This handout is designed to give you quick assistance with using APA rules for undergraduate papers at WCU. The information presented here is based on the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 7th edition (APA 2019). We strongly encourage you to consult this manual for detailed questions. You can find a copy in the Writing and Learning Commons (Belk 207) and at Hunter Library’s Reference Desk, or you can purchase your own copy from any bookseller. There are also many examples and detailed explanations on the APA website: http://www.apastyle.org.

What is APA?

“APA style” is the recognized style of the American Psychological Association. APA is used primarily in the social sciences, but it is common in many classes at WCU. APA guidelines cover more than just citations; APA provides rules on the structure, style, and look of a paper, including headings, tables, and research methods.

Formatting Your Paper

Use 1-inch margins on all sides. APA recommends 12-point Times New Roman font.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title Page</th>
<th>The Content/Body</th>
<th>Sources page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title of Paper</td>
<td>Text begins here. Double-space, use 12-point Times New Roman or a similar font, and indent new paragraphs ½”. Margins should be 1” all around, with the header ½” from the top. For more samples of APA papers, stop by the WaLC.</td>
<td>References</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your Name</td>
<td></td>
<td>Author, A. A. (Year). Title of work. Publisher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Carolina University</td>
<td></td>
<td>Author, B. B. (Year). Title of work. Publisher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Name</td>
<td>Section Heading</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructor</td>
<td>Level 2 Heading</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Due Date</td>
<td>Level 3 Heading</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Level 4 Heading</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Level 5 Heading</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>See the explanation below for information on how headings work in APA. If your paper has multiple sections, you will need to format them properly.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Title Page (See APA Manual p. 32)

A title page in APA should provide the page number, title, your name, the university, the course name, the instructor, and the due date for which you wrote the paper. Some professors may ask you to include a “running head,” which is not usually required in student papers. Graduate-level papers and/or papers being submitted for publication require an author’s note as well as a running head. Information on author’s notes and running heads can be found in the APA manual.

The Abstract (See APA Manual p. 38)

An abstract is a brief summary of your paper. For most undergraduate papers, abstracts are not required. Ask your professor whether to include one. If you are required to write an abstract, it should appear on the second page, in block format, and be no more than 250 words in length. For more information, consult the APA manual or visit the WaLC.

The Content/Body (See APA Manual pp. 43-47)

After the title page (and the abstract, if you’ve been required to write one), your paper begins. Each page of your paper should have a page number and should follow APA’s formatting rules for headings, tables, etc. If you are required to have a running head, it must be on every page of the document. Note that the header on the title page is not the same as the header in the rest of the paper.

Headings (See APA Manual pp. 47-49)

APA recommends using headings to separate sections of a paper. Headings are particularly important in studies, proposals, and reports. The rules for headings in APA relate to the “level” of the section. In order to make sure you use headings effectively, try outlining your paper or prioritizing ideas in your draft. It should be easy to tell major elements from minor points. If you use headings, format them according to these rules:

**Level 1: Centered, Bold, Major Words are Capitalized**

Begin body text on the next line. Level 1 headings are sections like Methods, Results, and other major elements. The title of the paper does not count as a heading. The term “Introduction” should not be used as a heading.

**Level 2: Left Aligned, Bold, Major Words are Capitalized**

Begin body text on the next line. Level 2 headings are used for important/common subsections, such as the “Participants” in a Method (Level 1) section.

**Level 3: Left Aligned, Bold, Italic, Major Words are Capitalized**

Begin body text on the next line. Level 3 headings are part of the text of the paragraph. Only the first word is capitalized, as it would be in a new sentence.

**Level 4: Indented, bold, Major Words are Capitalized, end with a period.** Begin body text after the period. Level 4 headings are not very common in undergraduate and/or short papers.

**Level 5: Indented, Bold, Italics, Major Words are Capitalized, end with a period.** Begin body text after the period. Level 5 headings are rarely needed in undergraduate and/or short papers.

Tables and Figures (See APA Manual p. 195)

APA has very specific rules for visuals and tabulated data. For information regarding the design and the proper citation of tables, figures, or any other visual elements in your paper, refer to Chapter 7 of the seventh edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. 
Rules for References

NOTE: Good research requires you to select your sources carefully and read them closely. Start by finding reliable, relevant sources. Develop an understanding of your topic, build your source list, and then start writing. Remember, the research always comes first! All sources should be included in a list at the end of your paper. Chapter 9 in the seventh edition is fully dedicated to this area. For more in-depth questions, see this chapter.

- Include a digital object identifier (DOI) if you have one. If not, APA prefers a link to the journal’s homepage over the incredibly long URLs from databases. If no online journal link is available, the databases should give you a fixed URL or permalink to the article; provide that instead. You can also provide a short link to the database (such as “http://eric.edu.gov”) if that is the only option available to you. (See APA Manual p. 299)

- For online sources, provide retrieval information. Only use the date if the data on the page is subject to change, such as wikis. (See APA Manual p. 282)

- For a passing reference to a website in a text see APA Manual p. 298.

- Titles of books, websites, and articles are capitalized like sentences—only the first word of the title (and subtitle, if present) are capitalized. Periodicals are different, however; titles of journals, newspapers, and magazines should have all major words capitalized. Proper nouns are always capitalized. (See APA Manual p. 291)

- Center and bold the word “References” at the top of the page, and double-space all entries. (See APA Manual p. 303)

- Use a final period at the end of each entry, EXCEPT when it ends with a web address or DOI number. (See APA Manual p. 317)

- Use a hanging indent for each entry: first line flush with the left margin, subsequent lines indented ½ inch. In Microsoft Word, hanging indents are easy to set up. Highlight your source list, click on the Paragraph dialog box, then select “Special” under indents (or just use the ruler functions, if you know how). (See APA Manual p. 303)

- Alphabetize the Reference list by author’s last name. (If there is no author, use the first significant word in the title.) Multiple references by the same author are arranged by year of publication, starting with the earliest. (See APA Manual p. 303)

- Do not include first names of authors. Use last names and initials instead. (Also, never refer to authors by their first names in the text of your paper.) All authors’ names should appear like this: “Smith, J. A.” See the bullet above for more information on how to alphabetize your reference list. (See APA Manual p. 317)

- Editors. Many sources will have editors instead of authors. Follow the same rules as you would for listing authors, but remember to put “(Ed.)” after the editor’s name, or “(Eds.)” if there is more than one editor. (See APA Manual p. 322)

- Dates are important. Use them! If a source does not have a date, use “n.d.” to indicate no date. (See APA Manual pp. 290-291)

- Italicics. Titles of books, journals, newspapers, magazines, and websites are always italicized. Titles of chapters and articles are neither italicized nor enclosed within quotation marks. (See APA Manual p. 170)

- APA does not recommend using indirect references. Whenever possible, cite the original source, unless the source is unavailable or unusable. In the event that you do use an indirect reference, only list
the text you are working with directly in the References page. Do not list the indirect reference on the Reference page.

- List authors in the order they appear in the original source. For two authors, separate names with an ampersand, like this: “Smith, A. & Jones, B.P.” For three to seven authors, list in order, with an ampersand before the last author: “Smith, A., Jones, B. P., & Clooney, G.” For more than 20 authors, list the first 19, then insert an ellipsis, then the last author’s name. (See APA Manual p. 286)

- Use only the name of the publisher. Do not use terms like “Inc.” or “Company.” If a text has no publisher (e.g., a self-published Kindle book), use the word “Author” as the publisher’s name. (See APA Manual pp. 295-296)

- Sources. Scholarly sources are easier to cite than informal ones. If you are having trouble with a citation, look for a more reputable source. For any academic paper, use library resources.
Reference List Examples

Below are the basic formats and examples of sources often used in research papers.

Books (print) (See APA Manual p. 321)

General format

Author, A. A. (Year). Title of work. Publisher.

Book with one author


Book with an editor


Book with more than one author/editor


Book with more than one edition (or a reprinted book)


Book in a language other than English


Electronic, audio, and online books

(See APA Manual p. 321 and “Rules for References” for more information)

General format

Author, A. A. (Year). Title of work [version or database]. Publisher. http://www.xxxxx

Author, A. A. (Year). Title of work. Publisher. doi:xxxxx

Online version of print book

Electronic-only book (never published in print)


Chapter or entry in a book
(See APA Manual p. 326)

General format

Author, A. B. (Year). Title of chapter/entry. In B. Editor (Ed.), Book title (pp. xx-xx.). Publisher.

Chapter in a book


Entry or chapter in a book with NO AUTHOR


Articles in Periodicals, Scholarly Journals, Newspapers, Etc.
(See APA Manual pp. 294, 316-318)

General format


https://doi.org/xxxxx [if available]

NOTE: The volume number in an APA citation is an italicized digit. Do not include the term “vol.” or any words. Just include the number itself, in italics, after the name of the periodical. See examples below. Issue numbers should be included depending on how the periodical paginates its publication. If a journal continues paginating across issues, an issue number is not needed. If the journal begins each new issue with page 1, include an issue number in your citation. Getting this right may require some research. Consult the APA manual, or check other issues of the journal in question to determine whether issue numbers need to be included in your citation. When in doubt, include an issue number if you have one.

Article in print


Studies in Emergent Order, 3, 82-99.
Online article (or PDF based on a print source) with DOI (digital object identifier)


https://doi.org/10.1007/s11273-011-9233-3

Online article or PDF based on a print source, without DOI


http://www.sli.gsu.edu

Article in an Internet-only newsletter

Tate, T.K. (2013, July 9). Student studies songbird mating, personality and paternity on campus.

*The Reporter*. http://thereporter.wcu.edu

Online article with no author


Online article with no author and no date (e.g., wiki article)


Entry in an online dictionary or reference work, no date and no author identified


NOTE: The WaLC strongly discourages using online dictionaries, wikis, and quotation sites in formal papers.

Reviews (See APA Manual p. 334)

General format

Example


Government, Corporate, and Technical Reports (See APA Manual p. 329)

General format

Author, A. A. (Year). *Title of work* (Report No. xxx). Publisher and/or URL.

Example


Other Research (See APA Manual p. 332)

General format (presentation/poster)

Presenter, A. A. (Year, Month). Title of paper [Paper/Poster presentation]. Organization Name, Location.

Example


General format (thesis/dissertation)


Example


Audiovisual Sources (See APA Manual p. 342)

General format for Film

Director, A. A. (Director). (Year). *Title of motion picture* [Film]. Studio.
Example


**General format for Music album**

Writer, A. (Copyright year). *Title of album* [Album recorded by B. B. Artist if different from writer].

Label.

**Example**


**General format for Single song or track**

Writer, A. (Copyright year). *Title of song* [Song recorded by B. B. Artist if different from writer]. On *Title of album*. Label.

**Example**


**General Format for TV series episode**

Lastname, A. (Writer), and Lastname, B. (Director). (Year). *Title of episode* (Season, Episode) [TV series episode]. In C. Lastname (Executive Producer), *Title of show*. Distributor or studio.

**Example**


**NOTE:** For television, films, music, or other artistic or cultural works, cite the original or official recording whenever possible (instead of a Youtube video or indirect source).

**General format for Online slide presentation**


**Example**


**General format for Audiobook**

Example

General format for Podcast
Host, A. A. (Host). (Date range). *Title* [Audio podcast]. Publisher. URL.

Example
https://www.npr.org/series/423302056/hidden-brain

General format for Podcast episode
Host, A. A. (Date). (Date). *Title (No.)* [Audio podcast episode]. In *Podcast title*. Publisher. URL.

Example

Websites (See APA Manual pp. 298, 350-352)

NOTE: APA considers many web sources unreliable. Also, entire websites are rarely cited in APA. Instead, specific parts/sections should be cited individually. *Ask your instructor before using any non-scholarly online source.*

Author, A. B. (Date of publication). *Title of document*. http://www.xxxx

Specific section or page from a website

Section of a web site with no date and/or no author
E-mail, Interviews You Conduct, and Other Personal Communication

Do not cite in reference list.

(See APA Manual p. 260)

In text only:

(A. Author, personal communication, Month date, year)

Example of Email discussed in text:

The director stated the results were “disastrous but inaccurate” (A. Smith, personal communication, May 28, 2009).

Online posts (internet videos, message boards, blogs, etc.)

(See APA Manual pp. 348-350)

General Format

Author, A. A. (Year, Month Day). *Post title* [Description of form]. http://www.xxxx

YouTube video

Porter, J. (2012, November 11). *WCU 2012 - “This is how we roll” at BOA Grand National Semi-Finals* [Video]. YouTube. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-itBe-21L6c

Blog post


Tweet


Wiki entry

Citizenship & Civility (n.d.). Retrieved July 11, 2013 from the WCU wiki:

http://fuji.wcu.edu/groups/citizenshipcivility20122013/

NOTE: Wiki entries and undated websites must include a retrieval date. APA considers wiki unreliable.
In-Text (Parenthetical) Citations
(See APA Manual pp. 253-280)

All in-text citations must include the author’s name and the year the source was produced. If a sentence contains a direct quote or paraphrase, the citation must include a page number. When the author’s name is cited in the sentence, the date follows the name in parentheses. When the author(s) is not named in the sentence, the name, date and page number (if applicable) go in parentheses at the end of the sentence. (See APA Manual p. 271)

Documentation within your paper gives credit for any direct quotations, paraphrases, or summaries from your sources. An in-text citation functions as a short, specific credit that corresponds to an entry on the References page, and vice versa. The position of the in-text citation shows exactly what information has come from that source.

NOTE: All in-text citations must include the author’s name and the year the source was produced. If a sentence contains a direct quote or paraphrase, the citation must include a page number.

There are two forms of in-text citation:
1) Author and date cited in sentence (narrative citation). This is recommended the first time a source is mentioned or used. See the explanation of signal phrases below and the second column in the table on page 13.
   If a direct quote is being cited, a sentence citation must be followed by a parenthetical citation with a page number or location.
   • According to Stanford (1981), numerous differences are evident when participants…
   • Rogers and Graham (1989) dispute this finding…
   • Kwitzel (1976) noted that “humanistic values in literature, science, ethics and society cut across religious commitments and are common possessions of the culture” (p. 5).
   • Verbunt, Pernot, and Smeets (2008) offered that “the level … seemed best explained by their mental health condition and less by their physical condition” (Discussion section, para. 1).

2) All citation information in parentheses. The most common type of citation. In parenthetical citations, all information appears at the end of the sentence/mention in parentheses.
   • Research has shown that men and women use generic pronouns in different ways (Martyna, 1978).
   • Thus, “the placebo effect disappears when behaviors are studied in this manner” (George, 1993, p. 276), but it depends which behaviors are being studied.

Signal Phrases

In APA, signal phrases are used to introduce and discuss sources. Much like a cocktail party where you formally introduce your guests to one another, you should introduce and discuss author(s) in the text of your paper, particularly the first time they are mentioned or used. Consider these common signal verbs:

Table 1
Commonly used verbs in APA signal phrases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acknowledged</th>
<th>Believed</th>
<th>Declared</th>
<th>Granted</th>
<th>Observed</th>
<th>Reported</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Added</td>
<td>Claimed</td>
<td>Denied</td>
<td>Illustrated</td>
<td>Offered</td>
<td>Responded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admitted</td>
<td>Commented</td>
<td>Disclosed</td>
<td>Implied</td>
<td>Pointed out</td>
<td>Suggested</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Addressed</td>
<td>Compared</td>
<td>Disputed</td>
<td>Insisted</td>
<td>Reasoned</td>
<td>Testified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argued</td>
<td>Confirmed</td>
<td>Emphasized</td>
<td>Negated</td>
<td>Refuted</td>
<td>Thought</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asserted</td>
<td>Contended</td>
<td>Endorsed</td>
<td>Noted</td>
<td>Rejected</td>
<td>Wrote</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Once you have introduced your sources, follow standard guidelines for in-text citations.

### Table 2

**Rules for In-text/Parenthetical Citations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of source</th>
<th>First use and/or source mentioned IN TEXT</th>
<th>PARENTHETICAL, first citation</th>
<th>Parenthetical format, subsequent citations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One work by one author</td>
<td>Trawick (2010) claims…</td>
<td>(Trawick, 2010)</td>
<td>(Trawick, 2010)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One work by two authors</td>
<td>Hampton and Reich (2003) claim…</td>
<td>(Hampton &amp; Reich, 2003)</td>
<td>(Hampton &amp; Reich, 2003)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One work by three or more</td>
<td>Blaylock et al. (2005)</td>
<td>(Blaylock et al., 2005)</td>
<td>(Blaylock et al., 2005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group (no abbreviation) author</td>
<td>Fordham University (2011) claims…</td>
<td>(Fordham University, 2011)</td>
<td>(Fordham University, 2011)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author is missing</td>
<td>Title of Book or “Title of Article” (2001) claims…</td>
<td>(Title of Book or “Title of Article,” 2001)</td>
<td>(Title of Book or “Title of Article,” 2001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date is missing</td>
<td>Wilber (n.d.) claims…</td>
<td>(Wilber, n.d.)</td>
<td>(Wilber, n.d.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author and date missing</td>
<td>Title of Book or “Title of Article” (n.d.) claims…</td>
<td>(Title of Book or “Title of Article,” n.d.)</td>
<td>(Title of Book or “Title of Article,” n.d.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE:** Adapted from Table 8.1 in American Psychological Association. (2020). Works credited in the text. In *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.), p. 266.

**NOTE:** If you use a direct quote or paraphrase from any source, the in-text citation must **include a page number**. For example: Costello (2004) claimed that punk rock had had a “long honeymoon” (p. 75). Thus, other musicians felt “the need for darker beats” was ongoing (Cobain, 1991, p. 23).

**Exceptions to In-text Citation Rules**
1) **Direct quotes.** If you are citing a direct quote, the in-text citation must include a page number (or a location, if the original source is not paginated).

2) **Secondary or indirect references** to a source you do not actually have a copy of.

   Seindenberg’s subsequent study (as cited in Coltheart & Haller, 1997) found that…

   **NOTE:** In the reference list, give only the secondary source (Coltheart & Haller), NOT the work cited within its text (Seindenberg). APA does not recommend using indirect references. Whenever possible, cite the original source, unless the source is unavailable or unusable.

3) **Block quotations** (quotations of 40 or more words). Block quotes are indented ½ inch from the regular text. No quotation marks are used for block quotes. See the example below.

   In their groundbreaking study, Neto and Barros (2000) explain some of these effects:
   
   As a result of these unmet needs, the individual experiences a variety of aversive affective states. Feelings of loneliness are often situationally determined and tend to be short-lived. However, some people feel loneliness in many different settings and so frequently that it comes to resemble an enduring personality trait. (para. 3)

   **NOTE:** In a block quotation, the period precedes the closing citation. Use block quotes sparingly.

4) **Emails/personal communication.** Emails, interviews, etc. are not cited in the reference list.

**Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is representing the words or ideas of someone else’s as one’s own in any academic exercise. Whether intentional or unintentional, plagiarism can result in an “F” in the course and/or expulsion from the University as well as other financial sanctions. WCU’s Academic Integrity Policy (http://academicintegrity.wcu.edu), the Western Carolina University Code of Student Conduct, and your instructor’s syllabus outline the reporting and resolution process, and the various sanctions for plagiarism.