudinal study. *Aggressive Behavior* 37 (2), 193-206.

### *Digital Journal Article with a DOI*

Author(s). (Year). Title of article. *Title of Journal* , Volume (Issue), Pages. doi:

For example:

Gentile, D. A., Coyne, S., & Walsh, D. A. (2011). Media violence, physical aggression, and relational aggression in school age children: A short-term longitudinal study. *Aggressive Behavior* 37 (2), 193-206. doi: 10.1002/ab.20380

### *Digital Journal Article with No DOI*

Author(s). (Year). Title of article. *Title of Journal* , Volume (Issue), Pages. doi:

For example:

Birmingham, E. (2000). Fearing the freak: How talk TV articulates women and class. *Journal of Popular Film and Television*, 28(3), 133-39. Retrieved from: <http://trine.worldcat.org/oclc/4901322505>

## In an Anthology or Edited Collection

Author's Last Name, Initials. Chapter title. *Book Title*. Ed. Editor's Initials and Last Name. Publication City: Publisher, Date of Publication. Page Numbers of Chapter. Medium of Publication.

For example:

Alarcon, Daniel. (2012). "Grand mall seizure." In J.T. Mims and E. Nollen (Eds.), *Mirror on America*. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. (pp. 292-300). Boston, MA: Bedford/St. Martin's.

## No Author

If you have a source with no author, list the source by the title of the source.

For example:

*CQ Researcher on Teens in America*. (2001). Washington, D.C.: CQ.

## Citing Books

The basic format for book citations is:

Author, A. A. (Year of publication). *Title of work: Capital letter also for subtitle*. Location: Publisher.

For example:

Lessig, L. (2008). *Remix: Making art and commerce thrive in the hybrid economy*. New York: Penguin.  
*Two to Seven Authors*

List by last names and initials; commas separate author names, while the last author name is preceded again by ampersand.

For example:

Anderson, C.A., Gentile, D. A., & Buckley, K.E. (2007). *Violent Video Game Effects on Children and Adolescents: Theory, Research, and Public Policy*. Oxford: Oxford UP. Print.

### 7+ Authors

List the last names and initials of first names in the reference; commas separate author names. After the sixth author's name, use an ellipses in place of the author names. Then provide the final author name. There should be no more than seven names listed.

For example:

Miller, F. H., Choi, M. J., Angeli, L. L., Harland, A. A., Stamos, J. A., Thomas, S. T., . . . Rubin, L. H. (2009). Web site usability for the blind and low-vision user. *Technical Communication*, 57, 323-335.

### No Author

If you have a source with no author, list the source by the title of the source.

For example:

*Merriam-Webster's collegiate dictionary* (10th ed.).(1993). Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster.

## Citing Electronic Sources

APA has no standard procedure for citing websites because most fields that use APA don't consider general websites to meet their standards for evidence. However, APA does provide instructions for citing specific types of online sources like blogs, podcasts, wikis and discussion board postings. For instructions, see Purdue OWL or the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*.

**NOTE:** Use n.d. if no publication date can be located.

**NOTE:** APA requires URLs or DOIs (Digital Object Identifiers)

### Whole Website

If you refer to a whole website, the URL is included in parentheses right after the reference, but not included on the References page.

For example:

The Google Scholar search engine (<http://scholar.google.com>) is considered good for academic research.

### REMEMBER:

This page is for a quick reference that includes the basics of APA formatting and citations.

If your question is not answered through this reference, or it did not address what you were looking for, [Purdue OWL](#) or the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (available in the [LINK](#)) can help with citing other types of sources.