



## APA Formatting & Style Guide

The APA (American Psychological Association) style of formatting is often used in social sciences and business. This guide includes guidelines for in-text citations, reference pages, and general essay formatting. For more information and further resources, visit the American Psychological Association APA Style website ([apastyle.apa.org](http://apastyle.apa.org)).

### General Essay Formatting

Essays written with APA format should have the following features:

- Double-spaced
- 1" margins on all sides
- 11 or 12 pt. font that is easy to read (e.g. Calibri, Arial, Times New Roman)
- Page numbers (in top right corner)

### Title Page

The title page includes the following features:

- Title of paper
- Author name(s)
  - 2 authors: place the word "and" between author names
  - 3+ authors: use commas between author names and the word "and" before the last author name
- Name of college/university
- Course name and number
- Instructor name
- Assignment due date
- Page number

The title page should start about 3-4 lines down from the top of the page. All lines should be centered, and the title should be in bold.

A diagram of a title page template enclosed in a gray border. The page number '1' is in the top right corner. The following text is centered on the page:

**PAPER TITLE**

Student Name

School/University

Course Number: Course Name

Instructor

Due Date



## APA Formatting & Style Guide

### In-Text Citations

When you use information or ideas from other sources in your essay, it is important that you include citations for those sources. Whether you are paraphrasing or using a direct quote, an in-text citation is required. In-text citations are short and must be accompanied by a full reference list at the end of the essay. Without citations, you are plagiarizing. Plagiarism violates school policy and will lead to negative academic consequences.

In-text citations include the following features:

- Author's last name
- Source's date of publication
- Page number (only if using direct quote)

There are four main formats for in-text citations. Pay attention to the use of "and" versus "&".

1. Author(s) and date in parentheses
  - a. Ex: (Smith, Larson, & Clark, 2015)
  - b. This format can go before or after the information you are citing.
2. Author(s), date, and page number in parentheses
  - a. Ex: (Smith, Larson, & Clark, 2015, p. 46)
  - b. This format can go before or after the information you are citing.
  - c. Page numbers are only used if citing a direct quote.
3. Date only in parentheses
  - a. Ex: Smith, Larson, and Clark (2015) stated...
  - b. This format can go before the information you are citing.
4. Date and page number in separate parentheses
  - a. Ex: Smith, Larson, and Clark (2015) stated ... (p. 46).
  - b. The name and date can go before the information you are citing, and the page number can go after.

### How do citations change with number of authors?

- 2 authors: Use last names of both authors in every citation.
  - Ex: (Lewis & Clark, 1995)
  - Ex: Research by Lewis and Clark (1995) stated...
- 3-5 authors: Use last names of all authors in the first citation. Use only the first author's last name followed by "et al." in all later citations.
  - Ex: (Washington, Jefferson, & Madison, 2003)
  - Ex: (Washington et al., 2003)
- 6+ authors: Use only the first author's last name followed by "et al." in all citations.
  - Ex: (King et al., 2017)
  - Ex: King et al. (2017) argued...



## APA Formatting & Style Guide

- Unknown author: Use the first key word or two of the title in place of the author name. Capitalize key words in the in-text citation. Italicize titles of books or reports. Use quotation marks for titles of articles or web pages.
  - Ex: (“Brain Imaging”, 2017)
  - Ex: (*The Great Gatsby*, 1925)

### What is the right amount of citations?

Finding a balance between citations and original ideas can be tricky. An essay with too many in-text citations is tough to read and lacks your own original ideas. An essay without in-text citations is plagiarized. Generally, you should use 1-2 sources for each main idea in your essay. If you are paraphrasing a source over multiple sentences, you do not need to reference in every sentence. If the source remains clear, one in-text citation should be enough.

Sources may provide you with definitions, data, general information, or ideas that support your thesis. If you are using any of this in your essay, make sure you include a citation.

### Reference Page

Every source listed on your reference page must appear as an in-text citation at least once in your essay. Likewise, any source mentioned in an in-text citation must also appear on your reference page.

A reference page has the following features:

- A title of “References” centered at the top of the page
- Double-spaced
- Hanging indentation on the second line of each reference
- References are alphabetized by last name of the first author
- References with the same author name are put in chronological order, from earliest to most recent

### How does formatting change with number of authors?

- 1 author: Last name followed by first and middle initials.
- 2 authors: List by last name followed by first and middle initials. Use “&” instead of “and”.
- 3-7 authors: List by last name followed by first and middle initials. Commas separate author names. Use “&” instead of “and” before the last author.
- 7+ authors: List by last name followed by first and middle initials. Commas separate author names. Use an ellipsis (...) after the name of the sixth author, followed by the name of the last author. Even if there are more than seven authors, you should only have seven names listed.
- Organization as author: Use the name of the publishing organization in place of the author name.
- Unknown author: Use a shortened version of the title in place of the author name.



## APA Formatting & Style Guide

There are many different types of sources you can use when writing an essay. See below for the basic format for referencing an online article. This format can change depending on whether your source is electronic or in print, how many authors contributed, and if it has a DOI (see below). We have only included the most common option here. You can find a longer list of examples on the Purdue Online Writing Lab website.

### What is a DOI?

A Digital Object Identifier (DOI) is a unique code made up of numbers and letters that is assigned by publishers to each published work online. If a work you are using has a DOI, then you must include it in your reference. There are different DOI formats depending on when a work was published, so be sure you have made them all in the same format on your reference list.

### Further Resources

This document is only a brief overview of APA style. For answers to specific questions you may have or to read more information and see a sample paper, we encourage you to visit the websites below.

Purdue Online Writing Lab's APA Formatting & Style Guide:

[https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research\\_and\\_citation/apa\\_style/apa\\_formatting\\_and\\_style\\_guide/general\\_format.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/general_format.html)

American Psychological Association's APA Style Guide:

<https://apastyle.apa.org/>