

APA Documentation Style Guide

About APA: If you have taken basic college writing courses, you are probably accustomed to using only MLA style (author page#). However, many social sciences & science classes instead require APA style (author last name, year). It can be a difficult transition, especially if you have to bounce back and forth between different styles for different classes. The principles are the same: All writing must have a clear source, your words ("I," etc.) or acknowledged words of outside authorities. MLA wants to know *where* you found the information; APA wants to know *when* it was published.

APA position papers: There are several kinds of APA papers. Some need to follow strict guidelines for the purposes of reviewing published articles in the field or reporting on particular studies or research. These formats require specific sections and headings to reflect data, methods of the research and outcomes. **APA position papers are less formal in their "layout" and structure. However, position papers do state a thesis and defend its position using authoritative resources to support the claim, reasons and evidence. APA position papers must contain signal phrases and in-text citations that refer to a References page listing the sources used in the paper.**

Some Specifics of APA style:

1. **USE OF "I":** APA style allows for the first person to be used to refer to yourself if you are the only author of the paper. You can use "we" to refer to the authors when there are more than one author of the paper.
2. **SOURCES: ALL sentences need a clear source. ALL OUTSIDE SOURCES IN APA MUST INCLUDE A (YEAR) OF PUBLICATION.** You need multiple citations even if you are using the same source throughout the paragraph. Every sentence that contains information that is not **entirely** your own words or thoughts needs to contain the citation for the source from which it came. ***Even if this means citing almost every sentence of a paragraph, it must be done.*** You can, however, build citations into your sentence (signal phrases) throughout the paragraph to avoid an excess of parenthetical documentation at the end of each sentence.
 - a. Signal Phrases: **This is a short introductory phrase which alerts the reader that a paraphrase or a quote is about to follow. The citation includes: the author(s)'s last name(s), the year in parentheses, and the page number (if a quote). The page number is not required for paraphrases or summaries. Please remember, all sources cited in-text must be fully cited on the reference page. PLEASE USE OWL OR A CITATION MAKER FOR MAKING AN APA REFERENCE LIST**
3. **HEADING SECTIONS/LEVELS:** Heading levels are not required for all APA papers, however, you may find them really helpful once you get the hang of them. **They serve as a sort of outline for your paper and provide a clear and decisive organization for the topics.** A paper using APA style may contain 4 or more sections on their own pages, including:
 - a. the title page,
 - b. the abstract,
 - c. the main body of the paper (which may have sub-headings to clarify organization, like, Introduction, Background, The Situation, Conclusion, etc.)
 - d. and the References page.
 - i. References page uses no entry numbers or bullets in the list
 - ii. entries are in alphabetical order by author or other identifying information as guide directs.

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SOME SAMPLES OF COMMON SOURCE CITATIONS—IN SENTENCES.

Author(s) known citing a quotation:

According to Caplan (2005), "very few people have 20/20 vision. Being able to see well is crucial to success in some sports" (p. 593).

The author(s) is unknown:

(Use the title of the book, article, pamphlet, etc. Use just the first one or two words of the title. The titles of longer works such as books, journals, brochures (pamphlets), reports, and films are italicized. the titles of shorter works such as essays, articles, songs, and chapters are placed within quotation marks).

Example of a book without an author citing a quote:

In *Five Acres and Independence* (1976), it was discovered that, in many instances, "mules can be stubborn" (p. 56).

Example of a journal article without an author citing a quote:

According to the article "Go Wireless" (2011), the current generation of students "enjoy the freedom of mobile phones" (p. 376).

The author is a group or corporate entity:

Example of a corporate entity that does not use a well-known name abbreviation citing a quote:

Research by the Animals in Nature Association (2008), has shown that, in many states, the number of animals in "the wild is decreasing exponentially to the increase in the human population" (p. 78).

Example of a corporate entity that has a well-known name abbreviation (citing a paraphrased sentence):

(The following example is the first in-text citation for this source. If you are citing this source in other parts of your paper, do not use the full name of the corporation, use the abbreviated name: for example (AHA, 2008). Also, the page number is not required with a paraphrased sentence).

According to the American Heart Association (AHA, 2007), daily exercise can have positive benefits to the heart .

The web page author is unknown. There is not a publication date or a page number available. A quote is being used from the web page:

(If the author of a web page is unknown, use the first one or two words of the title, placed in quotation marks. If the publication date is unknown, use n.d. If a page number is not available, use the paragraph number. The paragraph number on a web page is found by counting the number of paragraphs, starting at the first paragraph).

According to "Cooking Healthy" (n.d.), "decreasing the use of mono-saturated fats in a diet will decrease health risks in many people" (para. 5).

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Reference Page – Please consult OWL, a style guide or citation maker for source specifics:

- Your references should **begin on a new page**. Title the new page "**References**" and center the title text at the top of the page.
- All entries should be in **alphabetical order by author or other required information, if there is no author. Authors are listed by last name and initial *not first name***.
- The first line of a reference should be **flush with the left margin**. Each additional line should be indented (usually accomplished by using the TAB key.)
- The reference section should be uniformly **double-spaced**.
- All sources cited should appear **both in-text and on the reference page**. Any reference that appears in the text of writing must be listed on the references page, and any item appearing on your reference page must be also included, clearly, somewhere in the body of your text.
- Titles of **books, journals, magazines, and newspapers** should appear in italics.
- Titles of **articles** should be in sentence case: only first word of title is capitalized. e.g.—
Scruton, R. (1996). The eclipse of listening. *The New Criterion*, 15(3), 5-13.

[This part can be copy/pasted into another document and filled out for a map of the paper.]

Very Basic Outline of a Position Paper

- I. **Thesis: This is the sentence/claim that states your position:**

- II. **First reason that supports your position:**
 - A. **Cite a source that backs up your reason.**

- III. **Second reason that supports your position:**
 - A. **Cite a source that backs up your reason.**

- IV. **Third reason that supports your position:**
 - A. **Cite a source that backs up your reason.**

- V. **Conclusion: Re-state the topic and the claim about it that has been proved by sources; then suggest/project an outcome or caution you foresee.**