

# A Guide to APA Formatting

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All information on this handout comes from the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association 7th edition. Please consult this manual for more information and/or detailed examples. Note that the writing center does have a separate handout for citations titled "A Guide to APA Style."

*Note: These are guidelines for student papers. Please review the APA Manual for professional paper guidelines. Ask your professor if you are unsure as to which to use.*

## General Formatting

- APA requires an essay to be double-spaced with 1" margins on all sides
- APA recommends using 12 pt. Times New Roman font, 11 pt. Calibri or 11 pt. Arial
- A page header is not required for student papers. Ask your professor if a running head should be included.
- Page numbers should be flush right. Numbers start with 1 on the title page.

## Notes About Writing Style

- Active voice is preferred, although passive voice may be acceptable in some cases\*
- Avoid redundancy in language as well as poetic language, such as figurative language, rhyming, or alliteration
- Use language your audience will understand but avoid contractions.
- Reduce bias in your writing, be sensitive to labels\* and use the singular "they" if an author's gender is unknown. Example: \*"People living in poverty" not "the homeless"
- Do not use the general "we."

\*The writing center has a variety of handouts on similar topics that may be useful to you. Handouts can be found in print in the Writing Center (LOH120) or online through the writing center website.

## Title Page and Headers

- The paper title, your name, university name, course number or name, instructor's name and date written needs to be centered.
- Titles are written in **Title Case**. Example: **H**arry **P**otter and the **S**orcerer's **S**tone.
- Although student papers do not need running heads, should a header be needed use ALL CAPS, and a page number on the right. Headers summarize the title page header but are more concise.

## Titles in the Text

If the titles of an article or source is mentioned within a text, place it within quotation marks.

Example: According to the "Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association" .....

## Abstract

An abstract is a short summary of your entire paper (150-250 words). Your audience should be able to look at this and understand what you discuss without reading the whole paper. The label "Abstract" should be centered, Title Case and bold. The first line of the abstract should not be indented. Student papers usually do not have an abstract or keywords. Ask your professor if this needs to be included.

Keywords follow the abstract. They are to 3 to 5 words that describe the most common aspects of your paper. Think of them like #hashtags.

## Footnotes

- Footnotes should follow any punctuation mark, formatted in superscript fashion
- Footnote numbers should not follow dashes (-)
- If a footnote appears in a sentence in parentheses, it should be inserted within the parentheses
- Footnotes should be placed at the bottom of the page where they appear, following normal paragraph spacing rules and double-spaced throughout

## Headings

Level	Format
1	<b>Centered, Boldface, Title Case Headings</b> Text begins as a new paragraph.
2	<b>Left-aligned, Boldface, Title Case Headings</b> Text begins as a new paragraph.
3	<b>Left-aligned, boldface, Title Case Headings with a period.</b> Text begins as a new paragraph.
4	<b>Indented, boldface, italicized, lowercase heading with a period.</b> Text begins on the same lines and continues as a regular paragraph.
5	<b><i>Indented, boldface, italicized, boldface, lowercase heading with a period.</i></b> Text begins on the same lines and continues as a regular paragraph.

Note: Do not use a heading for the introduction of your paper. It is assumed that the beginning is the introduction.

## Tables and Figures

- They should only be included if it adds some sort of value to the paper
- They should be sequential as you refer to them in the text (Table 1, Table 2, etc.) (Figure 1, Figure 2, etc.)
- They should be concise and consistent
- Only discuss highlights of tables and figures in the text
- You do not need to use a table or figure if all of the data you discuss is contained in the body of the paper
- Do not refer to a table or figure's location ("...in the table below..." or "...in the figure on the next page...") when discussing it in your text: just refer to it by name ("... in Table 7...")
- Figure notes must be placed below the table
- Text in a figure should be in san serif font between eight and fourteen point
- Graphs should always include a legend to explain symbols, abbreviations, and terminology

## Appendices

- If you only have one, just label it "Appendix"
- If you have more than one, label them with capital letters (e.g. Appendix A, Appendix B, etc.)
- The label is centered and bold, just like "References" on your Reference page
- Appendices should appear in the order you refer to them in the body of the paper
- Each appendix should be on a separate page
- The first paragraph of the appendix should be flush with the left margin. Additional paragraphs should be indented.

For more specifics, visit the Writing Center to use our APA 7th edition manuals.