

Welcome to the Purdue OWL



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Summary:

This workshop provides an overview of APA (American Psychological Association) style and where to find help with different APA resources. It provides an annotated list of links to all of our APA materials and an APA overview. It is an excellent place to start to learn about APA format.

APA Style Workshop

Welcome to the OWL Workshop on APA Style! This workshop will introduce you to important aspects of using the American Psychological Association (APA) Style to write and format research papers. You should begin with the introductory material, which covers what APA Style is, why it is used, and who should apply it to their work. Then you are invited to work through the OWL's handouts on [APA Formatting and Writing Style](#), as well as [APA Citations and Reference Lists](#).

NOTE: This workshop should answer most of your basic questions about using APA Style. However, if you are writing a complex document such as a thesis or lengthy manuscript, or if you have detailed questions, you should consult The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (6th edition), which you can usually find at your local library or in many bookstores.

The APA also has a [website](#) that allows you to order the book online and read some of their frequently asked questions about APA style. Purdue's OWL also has a list of [Additional Resources](#) covering APA style that you can consult.

What is APA Style?

APA Style establishes standards of written communication concerning:

- the organization of content
- writing style
- citing references
- and how to prepare a manuscript for publication in certain disciplines.

Why Use APA?

Aside from simplifying the work of editors by having everyone use the same format for a given publication, using APA Style makes it easier for readers to understand a text by providing a familiar structure they can follow. Abiding by APA's standards as a writer will allow you to:

- Provide readers with cues they can use to follow your ideas more efficiently and to locate information of interest to them
- Allow readers to focus more on your ideas by not distracting them with unfamiliar formatting
- Establish your credibility or ethos in the field by demonstrating an awareness of your audience and their needs as fellow researchers

Who Should Use APA?

APA Style describes rules for the preparation of manuscripts for writers and students in:

- Social Sciences, such as Psychology, Linguistics, Sociology, Economics, and Criminology
- Business
- Nursing

Before you adopt this style for your paper, you should check to see what citation style your discipline uses in its journals and for student research. If APA Style is appropriate for your writing project, then use this workshop to learn more about APA and how to follow its rules correctly in your own work.

APA Formatting and Writing Style

You should start by becoming familiar with the general formatting requirements of APA Style, as well as the different standards for writing that are expected among APA writers. Because APA is different than other writing styles, you should pay attention to everything from general paper layout to word choice. The following pages will introduce you to some of these basic requirements of APA Style to get you started in the right direction.

[General APA Format](#)

- Covers the basic page layout for a typical APA manuscript, including everything from margin widths to the use of headings and visuals
- Includes a general list of the basic components of an APA paper: title page, abstract, and reference page
- Also includes a [PowerPoint slide presentation](#) with detailed information about the APA citation style

[Types of APA Papers](#)

- Describes the two most common types of APA papers: the literature review and the experimental report
- Outlines what sections must be included in each type of paper, from introductions to a methods section

[APA Stylistics: Basics](#)

- Describes three basic areas of stylistic concerns when writing in an APA field: point of view, clarity/conciseness, and word choice
- Explains how poetic language and devices should be avoided in APA reviews and reports
- Suggestions and examples are given for each stylistic issue

[APA Stylistics: Things to Avoid](#)

- Identifies the risk of bias in language concerning gender, race, disability, and sexuality when writing up research in APA fields
- Provides links to APA's official guidelines on avoiding bias
- Offers suggestions on finding alternatives to gendered pronouns and using different descriptors when identifying people in your research

APA Citations and Reference List

Perhaps the trickiest part to mastering APA Style is understanding the requirements for citing and listing secondary sources accurately. The following pages walk you through the details of writing citations and developing a reference page at the end of your paper. Read these guidelines carefully! It is important that you refer to your sources according to APA Style so your readers can quickly follow the citations to the reference page and then, from there, locate any sources that might be of interest to them. They will expect this information to be presented in a particular style, and any deviations from that style could result in confusing your readers about where you obtained your information.

[In-Text Citations: The Basics](#)

- Addresses the basic formatting requirements of using the APA Style for citing secondary sources within the text of your essay
- Provides guidance on how to incorporate different kinds of references to borrowed material, from short quotes to summaries or paraphrases

[In-Text Citations: Author/Authors](#)

- Focuses on various details about referring to the authors of your sources within your essay, which can be difficult to do efficiently if the source has more than one author or has an unclear author (e.g. an organization)
- Describes how to cite indirect quotes, electronic sources, and/or sources without page

numbers

Footnotes and Endnotes

- Recommends using footnotes or endnotes to avoid long explanations in the text
- Covers two basic kinds of notes: bibliographic and digressive

Reference List: Basic Rules

- Guides you through the general rules that apply to any reference list developed using APA Style
- Covers everything from where the reference list appears to the capitalization of words in the titles of sources
- Serves as a primer on formatting that will be followed in all of the following handouts on creating APA reference entries

Reference List: Author/Authors

- Walks you through how to construct a reference entry for different text starting with a focus on author
- Notes how the references are different depending on the number of authors or if there are multiple works by the same author

Reference List: Articles in Periodicals

- Builds from the previous handout by looking specifically at how to refer accurately to a periodical source
- Lists types of entries depending on the kind of journal (e.g. one paginated by volume), if the source is a magazine v. a newspaper, or the kind of article the source is (e.g. a letter to the editor)

Reference List: Books

- Builds from the author handout by describing how to properly refer to book-length sources
- Addresses both the basic format as well as requirements for those unique book sources that require you to note specific details, such as whether it is a translation or part of a multivolume work

Reference List: Other Print Sources

- Offers a short list of other less common print sources you might be citing in your manuscript and how to construct references for them
- Covers examples such as citing a source that is cited in another, or citing a government document

[Reference List: Electronic Sources](#)

- Walks through the requirements and unique qualifications (see the Notes throughout the page) for constructing references for electronic sources
- Covers sources from online periodicals and scholarly databases, to emails.

[Reference List: Other Non-Print Sources](#)

- Focuses primarily on how to reference video and audio texts that are used as sources, from movie clips to sound recordings
- Notes that personal communication (e.g. an interview or conversation) is not to be included in the reference list.

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