What is American Psychological Association (APA) Style?

APA Style is used primarily in the social sciences—psychology, sociology, nursing, family studies, etc. It places emphasis on the date of publication, whereas other styles (MLA, for example) emphasize the page number.

APA Style is a parenthetical documentation style. This means it uses in-text citation. Two pieces of information must always be included in the in-text citations: 1. The first author’s last name and 2. the date of publication. If quoting directly from a source, however, the page number must also be included. The information contained in parentheses is separated by commas. E.g.: (Smith, 2000) or (Smith, 2000, p.23)

There are several ways to integrate APA citations into your text. In any case, it is important to cite the authors for their ideas. Options for citation include:

1.) Place the author(s) and date(s) in parentheses at an appropriate place in or at the end of a sentence.

   eg: Researchers have pointed out that the lack of trained staff is a common barrier to providing adequate health education (Fisher, 1999) and services (Weist & Christodulu, 2000).

2.) Include the names of the researcher(s) in the sentence. Place only the date in parentheses.

   eg: Fisher (1999) recommended that health education be required for high school graduation in Florida.

3.) Integrate the author and the date into your sentence.

   eg: In 2001, Weist proposed using the Child and Adolescent Planning Schema to analyze and develop community mental health programs for young people.

4.) When citing a direct quotation, include the page numbers as follows:

   eg: Lopez (1993) found that “the effect disappeared within minutes” (p. 311).

Notes:

- If your text is written by two authors, list both names in every citation. If there are 3-5 authors, list all for the first use, then abbreviate to “first author et. al.” for subsequent citations.

   eg: (Smith, Nelson, Jones & Sawyer, 2004) and subsequently (Smith et al., 2004)

- When writing about an event that occurred in the past, use the past tense (e.g., Smith showed). For an event that is continuous, the present perfect tense is used (e.g., Smith has shown). When results are given, the present tense is used (e.g., the experiment demonstrates).
Formatting the References List

Title: Type the word “References” at the top of the page, centered. Do not bold, italicize or underline.

Spacing: All entries should be double-spaced, unless your assignment instructs you otherwise.

Indentation: If an entry is longer than one line, use a hanging indent on the second line.

Capitalization: Capitalize only the first word of titles of books and articles. If there is a subtitle, capitalize the first word after the colon. Ex: Family meditation: Facts, myths, and future prospects.

Organization: All entries should be alphabetized by authors’ last names.

Sample Reference Entries

Notes:
- Unlike MLA, APA Style does not require quotation marks around chapter or article titles in the References list.
- At a minimum, the reference for an internet source should provide a document title or description, a date (the date of publication or the date of retrieval), and the DOI (digital object identifier) or URL. APA prefers the use of DOI if available.

Book with a single author:

    Author’s last name & first initial. (Year of publication). Title of work: Capital letter for subtitle. Location: Publisher.


Books with two to six authors:

    List all authors by last names and initials; separate the authors names with commas. The last author name should be preceded again by an ampersand (&).


Books with more than six authors:

    List the first six authors by last names and initials, followed by an ellipsis (…) then the name of the last author in the listing.

Sample Reference Entries (Continued)

Journal article:

Author of article. (Year of publication). Title of article: Capital letter for subtitle. Title of journal, volume number, issue, pages of article.


Article from a database:

Author (s). (Year). Title. Journal or Source Title, Volume (number), page numbers. DOI [or, Database name.]


Internet source created by a private organization:

Title of website. (Date of last update). Title of page or article. Date you visited the site, DOI or URL.

**If the website has a listed author, list the author before the title of the website.**


Online Newspaper Article:
