

Documenting Sources : The APA Format

What is the APA Format?

This handout summarizes APA guidelines for documenting sources cited in written work; these guidelines are based on the 6th edition of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (2010). APA style is standard in many fields, including psychology, education, nursing and social work.

What Sources Must Be Documented in Academic Writing?

In academic writing, you must cite sources for all borrowed information, visuals, and ideas. This includes material you have paraphrased (put into your own words). However, you should not cite sources for generally known facts. If in doubt, cite your source.

What Does APA Documentation Consist of?

Complete APA documentation consists of two elements:

- (1) an in-text citation at the point in your paper where you are presenting information borrowed from a source or where you are referring to published research;
- (2) a reference list giving complete publication information for all sources cited in the paper (except for personal communications and references to the Bible and the Qur'an).

Examples of in-text citations and reference-list entries, along with formatting guidelines, are included below. While the examples are single-spaced, in APA format you must double space your entire paper, including inset quotations and your reference list.

In-text Citations for Paraphrased Ideas and References to Research

Guidelines for paper-based and online sources

Example 1: The high infant mortality rate in the U.S. may be attributed in part to the high cost of medical insurance (Smith, 1996). Smith (1996) found that economic...

Example 2: Smith (1996) concluded that the high infant mortality rate in the U.S. may be attributed in part to the high cost of medical insurance. Smith found that economic barriers to adequate prenatal health care were higher for some ethnic groups.

- Cite the author's last name and the year of publication in parentheses, as in example 1. If the author's name appears as part of the sentence (example 2), do not include it in the citation.
- Place the closing period for the sentence after the parenthetical citation, as in example 1.
- Note that a parenthetical citation would not normally be included for a source cited earlier in a paragraph if the author's name is used in the narrative and if it's clear that the same source is being referred to (as in example 2). However, a citation for the year should be included if the author's name first appeared in a parenthetical citation, as in example 1.
- When paraphrasing, take care not to use exact wording from the source. If you take wording directly from a source, use quotation marks around the borrowed wording. Page citations are not required for paraphrased material, but you may include them "when it would help an interested reader locate the relevant passage in a long or complex text" (APA, 2010, p. 171).

Guidelines for a source with no author or no date

Example 3: Some people have found vitamin E helpful for this problem ("Ways to overcome," n.d.).

- For a source without an author, use a short form of the title within quotation marks in the citation, as shown in example 3. For a source without a date, write "n.d." (for no date) in place of the date. Note that sources without an identifiable author or date of publication generally would not be considered credible sources in an academic paper.

Guidelines for multiple authors or multiple sources

Example 4: Some researchers have noted a positive correlation between caffeine intake and heart disease (Carmichael, 1998; Hawkins, 1997), while others (Lumpas et al., 2000; Wright & Weston, 1993) have found conflicting results.

- When including more than one source in a parenthetical citation, arrange sources alphabetically (as in the reference list) and separate them by semicolons. The APA Manual advises citing “one or two of the most representative sources for each key point” (2010, p. 169).
- For sources with two authors, always cite both authors. For sources with three to five authors, cite all authors in the first reference, and in subsequent citations use only the first author’s name followed by “et al.” (not italicized and with a period after “al”). For sources with six or more authors, use the first author’s name with et al. for all in-text citations.
- Use the “&” symbol to connect authors’ names inside parenthetical citations; outside citations, use the word “and.”

In-text Citations for Quoted Passages Less Than 40 Words Long

Guidelines for citing page and paragraph numbers for quoted passages under 40 words

Example 5: Halloran (1990) notes that concern with grammatical correctness in English was “essentially an eighteenth-century invention” (p. 166).

Example 6: Concern with grammatical correctness in English was “essentially an eighteenth-century invention” (Halloran, 1990, p.166).

Example 7: Sharp (2003) found that “there was no evidence of a link between people’s voting patterns and their television-viewing habits” (para. 5).

- When quoting, use quotation marks and cite the page number. For online sources with no page numbers, use paragraph numbers (e.g., para. 5). If necessary for clarity, cite paragraph numbers from specific sections of a document, for example: (Smith, 2009, Conclusion section, para. 4) or (Weldon & Rice, 2007, “Reasons for Program Changes,” para. 2).
- Delete any period or comma at the end of a quoted passage, but retain question marks from the original text. Place the period (or other end punctuation) after the parenthetical citation.

In-text Citations for Quoted Passages Over 40 Words

Guidelines for block indent quotations

Example 8: As Halloran (1990) notes, correct grammar has long been associated with social class:

In the competitive middle-class society of the nineteenth-century, speaking and writing “correct” English took on new importance as a sign of membership in the upper strata. . . . [B]y attempting to impose a “hyper-correct” dialect on the generally privileged students at Harvard and the other established liberal arts colleges, Hill and others may actually have strengthened the linguistic obstacles to upward mobility. . . . The rhetoricians prepared students to leap social hurdles, while at the same time elevating the hurdles. (p. 167)

- For quotations over 40 words, indent the quoted passage five spaces on the left, double-space, and do not use quotation marks or insert extra space before or after the quotation.
- Place the end punctuation before the citation (not after, as with short quotations).
- Use an ellipsis (three spaced dots) to indicate words left out of a quotation; use square brackets [like this] to indicate words that you’ve added for clarity. The first letter of the first word of a quotation may be changed from upper to lower case or vice versa.
- To introduce a long quotation effectively, try preceding it with what could be a complete sentence, followed by a colon (as in the example above).

In-text Citations for Sources Taken from Other Sources

Guidelines

Example 9: Wright (1999) argues that drug companies “hold governments hostage” when they refuse to justify the cost of life-saving but highly expensive medications (cited in Frost & Krahn, 2000, p. 8).

- Use original sources rather than “second-hand” sources whenever possible. If you must use a “second-hand” source, format your citation as shown in example 9. Provide a reference-list entry only for the source you are working from—in this case, Frost and Krahn (2000).

In-text Citations for Personal Communications and Class Lectures

Guidelines

Example 10: In 2002, the profits doubled (J. Bell, personal communication, May 4, 2004).

Example 11: According to Bell, the organization's CEO, the company's profits doubled in 2002 (personal communication, May 4, 2004).

Example 12: Critics at the time panned this film, which is now regarded as a masterpiece (B. Green, University of Calgary, Film201 lecture, March 20, 2003).

- For personal communications (conversations, letters, and e-mails), in-text citations should include the name of the source, the words “personal communication,” and the date of the communication. The citation should not include information already included in the sentence.
- Cite course lectures only when necessary; look for published sources making the point.
- Personal communications should NOT be included in your reference list. However, reference-list entries should be included for course notes if they are in hard-copy or electronic format.

Formatting an APA Reference List

Page formatting: Type “References,” centred at the top of a new page. Double-space the entire list and format entries using hanging indent format, as shown in the example at the end of this handout.

Arranging entries: Include entries for all sources cited in your paper except personal communications. Arrange entries alphabetically by the first author’s last name and by the first keyword in a corporate author name (e.g., The UNIVERSITY of Calgary). If there is no author, place the title first and alphabetize by the first keyword in the title.

Authors’ names: Invert all authors’ names, putting the surname first, followed by initials (never full first names). List all authors of a work up to seven, then add ellipses and the last author’s name. Multiple sources: For two or more works by the same author or group, list the earliest work first. Include all authors’ names in each entry. For two or more works by the same author(s) in the same year, add a lower-case letter (e.g., 1998a; 1998b) to the entries and the corresponding in-text citations.

Dates: If no publication year is available, write (n.d.) in the date slot for the reference-list entry.

Titles: Use normal type for article and chapter titles; use italics for book, newspaper, journal, and magazine titles. For book and article titles, capitalize only the first letter of the first word. Capitalize the first letter of all keywords of newspaper, magazine, and journal titles.

Page numbers: Include inclusive page numbers for all articles. Write “p.” (or “pp.”) before page numbers for book chapters and newspaper articles, but not for journal or magazine articles.

Dois for online sources: Digital Object Identifiers (dois) are alphanumeric strings that provide a persistent link to electronic sources. When available, they should be included in reference-list entries for both print and electronic sources. When you include a doi in a reference list entry, no URL, data-base name, or date of retrieval is required. If a doi is unavailable, cite the URL of the journal’s home page. (Include the URL for online archives such as ERIC or JSTOR when documents are not available via other routes.) Note: Crossref.org provides a doi search function and also provides a service that takes readers to the online article when they input an article’s doi.

Retrieval dates: Include retrieval dates for online sources ONLY if the material is subject to change (e.g., Wikis). Retrieval dates are not required for journal articles or other texts not likely to change.

References Formatting

Journal Article with Doi

Wellen, K. E., & Hotamisligil, G. S. (2005). *Inflammation, stress, and diabetes*.
Journal of Clinical Investigation, 115(5), 1111-1119. doi: 10.1172/JCI200525102

Guidelines

- Capitalize only the first letter of the first word of article titles and subtitles, but capitalize the first letter of all keywords of JOURNAL titles. Italicize journal titles.
- After the journal title, put a comma, followed by the volume number in italics, followed by the page range. If each journal issue begins at page 1, include the issue number in parentheses (not italicized) after the volume number (as shown in the above example). Leave out the issue number for journals paginated continuously throughout the year, where the page numbers of one issue pick up where the page numbers of the previous issue left off. You may have to check several issues of a journal in order to figure out if it's paginated continuously or not.
- If a doi (Digital Object Identifier) is available, cite it, as shown above. The doi can sometimes be found under a link or button labelled Article, Cross-Ref, or the database name (e.g. PubMed). If necessary, you can check or search for dois at CrossRef.org. When citing a doi, leave out the database name or URL.

Journal Article with NO Doi

Hawkins, C. (2008). *Affirmations: How to inspire students to revise*.
Praxis: A Writing Centre Journal, 5(2). Retrieved from <http://projects.uwc.utexas.edu/praxis/>

Guidelines

- If a doi is not available for an online journal article, write "Retrieved from" and then cite the URL of the journal home page, as shown above. Cite the page range for the article if it's available. (Note: no page numbers were available for the Hawkins article above.)

Magazine Article (online & paper-based)

Horton, S. (2009, August). Court orders release of juvenile prisoner at Gitmo. *Harper's Magazine*.

Retrieved from <http://www.harpers.org/>

Sutton, R. (1994, May 10). Landscaping trends. *Gardening World*, 54(3), 27-33.

Guidelines

- For magazine articles retrieved online, give the URL of the magazine's home page.
- Include the full date and the volume number, issue number, and page range, if available.

Article in a Daily Newspaper (online & paper-based)

Lowey, M. (1994, June 11). Facing the techno-gap. *The Calgary Herald*, p. B8.

Richards, G. (2009, July 30). Alberta police face stricter Taser rules. *The Calgary Herald*.

Retrieved from <http://www.calgaryherald.com/index.html>

Guidelines

- If an article appears on discontinuous pages, give all page numbers (separated by commas).

Books (print & online)

American Psychological Association. (2010). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

Bazerman, C. (1988). *Shaping written knowledge: The genre and activity of the experimental article in science*. [WAC Clearinghouse Landmark Publications in Writing Studies.] Retrieved from http://wac.colostate.edu/books/bazerman_shaping/

Jolliffe, D. A. (1999). *Inquiry and genre: Writing to learn in college*. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Guidelines

- Capitalize only the first letter of proper nouns and of the first word of book titles and subtitles.
- Italicize book titles.
- For print books, include the place of publication and the state abbreviation followed by a colon and the name of the publisher. If the publisher and writer are the same, identify the publisher as “Author” (as in the APA example above).
- For books available online (i.e., electronic versions), cite the doi (or the URL if a doi is not available), as in the Bazerman and Scott examples above.

Article or Chapter in an Edited Book

Halloran, S. M. (1990). *From rhetoric to composition: The teaching of writing in America to 1900*. In J. J. Murphy (Ed.), *A short history of writing instruction from ancient Greece to twentieth-century America* (pp. 151-182). Davis, CA: Hermagoras Press.

Guidelines

- Include editors’ names (with initials before surnames). Include the page range in parentheses after the title and prefaced by pp.

Encyclopedia or Reference Work

Caffeine. (n.d.). In *The American heritage® Stedman’s medical dictionary*. Retrieved from Dictionary.com website: <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/caffeine>

Guidelines

- *Begin with the author’s name, if available. If no author is given, begin with the article title.*

Technical and Research Reports

Statistics Canada. (2009). *2006 Census: Immigration in Canada: A portrait of the foreign-born population, 2006 Census: Findings*. (Report No. 97-557-XIE2006001). Retrieved from <http://www12.statcan.ca/census-recensement/2006/as-sa/97-557/index-eng.cfm>

Guidelines

- For paper-based reports, include the place of location and the publisher, as you would for a book. If the publisher is the author, then write “Author” for the publisher’s name.

Video

Bard, R. (Writer), & Boynton, G. (Director). (2005). Going away [Television series episode]. In R. Kelley (Executive producer), Mystery Archives. Toronto, ON: OTV5 Broadcasting.

Nova Science Now (Producer). (2009). The science of picky eaters [DVD]. Available from

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/sciencenow/archive/date-20090721.html>

Guidelines

For a television-program episode, use the same format as for a book chapter but list the scriptwriter and director in the author position and the producer in the editor position.

Blog Post

*Sherman, A. (2009, July 28). Extravagant eggs.
Retrieved from <http://cookingwithamy.blogspot.com/>*

Guidelines

- If the author uses a screen name, use that in place of the author’s actual name.

Web Sites

University of Minnesota Libraries. (n.d.). Evidence-based practice. Retrieved from <http://www.biomed.lib.umn.edu/learn/ebp/index.html>

Ways to overcome pain. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.painrx.com.html>

Guidelines

- Begin with the author's name; if no author or corporate author can be identified, move the title to the author slot. The second sample entry above, with no author, would be cited in a paper as follows: ("Ways to Overcome," n.d.).
- If no publication date is available, insert "(n.d.);" in that slot.
- Do not italicize the title of an article on a website (just as you would not italicize the title of an article in a magazine). Do italicize the title of a report or book found on a website (as you would for print copies). Capitalize only the first letter of the first word (plus proper nouns).
- Provide the retrieval date if the content is likely to change or be updated.
- Cite the URL (with no period after it). Break long URLs before punctuation marks.

Brochure

Canadian Landscapers Society. (2003). Xeriscaping your yard [Brochure]. Toronto: Go Press.

Guidelines

- Italicize book titles. Capitalize only the first letter of proper nouns and of the first word of book titles and subtitles. (For brochures, add "[Brochure]" after the title.)

A sample APA-style References page follows.

Sample APA reference page:

References	
American Psychological Association. (2010). <i>Publication manual of the American Psychological Association</i> (6 th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.	book, published by the author
Bard, R. (Writer), & Boynton, G. (Director). (2005). Going away [Television series episode]. In R. Kelley (Executive producer), <i>Mystery Archives</i> . Toronto, ON: OTV5 Broadcasting.	television episode
Bazerman, C. (1988). <i>Shaping written knowledge: The genre and activity of the experimental article in science</i> . (WAC Clearinghouse Landmark Publications in Writing Studies.) Retrieved from http://wac.colostate.edu/books/bazerman_shaping/	online book
Caffeine. (n.d.) <i>In The American heritage Stedman's medical dictionary</i> . Retrieved from Dictionary.com website: http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/caffeine	encyclopedia entry (online)
Canadian Landscapers Society. (2003). <i>Xeriscaping your yard</i> [Brochure]. Toronto: Go Press.	brochure (print)
Halloran, S. M. (1990). From rhetoric to composition: The teaching of writing in America to 1900. In J. J. Murphy (Ed.), <i>A short history of writing instruction from ancient Greece to twentieth-century America</i> (pp. 151-182). Davis, CA: Hermagoras Press.	article or chapter in a print book
Hawkins, C. (2008). Affirmations: How to inspire students to revise. <i>Praxis: A Writing Centre Journal</i> , 5(2), 31-41. Retrieved from http://projects.uwc.utexas.edu/praxis/	online journal article; no doi
Horton, S. (2009, August). Court orders release of juvenile prisoner at Gitmo. <i>Harper's Magazine</i> . Retrieved from http://www.harpers.org/	magazine article (online)
Jolliffe, D. A. (1999). <i>Inquiry and genre: Writing to learn in college</i> . Boston: Allyn and Bacon.	book (print)
Lowey, M. (1994, June 11). Facing the techno-gap. <i>The Calgary Herald</i> , p. B8.	newspaper article
Nova Science Now (Producer). (2009). The science of picky eaters [DVD]. Available from http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/sciencenow/archive/date-20090721.html	video
Richards, G. (2009, July 30). Alberta police face stricter Taser rules. <i>The Calgary Herald</i> . Retrieved from http://www.calgaryherald.com/index.html	newspaper article (online)
Smith, R. R. (2006). <i>Teaching English to new immigrants</i> . Retrieved from ERIC database. (ED2900353).	article from ERIC
Statistics Canada. (2009). <i>2006 Census: Immigration in Canada: A portrait of the foreign born population, 2006 Census: Findings</i> . (Report No. 97-557-XIE2006001). Retrieved from http://www12.statcan.ca/census-reensement/2006/as-sa/97-557/index-eng.cfm	corporate author, government research report (online)



Sutton, R. (1994, May 10). Landscaping trends. *Gardening World*, 54, 27-33.

magazine article (print)

University of Minnesota Libraries. (n.d.). Evidence based practice. Retrieved from <http://www.biomed.lib.umn.edu/learn/ebp/index.html>

article from a website

Ways to overcome pain. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.painrx.com.html>

no author, article from a website

Wellen, K. E., & Hotamisligil, G. S. (2005). Inflammation, stress, and diabetes. *Journal of Clinical Investigation*, 115(5), 1111-1119.
doi:10.1172/JC1200525102

journal article with doi;
2 authors

Note: Many examples used here are taken from actual sources; others are hypothetical.
