Washington State University

Kinesiology Writing Guide – American Psychological Association (APA)

Most of your kinesiology classes will require APA (American Psychological Association) format for writing. This style is different in a number of ways from that you may have used for high school or English class writing. Two differences that often catch students:

* APA style uses in-text citations rather than footnotes.
* The heading for the references section is References rather than Works Cited
* Great online APA guides are available. Here are two:

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

<https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_style_introduction.html>

1. General Style Notes
2. Writing style should be clear and concise. For a research project report, coverage should be complete enough to allow another investigator to attempt to replicate the study.
3. Generally, we write a research report in the past tense. It is particularly important to refer to the work of others in the past tense: “Smith (1989) said” not “says.” However, when you refer to events or ideas that are ongoing, use the present tense: “Current research shows that….”
4. Use the active voice whenever possible: “Three experimenters conducted the study” or “We recruited fifteen volunteer participants” not “ the study was conducted by…” or “fifteen participants were recruited”
5. Specify antecedents for pronouns: “The task was not difficult” rather than “It was not difficult”.
6. Each paragraph should have a topic sentence and should be related to that sentence.
7. Scientific writing is designed to be straightforward and direct without distraction. When you write in this style, avoid clichés, common phrases (such as “That said,…”) or any kind of creative writing device (e.g., rhyming). Redundancy is also to be avoided: “has been previously found” (leave out “previously”).
8. In scientific writing, we also avoid making concrete statements (e.g., “the data prove that…”). Rather, we hedge and use terms like “support”.
9. Avoiding bias in writing
10. Disabilities: refer to person first, e.g. “women with arthritis” rather than “arthritic women”
11. The seventh edition of the APA Manual endorses the use of “they” as a singular pronoun. The manual advises writers to use “they” for a person whose gender is unknown or irrelevant.
    1. For instance, rather than writing "I don't know who wrote this note, but he or she has good handwriting," you might write something like "I don't know who wrote this note, but they have good handwriting."
    2. Additionally, “they” should be used for a person who uses “they” as their personal pronoun. In both cases, derivatives of “they,” like “them,” “their,” “themselves,” and so on should also be used accordingly. Plural verbs should be used when "they" is referring to a single person or entity (e.g., use "they are a kind friend" rather than "they is a kind friend").
    3. The manual also advises against anthropomorphizing language. Thus, non-human relative pronouns like “that,” and “which” are recommended for animals and inanimate objects, rather than “who.”
12. Text Format(for additional information see American Psychological Association (APA), 6th edition.

A. Margins**:**  All margins will be one inch (top, bottom, left and right) on every

page. On most word processors, these are the preset margins. To check margins go to the **File** icon and choose **document layout;** you can make changes there.

B. Spacing**:** Double space every line in the text, title, heading, quotations,

references, etc.

C. Paragraphs and Indents**:** Indent the first line of every paragraph five to

seven spaces; for consistency use the tab key. The only exceptions are:

the abstract, block quotations, titles and headings, table titles and notes,

and figure captions.

D. Page numbering**:** Begin numbering consecutively with the title page. Type

page numbers in the upper right hand corner, one inch from the right hand edge

of the page.

E. Include a **page header**  (also known as the "**running head**") at the top of every page. To create a **page header/running head**, insert page numbers flush right. Then type "TITLE OF YOUR PAPER" in the header flush left using all capital letters. The **running head** is a shortened version of your paper's title and cannot exceed 50 characters including spacing and punctuation.

F. Headings and Subheadings**:** These will depend on the number of levels that you want.

**Main Heading**

**Level 2 Heading**

***Level 3 Heading****.*

**Level 4 heading*.***

***Level 5 heading.***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **APA Headings** | |
| **Level** | **Format** |
| 1 | **Centered, Boldface, Title Case Heading**       Text starts a new paragraph. |
| 2 | **Flush Left, Boldface, Title Case Heading**  Text starts a new paragraph. |
| 3 | ***Flush Left, Boldface Italic, Title Case Heading***       Text starts a new paragraph. |
| 4 | **Indented, Boldface Title Case Heading Ending With a Period.** Paragraph text continues on the same line as the same paragraph. |
| 5 | ***Indented, Boldface Italic, Title Case Heading Ending With a Period.*** Paragraph text continues on the same line as the same paragraph. |

1. Reference list

**Do not** call this section a Bibliography or Works Cited. The heading, “References”, is used, centered, ***without*** underlining or bold setting or quotation marks or colon or period after the word References.

1. Professional journals: Note: follow all capital and punctuation patterns in the example:

Author’s last name, First and middle initials. (Date). Title of the article.

*Title of the Journal, volume number*, pages.

Do not change the order of the authors. Include all authors and use “&” before the last author. You must list up to 20 authors. For more than 20, after the first 19 authors’ names, use an ellipsis ( …)in place of the remaining author names. Then, end with the final author's name (**do not** place an ampersand before it). There should be no more than twenty names in the citation in total.

***Example:***

Buss, D.M., & Schmidt, D.P. (1993). Effects of viewing aggressive sports on the hostility of spectators. *Journal of Sport and Social Issues, 42*, 275-286.

Pegion, K., Kirtman, B. P., Becker, E., Collins, D. C., LaJoie, E., Burgman, R., Bell, R., DelSole, R., Min, D., Zhu, Y., Li, W., Sinsky, E., Guan, H., Gottschalck, J., Metzger, E. J., Barton, N. P., Achuthavarier, D., Marshak, J., Koster, R., . . .  Kim, H. (2019). The subseasonal experiment (SubX): A multimodel subseasonal prediction experiment. Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society, 100(10), 2043- 2061.

1. Chapter in edited book:

Author’s last name, First and middle initials. (Date) Title of the chapter. Ed. First and middle initial. Editor’s last name (Ed.), *Title of the book,* (chapter pp. numbers)*.* Name.

***Example:***

Schmidt, R. A. (1991). Frequent augmented feedback can degrade learning: Evidence and interpretations. In J. Requin & G.E. Stelmach (Eds.), *Tutorials in motor neuroscience* (pp. 59-75). Dordrecht, the Netherlands: Kluwer Academic.

3. Magazine articles – note that month of publication is required because there aren’t issue numbers to help identify which issue the pages are in:

***Example:***

Gardener, H. (1981, December). Do babies sing a universal song? *Psychology Today*, *135,* 70 - 76.

4. Books or texts:

***Example:***

Saxe, G.B. (1991). *Cultural and cognitive development: Studies in mathematical understanding.* Erlbaum.

5. Internet:

* 1. For books, pamphlets, or text accessed electronically, or an abstract on CD –ROM or a computer program: provide same author, date and title information required for print books or other non-periodicals, as well as the medium, location, name of publisher/producer or distributor of database program in brackets:
  2. For on-line journal, provide same information as usual and include internet location.
  3. For all online material: provide same information as usual plus retrieval path in the form of website url or DOI.

***Examples:***

Lombardo, M. P., & Deaner, R. O. (2014). You can’t teach speed: Sprinters falsify the deliberate practice model of expertise*. Peer Journal, 2,* 445. DOI 10.7717/peerj.445

Steinberg, F., Pixa, N. H., & Doppelmayr, M. (2016). Mirror visual feedback training improves intermanual transfer in a sport-specific task: A comparison between different skill levels. *Neural Plasticity, 2016,* Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1155/2016/8628039>.

1. Reference citations in text:

Every time you use someone else’s ideas, words or materials you must cite that reference in the text. Every citation in your reference list must be found in your text and vice versa.

Single author:

Smith (2016) compared reaction times...

In a recent study of reaction times, Smith (2016) found that...She also...

A recent reaction time study (Smith, 2016) showed that...

Two authors:

William and Jones (2014) found that...

as has been shown (William & Jones, 2014), speed increases when….

Three or more authors:

List only the first author’s name followed by “et al.” in every citation, even the first,

unless doing so would create ambiguity between different sources.

(Kernis et al., 1993)

Kernis et al. (1993) suggest...

In *et al.*, *et* should not be followed by a period. Only "al" should be followed by a period.

If you’re citing multiple works with similar groups of authors, and the shortened “et al” citation form of each source would be the same, you’ll need to avoid ambiguity by writing out more names.

When your parenthetical citation includes two or more works, order them the same way they appear in the reference list (viz., alphabetically), separated by a semi-colon.

(Berndt, 2002; Harlow, 1983)

Direct quotations:

For a direct quotation, use the same formats as above but include page

number(s), or paragraph number(s) for electronic text. You will not need to

include page numbers when paraphrasing or describing ideas or research, but

please remember to cite the author each time. A single page is indicated by p. (p. 45) and multiple pages by pp. (pp. 7-10).

Quotations of 40 or more words should be blocked within the text:

skip a line between text and quotation, single space quotation, indent five spaces

on both sides, and do not use quotation marks.

V. Common mechanical errors

1. The word data is plural and requires a plural verb, e.g., “the data show that”…rather than “the data shows that”
2. “A lot” should be written in two words.
3. “Affect” is a verb; “effect” is a noun.
4. Tense should be consistent throughout the paper (see exceptions noted previously).
5. Noun and verb should match with respect to number (e.g., the dog*s go*; the dog *goes*)
6. Use of apostrophes: only when indicating possession or contraction (it’s) and place the apostrophe after the “s” for plural nouns when indicating possession.
7. Check for complete sentences.
8. Use a semi-colon before a complete clause (i.e. the clause could stand alone as a sentence) or between nouns in a long list.
9. Use a colon if the clause before or after the colon is not a complete sentence, and also before a long list of nouns. In a list of noun phrases, use semi-colons between phrases
10. Write out all numbers equal to or less than “ten”; write out any number used to begin a sentence.
11. Citation errors: “et al.” : After the first time a group of authors is cited, you may use the first author followed by et al.: Brown et al. (1992)… Note that there is no comma before et al but there is a period after. Do not use et al. for only two authors.
12. Do not use etc.
13. “e.g.” stands for “for example”
14. “i.e.” stands for “that is” and is used when you want to restate something in another way: “the median, i.e., the middle score when scores are arranged in numerical order…”
15. Don’t use irregardless, kind of, sort of, really…
16. Don’t use extra words: use “since” rather than “owing to that fact that”
17. Don’t start a sentence with “Being as…”, “therefore”. An incomplete sentence will often result.
18. DO NOT use contractions
19. Watch out for errors with “fewer” and “less”. If a number is involved (e.g. fewer errors might be 3 as opposed to 5, then use the word “fewer”. If it’s qualitative, use “less” e.g., he was less prepared (you can’t attach a number to preparation).
20. DO NOT USE QUOTES
21. Apostrophes! For possessive!
22. Avoid “would”. Use simple direct tenses.
23. Stay away from “you” (second person). Only use first person when describing what YOU did (e.g., we used six participants in each group). Otherwise use third person.
24. Avoid close paraphrasing (changing a word or two from a statement made in your source) because this is a form of plagiarism.
25. Based ON (not based around, based off of)
26. Quotations cited as documentary evidence are introduced by a colon and enclosed in quotation marks:

The Surgeon General has this to say about smoking: “ ….”

When a quotation is the direct object of a verb it is preceded by a comma and enclosed in quotation marks:

Mark Twain said, “A classic…”

1. Captions and Legends for Figures
2. For figures, make sure to include the figure number and a title with a legend and caption. These elements appear **below** the visual display. For the figure number, type *Figure X*. Then type the title of the figure in sentence case. Follow the title with a legend that explains the symbols in the figure and a caption that explains the figure:

*Figure 1*. How to create figures in APA style. This figure illustrates effective elements in APA style figures.

1. Captions serve as a brief, but complete, explanation and as a title. For example, “*Figure 4*. Population” is insufficient, whereas “*Figure 4*. Population of Grand Rapids, MI by race (2017)” is better. If the figure has a title in the image, crop it.
2. Graphs should always include a legend that explains the symbols, abbreviations, and terminology used in the figure. These terms must be consistent with those used in the text and in other figures. The lettering in the legend should be of the same type and size as that used in the figure.
3. When you use a figure in your paper that has been adapted or copied directly from another source, you need to reference the original source.  This reference appears as a caption underneath the figure that you copied or adapted for your paper.
4. Any image that is reproduced from another source also needs to come with copyright permission; it is not enough just to cite the source.

**Hints:**

* Number figures consecutively throughout your paper.
* Double-space the caption that appears under a figure.

***Caption Examples:***

**General Format 1 (Figure from a Book):**

**Caption under Figure**

*Figure X*. Descriptive phrase that serves as title and description. Reprinted [or adapted]

     from *Book Title* (page number), by Author First Initial. Second Initial. Surname,

     Year, Place of Publication: Publisher. Copyright [Year] by the Name of Copyright Holder.

     Reprinted [or adapted] with permission.

***Example***

*Figure 1.* Short-term memory test involving pictures. Reprinted from *Short-term Memory*

*Loss* (p. 73), by K. M. Pike, 2008, New York, NY: Mackerlin Press. Copyright  2008 by

     the Association for Memory Research. Reprinted with permission.

**General Format 2 (Figure from a Journal Article):**

**Caption under Figure**

*Figure X*. Descriptive phrase that serves as title and description. Reprinted [or adapted]

     from “Title of Article,” by Author First Initial. Second Initial. Surname, Year, *Journal Title,*

*Volume*(issue), page number. Copyright [Year] by the Name of Copyright Holder.

     Reprinted [or adapted] with permission.

   ***Example:***

*Figure 1*. Schematic drawings of a bird's eye view of the table (a) and the test phase of

     the choice task (b). Numbers represent the dimensions in centimeters. Adapted from

     "Visual Experience Enhances Infants' Use of Task-Relevant Information in an Action

     Task," by S.-h. Wang and L. Kohne, 2007, *Developmental Psychology, 43*, p. 1515.

     Copyright 2003 by the American Psychological Association.

**General Format 3 (Figure from a Website):**

**Caption under Figure**

*Figure X*. Descriptive phrase that serves as title and description. Reprinted [or adapted]

     from *Title of Website*, by Author First Initial. Second Initial. Surname, Year, Retrieved

     from URL. Copyright [year] by the Name of Copyright Holder. Reprinted [or adapted]

     with permission.

***Example:***

*Figure 1.* An example of the cobra yoga position. Reprinted from List of Yoga Postures,

     In *Wikipedia*, n.d., Retrieved October 28, 2009, from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki

     /List\_of\_yoga\_postures. Copyright 2007 by Joseph Renger. Reprinted with permission.