APA Reminder Manual

This manual assumes you already know the basics of APA style. If you need the more primary rules go here: <http://teaching.up.edu/edresearch/apa-resources.html>

Here are descriptions of APA rules that a lot of writers forget. There are also some style suggestions that are not in the manual and in those cases I explain why I have suggested them. Remember that your mentor (dissertation chair) is the final authority for your writing but I offer these suggestions if needed.

*Note*: Any time you see a section citation it refers to the APA manual.

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Contractions

There is nothing in the APA Publication Manual about using contractions. Contractions are considered informal writing. Scholarly writing is anything but informal. There is one case when contractions might be used. When you are using a direct quotation, bring forward the contraction in the original. Otherwise do not use them.

You have to train yourself not to use contractions because all of us are so used to inserting the occasional contraction that often we do not even know we are doing it. When you have the bulk of your writing done on a project, search for apostrophes. Word will highlight them and you can quickly see which are possessives and which are contractions.

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APA Style of Heading by Level of Subordination

(Section 3.03)

The APA Publication Manual does not describe this clearly (Section 3.03). You have to look at the example paper in the manual or consult external resources like this one or other APA blogs. The examples below are formatted correctly.

Top Level

Centered, Bold, Title Case, on Its Own Line

One of the most widely researched topics in American higher education over the past forty years is the concept of student retention (Berger, Ramirez, & Lyons, 2012). Much time and effort is dedicated to the search to learn why some students stay and others leave.

Second Level

Flush Left, Bold, Title Case, on Its Own Line

One of the most widely researched topics in American higher education over the past forty years is the concept of student retention (Berger, Ramirez, & Lyons, 2012). Much time and effort is dedicated to the search to learn why some students stay and others leave.

Third Level

**Indented, bold, sentence case, first line of the paragraph, ending with a period.** One of the most widely researched topics in American higher education over the past forty years is the concept of student retention (Berger, Ramirez, & Lyons, 2012). Much time and effort is dedicated to the search to learn why some students stay and others leave.

Fourth Level

***Indented, bold, italic, sentence case, first line of the paragraph, ending with a period.*** One of the most widely researched topics in American higher education over the past forty years is the concept of student retention (Berger, Ramirez, & Lyons, 2012). Much time and effort is dedicated to the search to learn why some students stay and others leave.

Fifth Level

*Indented, italic, sentence case, first line of the paragraph, ending with a period.* One of the most widely researched topics in American higher education over the past forty years is the concept of student retention (Berger, Ramirez, & Lyons, 2012). Much time and effort is dedicated to the search to learn why some students stay and others leave.

*Notes.*

* Headings are not underlined, not all capital, nor made with larger type than the body of the paper.
* Usually, the introduction has no top-level heading (Section 3.03).
* Only use sub-section headings if there are two or more subsections.
* Headings do not start with a letter or number.
* Headings serve to organize the paper in the same manner that you would use an outline. With that in mind, it would be unusual to have a single subsection heading. If you are tempted to use a single subordinate heading within a section, consider not using it (Section 3.02).

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Ellipses

APA (section 6.08) refers to “three spaced ellipsis points” to show that something has been omitted from a direct quotation. First, every modern electronic type font has an ellipsis in the type font. Use those and not three periods. On a Mac this is usually Option + ; (semicolon) and in Windows Alt + Crtl + . (period).

APA says to not use an ellipsis at the beginning or end of a quotation unless it is needed to help avoid misinterpretation. My experience is that that is rarely the case.

Spacing around the ellipsis is a bit of a problem. Since APA is suggesting three periods, the examples in the manual are not of much use. My personal preference is no spacing before an ellipsis and one space after. Many typesetters do not use spaces on either side but there are lots of examples where this is not followed. The best advice is to make your own decision about this and then follow it consistently throughout your writing.

Finally, if you do use an ellipsis between two sentences or at the end of a quotation then it needs a period after the ellipsis without a space. (“That was all that was said…. At least, that is what I heard.”) If a citation follows the quotation when the quotation is not in an indented block (it is in the body of the text), then no period would follow the use of a final ellipsis and the period would be inserted after the citation.

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Punctuation and Quotation Marks

An ellipsis is a form of punctuation. See the section on [ellipses](#Ellipses) to review those rules.

For direct quotations that end with a period or a comma, the punctuation goes inside the final quotation mark. For all other punctuation (colons, semicolons, exclamation marks) the symbol goes outside of the final quotation mark. UNLESS, the special character is part of the original quotation. Then it would go inside the final quotation mark.

Single Quotation Marks

The only reason to use single quotation marks is when material was originally set off by double quotation marks in a direct quotation.

Emphasis and Invented Expressions

Do not use double quote marks for emphasis or when a word is used normally but in a limited context. In those cases, use italic. Double quote marks can be used when a word or phrase is meant to be ironic or when pointing to an invented or coined expression but they would only surround the word or phrase once and then not be used again. Since it is often difficult to separate these two uses, use italic when you are not sure.

Some Other Direct Quotation Rules

If you are pointing out that a grammatical error was in an original quotation, insert [*sic*] directly after the error. Note that the *sic* is in italic—presumably because it is a foreign word— but the square brackets are not in italic (sections 4.8 and 4.10).

If you want to insert text that was not in the original quotation, place the new text in square brackets. In that case, the inserted material will not be in italic.

If you want to add emphasis in a direct quotation, change the emphasized text to italic and then insert [emphasis added] after the emphasized text. The material inside the square brackets will not be italicized. If the original material already had the emphasis, there is no need to say [emphasis in the original] unless you feel it is necessary to avoid misunderstanding.

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APA Style Sheets

Using Style Sheets will save you hours of time in the long run. At first it does not seem like it is worth figuring out. It is! You are reading a document produced in MS Word. Embedded in this document are style sheets designed to produce documents in APA formatting. The style sheets can be copied directly from this document to your computer so you can use them. Note that style sheets reside in two places: within a document and on the computer you are using. So, if you close this document before you transfer the style sheets they will no longer be available. Once the style sheets are transferred they will be available on the computer to which they have been transferred and can be selected from the style menu whenever you are working on a document.

*Note:* You will see that my style sheets are set up to format in Times but that the SOE’s instructions say to use Times New Roman. The history of these two fonts is interesting but not for discussion here. Suffice it to say that they look different. Times New Roman looks slightly *blacker*. This is predominantly because the x-height of the letters (the height of a lower case x) is slightly larger. I prefer the appearance of Times. You may not care. Just change the font in the style sheet if you want Times New Roman.

There are 4 style sheets in this document that you need: APA Body, APA Heading 1, APA Heading 2, and APA Reference.

To transfer them to your computer:

1. Open the Style dialog box. On a Mac this is from the menu Format/Style…
2. From the Style dialog box select Organizer…
3. On the left-hand side, the list is entitled In APA Reminder Manual.docx:
4. Select the 4 style sheets you wish to move. You can select them all at once by holding down the shift key and clicking on each style name
5. In the center of the dialog box click on Copy and it will move the 4 style sheets to your computer. Above the box on the right side of the dialog it should say To Normal.dotm:

These four styles will now show up on the styles list whether you get to that from the Ribbon or from the menu, but only on this computer. If you use multiple computers, you will have to go through this transfer process for each computer.

What Choices Do These Styles Automatically Make?

**APA Body.** 12pt Times; double line spacing; left justified; .3 inch paragraph indent; when you hit the return key the next paragraph will be the same style.

**APA Heading 1.** 12pt Times; bold; double line spacing; center justified; no paragraph indent; when you hit the return key the next paragraph will be APA Body.

**APA Heading 2.** 12pt Times; bold; double line spacing; left justified; no paragraph indent; when you hit the return key the next paragraph will be APA Body. The paragraph is set to Keep with next so that the heading will never break on a page with the body on the next.

**APA Reference.** 12pt Times; bold; double line spacing; left justified; no paragraph indent; special hanging indent of .3 (the second and subsequent lines will be indented .3 inches); when you hit the return key the next paragraph will be the same style.

You do not need style sheets for 3rd or lower level headings. They are typed as a usual sentence using APA Body. Then select the heading text and change it to bold, bold-italic, or italic depending on the heading level.

Note also, that the default extra between-paragraph spacing that Microsoft includes as default with Word has been removed.

Feel free to change these as you will. You might want Times New Roman instead of Times for instance. To edit a style sheet, go back to Format/Styles, select the style you wish to change, and click on Modify…

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Serial (Oxford) Commas

(Section 3.04)

In a list of three or more elements, a comma should be placed before the final conjunction.

Example 1: Bob, Sally, and Martha

Example 2: Cooperative learning can take on the forms of students working collaboratively throughout a project on all aspects of the project, students working individual on elements of a project and then bring their work together to produce a single project, or students working on individual elements of a project and each presenting only about his or her work.

Semicolons in lists

Within a paragraph, if elements of the series have commas embedded in the element, then separate the elements with semicolons.

Ordered lists

Within a paragraph, if elements in a series are to be identified as ordered, then the numbers or letters appear at the beginning of each element and are enclosed in parentheses.

Example 3: The participants’ three choices were (a) working with another participant, (b) working with a team, and (c) working alone.

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Sentence Spacing

Every typesetter in the known world uses single spaces between sentences. Double spaces came from a time when we used monospace type fonts, where every letter took up exactly the same amount of space on a line. To make sure that your eye realized you were at the end of a sentence the convention became to use two spaces between sentences. No one uses monospace type fonts anymore and the double space convention puts too much space (visually) in between sentences. That is why typesetters do not do that.

In the APA Manual, at the end of Section 4.01, it states, “Space twice after punctuation marks at the end of a sentence.”

That is the only time double spaces are used anywhere in an APA document. All other uses of punctuation either have a single space after them (commas, colons, semicolons, and punctuation—including periods—in references) or no spacing (punctuation after initials in an abbreviation). If you were my candidate I would tell you to use single spacing between sentences. ASK you mentor or chair what he or she prefers.

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Tables of Contents (TOC)

The APA Manual is designed to be a style guide for submitting material to a publisher. Most published research reports do not have a table of contents. Therefore, there is no guidance on how to format a table of contents in the APA Manual. Do not use the table of contents in the manual as a guide unless your mentor tells you to do that. If the work you are submitting requires a table of contents you must find out what the style expectations are from your mentor. That is why almost every dissertation style guide includes examples of how to do a table of contents. Here is an example of what it might look like:

Table of Contents

Chapter 1 4

     Second Level Heading (a) 7

          Third Level Heading (a) 9

          Third Level Heading (b) 11

     Second Level Heading (b) 13

Chapter 2 16

The whole table is left justified. Each level of heading entry is indented. The page numbers are right aligned (justified). There is a dotted tab leader between each entry and page number. There are 5 hard spaces (option + space on a Mac) before the second level heading entries and 10 before the third level entries. (There are other ways to do this but I like using the hard spaces. If you do it with a tab it will cause havoc with the tab and the tab leader you have to use for the page numbers.) There is a space before and after the leader in the example above. (That is another style choice of mine.) Once again, I think it is valuable to teach yourself the commands in MS Word to do this but if you want you can cut and paste this example into your own document and go from there.

*Note.* In MS Word you can use Insert/Index and Tables…/Formal to insert a TOC which you will then have to reformat to match your document.

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Special Type Characters

Using correct type characters makes your work look more professional. Here are the main ones.

Smart Quotes

EM dash

EN Dash

Ellipsis

Diacritical Marks

Superscripts and Subscripts

Ampersand

Fractions

Ordinal Endings

X-Bar ( )

**Smart Quotes.** Use opening and closing quotation marks, “smart quotes.” Sometimes these are called curly quotes. Most word processors default to smart quotes. Often text which is copied from webpages will not have smart quotes or whatever it does have is translated by your word processor as straight quote marks. To get rid of straight quote marks, usually the fastest way is to erase and retype the quote mark. If you do need straight quotes (writing 5″ for instance) use the insert symbol command or look up the keyboard equivalent for typing that character.

**EM Dash.** The EM dash (long dash) is used to show that something has been inserted in the sentence which is not directly part of the thought you are expressing. Usually, there is no space before or after an EM dash. You can set up your word processor to automatically change double hyphens into EM dashes, or use the insert symbol menu.

**EN Dash.** The EN dash (the not quite so long dash) is mostly used to show duration: January 7–9. Again, usually, there is no space before or after and EN dash. You will find the EN dash in the insert symbol menu. All special characters have keyboard equivalents but if you do not use them frequently, it is easier to use insert symbol.

**Ellipsis**.When leaving something out of a quotation an ellipsis is inserted. An ellipsis is an actual type character so do not use three periods. There are a bunch of rules around using this character. I have listed them in a [separate section](#Ellipses).

**Diacritical Marks**. These are often called accent marks. There are way too many of these to discuss them individually. The ones seen most frequently are the French accent (I think it is called an aigu) and the umlaut. So, you might want to type résumé or schön. By the way, resume is also acceptable in English with no accent marks or with one: resumé (notice that Word’s spellchecker thinks this is wrong). If you use the insert symbol menu to put these in the document, you may have to select your type font to find them. Word usually defaults to the Symbol type font and that font does not have all of the diacritical marks.

**[Mac hint**:If you want to add a diacritical, when you type the letter to which to add the mark hold down the key. All of the available marks will appear in a list. Type the number you want.]

**Superscripts and Subscripts.** Use the superscript and subscript commands out of the font dialog box or off the ribbon. These are preset styles and if you use the commands they will be consistent within your document. There are two cases in which you need to pay additional attention when using superscripts and subscripts:

1. In a table, adding a superscript to data may be necessary to refer to a note listed below the table. This will misalign text in the data column. Be sure to use decimal tabs to assure correct alignment (see Table section).
2. This is a MS Word glitch and I assume it will be corrected eventually. When using the font Times the superscript type is too small. There are many work arounds for this but for me the fastest is to highlight the superscript and change the font to Times New Roman. Fortunately, APA does not use superscripts very often but you may have a few things containing superscripts that are repeated in your document. Chi Square is an example (χ2). Insert the Greek letter chi followed by a 2. Highlight the 2 and select superscript. While it is still highlighted change the font to Times New Roman. Whenever you need this copy it from where you have previously placed it and paste it in the new location. It will paste both the characters and the formatting.

**Ampersand.** You are used to using the ampersand (&) with author lists in citations and references. Remember that if you are presenting a citation outside of parentheses, the word *and* is used and not an ampersand.

**Fractions.** If the autocorrect Replace as You Type selection for fractions is turned on in Word (I think it is by default), when you type ¼ or ½ Word automatically reformats these to be the proper type character. As far as I can tell those are the only factions that are handled this way. All other fractions have to be built or imported.

Here is an example of a 12 point fraction typed in Word: 23/47. This is clunky and not how a type setter would solve the problem. Here it is, again in Word, as a fraction which is close to what it should be but not perfect. 23⁄47 You can copy this fraction into your own document and then replace the numbers—or you could teach yourself to build fractions in Word. Another solution is to add a type font which has fractions to your system.

**Ordinal Endings**. When you type 1st, Word should automatically make the st smaller and superscript. This works with other ordinal endings as well: 2nd 3rd 4th 122nd. Just type the ordinal ending immediately after the number and it should be reformatted. If it is not, go to Auto Correct/Autoformat as You Type and make sure that Ordinals with Superscript is checked.

**X-Bar ( ):** Although it is acceptable to use *M* as the statistical abbreviation for a mean,   
x-bar is more common if you have been trained in statistical notation. I prefer it but it is appearing less often in published reports. If you wish to use x-bar in a report it is accomplished in Word with the following steps:

* First, you could try copying the from this sentence but my experience is that it does not always work. If it does not, follow the rest of these instructions:
* Place the cursor where you wish to insert the symbol.
* From the insert menu select equation
* The equation ribbon will appear. From the ribbon select accent.
* From the accent menu find the box with a horizontal line across the top and click on it. The box with the line over it will be placed in the “Type equation here” box.
* When it inserts the box it moves the cursor to the right of the box. Hit the left arrow key once and it will highlight the box. Type a lower case x and then click off the box.
* The x which is entered is automatically made italic which it should be. The x will be in Word’s default font for equations (Cambria Math). Highlight the symbol and change the font to the same one you are using for your body text.
* When the equation is highlighted, click on the right-hand dropdown arrow and select Save as New Equation. Call it whatever you want. Now when you select insert equation, click on the Equation button on the left-hand end of the ribbon and your new x-bar equation will be there. All you have to do is click on it to insert it from now on. Note, this is saved on the computer on which you are working so it will be there for new documents as well.

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Numbers

(Section 4.31-8)

**The basic rule**: Numbers above 9 are written as numerals. Numbers below 10 are written as words.

**Beginning of a sentence**: Numbers used at the beginning of a sentence are written as words. Do not forget hyphens when writing compound numbers (Thirty-seven). APA suggests rewriting sentences to avoid having them begin with a number.

**With a unit of measurement**: All numbers which immediately precede a unit of measurement are displayed as numerals (4 cm). So, you cannot start a sentence with this construction.

**Mixed numerals and words**: Basically, make choices here to improve clarity. Back to back numbers read better mixed (ten 7-point scales). Since ordinals follow the same rules as numbers you have to be careful. *First 2 items* is better than *1st two items*.

**Decimals fractions**: Report decimal fractions as numbers. So, this means you cannot start a sentence with a decimal fraction. 1.47 ml of liquid is incorrect. Rewrite the sentence to avoid this. ALSO, if a decimal fraction cannot rise above 1 then do not put a 0 in front of the decimal point. A measure of 0.32 cm is correct but a correlation of *r* = 0.04 is incorrect. Probability values (*p*) also will never have a 0 before the decimal point.

**Decimal places (section 4.35):** The manual says round as much as is possible. It is written this way because the level of precision in a statistic is up to the author, so the manual has to allow reporting different decimal levels. REGARDLESS, it also says round to 2 decimal places in most cases. Unhelpfully, EZAnalyze and SPSS both round to 3 decimal places in results summaries. In Excel this is easy to fix. Highlight the results cells and then Format/Cell/Number and make sure 2 decimal places (the default) is selected. This is more complicated in SPSS (at least it was the last time I looked). You may find that the easiest thing to do is to either copy an SPSS output table and paste it into Excel or to export the output table as an Excel document. Then make style changes. The other virtue of doing this is that data tables move among Office applications with ease and usually retain style choices. Moving from SPSS into an Office application will require reformatting.

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Using et al. in Citations  
(Section 6.12)

For citations with one or two authors, both authors will always be listed.

For citations with three to five authors, all authors are listed in the first occurrence of the citation. Then, in all subsequent appearances the first author with et al. is used. Notice that et al. has a period after al. (Smith et al., 2004). Notice also that there is no comma after the first author’s name when using et al.

For citations of six or more authors, even in the first occurrence, the citation will be first author followed by et al.

Be sure you can find Table 6.1 (Basic Citation Styles) from the APA Manual. In the current edition, it is on page 177. It is also available electronically from our program resources.

A note on using et al. in references. If a reference has eight or more authors, the first six are listed, followed by an ellipsis and then the last author. Do not use et al. in that case. It is difficult to imagine el al. ever appearing in a reference. It has been pointed out to me that on rare occasions a report may be listed with et al. in the author list when the list is really long. You need to put every effort into finding out who all of the authors are.

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Indentation and Line Breaks

Indentation

Word can control the indentation of paragraphs in many places: from the ruler, the format paragraph dialog box, or from style sheets. DO NOT use tab keys to indent paragraphs. I will personally come find you and scream at you if you do. If indentation is properly formatted in any of the possible ways that Word allows you to use, you can easily and universally change the indentation for the entire document by going back and adjusting the control you set up. Learn to use [style sheets](#Style).

It is even more frustrating when tabs are used to produce hanging indents for references. Any adjustment to the reference usually causes the tabs to wreak havoc with the formatting of the reference. DO NOT do this.

Line Breaks

In all word processors it is possible to force a line break without creating a new paragraph. Usually the keyboard command for this is shift-return. This is a particularly handy tool when you are inserting text data into a table.

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Constructing an APA Table

General Ideas

The purpose of a table is to display a large amount of information efficiently and to make the data as comprehensible as possible. Beyond the guidelines listed below, the actual design of the table is largely up to the author. The balance is to design tables that are clear and concise but at the same time do not stray far from readers’ experiences with tables—they have to be easy to understand. To use the statistical metaphor, there are many more degrees of freedom in table design than there are in any other aspect of APA style.

An example is line spacing. A blank line should appear between the table number and the table title. Similarly, a blank line should appear between the table title and the table body. But, as a table designer you may choose to use single, 1.5, or double line spacing in the body of the table or even the table title. As a designer, you chose the best approach to clearly and concisely display the data.

Things to think about:

* Once you have decided on a style for your tables, stick with it as much as is possible throughout your manuscript. In order to achieve this level of consistency, start by working out the design of your most complicated table first. I suggest making notes on the formatting decisions you have made so that you can refer to them later while making tables later in your project.
* Design tables so that the entire table can fit on a single page. Again, this is a good reason to start with your most complicated table first.
* By default, assume double line spacing throughout the table and vary from that only when you run out of space to get the whole table on a single page. Tables read more easily when there is sufficient spacing between the rows in the table. White space is a valuable design tool with tables.
* Rarely is any text emphasis used in tables (bold or italic fonts). There are a couple of exceptions to this but you are unlikely to encounter them. If you do feel a need to add emphasis in a table to improve the clarity of the table be sure you use the same emphasis style in all of your tables. Again, the easy decision is not to use emphasis in tables.

An Example

Table 1

*Pretest and Posttest Mean and Standard Deviation for Direct Instruction and   
Problem-Based Learning*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Direct instruction *N* = 27 | |  | Problem-based learninga *N* = 32 | |
| Test iteration | Mean | *SD* |  | Mean | *SD* |
| Pretest | 62.75\* | 5.43 |  | 59.22\*\* | 6.03 |
| Posttest | 84.67\* | 6.11 |  | 87.17\*\* | 5.48 |

*Note.* Test source, *Houghton Mifflin Science for All Learners*, 2003.

aAs defined by Slavin (1987).

*\*p* < .05. \*\**p* < .01.

From the APA Manual Chapter 5 Displaying Results

* Table numbers are normal body type font and left justified. Each table in your paper is numbered based on the order it appears in the text. These are integer numerals (1, 2, 3, …)—not 5a, 5b or 6.1, 6.2
* Titles are Title Case, italic, and left justified. Titles do not end in a period. Titles should be brief but clear. Ask yourself if a reader would know what is in the table from the title. This usually means that you would name the statistics listed in the table and the variables to which they refer. If all groups represented in the table are of equal size, the group size can be included in the title in parentheses instead of in the table—(*N* = 62)
* Only the first letter of the first word in a column or row label is capitalized unless they are proper nouns.
* Statistical abbreviations are in italic. Normally you would use statistical abbreviations in order to save space. Note that the word Mean is used in the example above. It is not an abbreviation and, therefore, not in italic. Also, if you are using abbreviations in the table other than statistical abbreviations, they should be written out in the title. If the long form of the abbreviation is not appropriate in the title is should be included as a note.
* A horizontal rule (line) is drawn between the title and the table.
* A horizontal rule is drawn in between the column headings and the data.
* A horizontal rule is drawn below the data.
* Other horizontal rules may be used to show data groupings.
* Row headings are left justified. If the first column is data and not a row heading, it is center justified.
* All data columns and headings are center justified.
* Data should be represented with consistent number of decimal points when possible. Numerical data in columns should be decimal point aligned. DO NOT use spaces to force decimal alignment.
* Notes are placed below the bottom rule and are set in smaller type than the body of the table. They do not need to be complete sentences.
* Notes referring to the whole table (if needed) come first. Start with the word *Note* in italic followed by a period. The rest of the note is not in italics and ends with a period.
* Specific notes (if needed) come second. These notes are referenced with a lowercase letter set as a superscript. If there is more than one specific note, they are listed in alphabetical order.
* Significance (probability) notes, if needed, are last. Each increasing significance level is indicated by an additional asterisk. The abbreviation *p* is set as lower case italic. Each level of significance statement ends with a period. Be careful to only list those levels of significance that are represented in your table. If you are presenting multiple tables keep the level of significance indicators (number of asterisks) the same across tables.
* If you wish to indicate if a comparison is one-tailed or two-tailed, it is added after the indication of the *p* value: \**p* < .05, two-tailed.

In the sixth edition of the APA manual it is recommended that whenever possible the actual *p* values are listed in the table. They recommend that the *p* < style is only used if it would be confusing to put the actual values in the table. When the *p* < style is used the actual *p* values should be listed in the text.

When *p* values are listed in the table, no value smaller than .001 should be listed. Instead write *p* < .001

Example With *p* Values in the Table

Table 1

*Comparison by Gender of Posttest Scores for Fall and Spring Semester*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Gender | | | | | | |  |
|  | Boys | | |  | Girls | | |  |
|  | *n* | *M* | *SD* |  | *n* | *M* | *SD* | *p* |
| Fall | 1004 | 75.65 | 20.85 |  | 985 | 78.12 | 19.83 | .007 |
| Spring | 936 | 73.47 | 21.65 |  | 965 | 76.18 | 21.59 | <.001 |

If you include some measure of practical significance (e.g. Cohen’s *d*  or eta square) it would be added as an additional column to the right of the *p* value.

Suggestions for Using Microsoft Word to Build APA Tables

* You are reading this because you are at the end of your project and you just want to get it done. But, the one best thing you can do to improve the quality of your table design is to learn the table formatting controls in Word. This takes time and practice.
* It is a good idea to begin with all of the formatting removed from a table. You can add it back in as needed later. Be sure the formatting inside the cells of the table is set to single line space, no indent, no space before and after, or any other formatting controls that may get in the way of the table layout.
* Turn on the table gridlines so you can see what you are doing. Remember to turn them off before you give the paper to any to read.
* The data in the table should be uniformly displayed in the table. Make every row of the table the same height and vertically center the text. This will allow proper spacing above and below the text and it will make it easier to adjust line spacing later if you need to.
* When using 12pt text in the table, double line spacing is simulated if the row height is .4 inches. If you are using 10pt text the row height should be set for about .3 inches. Hint: row heights and column widths can be set to increments of 100th of an inch.
* Learn to use decimal tabs. Highlight the cells in a column you want to decimal justify. Select the decimal tab tool and click on the ruler inside the column. Click and drag the decimal tab in the ruler until the text you are decimal justifying is relatively centered under the column heading.
* In general, try to design tables in the same font and size as the body of the paper. Although, one strategy to get more information on the page is to reduce the text size in the table. It would be unusual to use anything smaller that 10pt font. If you use smaller fonts be sure the text display in the table is all the same font size. It is usual to leave the title the same size as the body text even if the font in the table is smaller. If you do chose a smaller font size, it is usual to apply it to all of the tables in the paper for uniformity.
* Once you have a table format that you like, you may find it easier to organize data for a table in Microsoft Excel, apply basic formatting in Excel, and then copy and paste the data into your Word table template.
* When you have fully completed the table, select the whole table including the table number and title. Go to the menu Format/Paragraph/Line and Page Breaks. Select Keep with Next. This will keep the table all together and not allow it to split over page breaks.

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Abbreviations (section 4.22 and many other places)

The general rule is to use abbreviations only if they are something the reader is likely to see as a conventional and easily understood abbreviation. You abbreviate to make the paper easier to read. If abbreviating makes the paper harder to read you made the wrong choice. Since you do not really know who is going to be reading your work, make the conservative choice and write out things you are tempted to abbreviate.

In general abbreviations should never begin a sentence. The exceptions are abbreviations of proper nouns like U.S. or APA.

Acronyms

When first presented, spell out the entire name for which the acronym will be used and then follow with the acronym in parentheses. Thereafter use the acronym. Use acronyms like other abbreviations—only to make the reading easier. If you are tempted to use lots of acronyms in your writing, be cautious. If the reader has to keep flipping back though a document to figure out what the acronyms mean this is not good.

Group Abbreviations in Citations

Group name outside of parentheses—American Psychological Association (APA, 2010)

Group name inside of parentheses—(American Psychological Association [APA], 2010)

The abbreviation should be presented with the first occurrence of the group name in the text. If the group name only appears once then do not include the abbreviation. After the abbreviation is inserted in the text it can be used for the remainder of the text including citations.

In the reference, spell out the full group name and do not include the abbreviation.

State Abbreviations

You already know this from APA reference style but if you abbreviate state names in the body of the paper use the same conventional two-letter abbreviations.

Statistical Abbreviations

Remember to avoid using statistical abbreviations in the body of the paper—only in tables or inside of parentheses. In the body, write out the words (e.g., mean, standard deviation, confidence interval, or degrees of freedom). There are innumerable exceptions to this rule. When in doubt, put the reported statistic inside of parentheses and use the abbreviation.

United States

OK, this is just one of those things you have to remember. US as a noun has no periods. When used as an adjective it does. (Educational statistics in the US are gathered by the U.S. Department of Education.)

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Latin Abbreviations: i.e., e.g., etc., vs.

There are more than these four listed in the manual (Section 4.26) but these are the four that cause the most trouble. (et al. is covered in its own section in this handbook). The general rule is that these abbreviations are used inside of parentheses. Outside of parentheses write out the English equivalent: i.e., that is; e.g., for example; etc., either etcetera or and so forth; vs., versus.

etc.

The easy one to address is etc. Do not use it. If there are more items in a list that you are discussing, then list the additional items. Your writing should not be ambiguous and etc., by definition, is ambiguous.

i.e. and e.g.

Since i.e., would only be used inside of parentheses it would never begin a sentence.

* i.e. and e.g. will always be lower case.
* Notice that there is no space in the middle of either of these. For that matter, there should never be spaces between elements of abbreviations whether they have periods between the elements or not.
* Note that a comma follows these abbreviations.
* Even though these are Latin abbreviations do not italicize them.

Learn which one is which. Are you clarifying something you said? Then use i.e. Are you pointing to examples which are representative a larger list? The use e.g.

vs.

I think that you could argue that vs. is not a Latin abbreviation but it is usually addressed in the same section with the others. The abbreviation vs. is used inside parentheses but write out the word versus outside of parentheses. The exception is the abbreviation v. which is used both inside and outside of parentheses when referring to court cases.

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Court Cases and Statutes

These citation rules are addressed in Appendix 7.1 of the APA Manual. Although in some cases these references look straight forward, they can become very complicated. So, whenever possible try to find an APA example of these items on the web. See if someone else has figured out your reference already.

Court Cases

Intext citations for court cases take on the form of *Name v. Name* (Court Date) or (*Name v. Name*, Court Date). Often court cases have multiple court dates so it would be *Name v. Name* (Court Date/Court Date). The name of the case is always italic whether it is inside of parentheses or not.

In the reference, the general form is Name v. Name, Volume Source Page (Court Date). Of course, the trick is figuring out what the volume source page is.

Brown v. Board of Education, 347 U.S. 483 (1954).

Notice nothing is in italic and there is no comma after the volume source page. When this is a decision followed by an appeal, both volume source pages are listed (followed by the court date in each case) and the two or more source pages are separated by a comma.

Statutes

First, find this symbol: § It is the symbol for a section number in legal documents. You can copy it from this document but it is included in most standard symbol sets.

The form for intext citation is the: Name of the Act (year).

Americans With Disabilities Act (1993) or (Americans With Disabilities Act, 1993)

Nothing in italics.

The form for the reference is: Name of the Act, Volume Source § section number (year).

Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990, 42 U.S.C.A. § 12101(1993).

Rarely are statutes this simple to reference. And, again, you have to figure out what the volume source is. There are lots of other forms of legislative material and the citation forms follow the Bluebook rules (The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation) which cover citing and referencing of legal documents.

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Rhetorical Questions

A rhetorical question is a [figure of speech](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Figure_of_speech) in the form of a [question](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Question) that is asked to make a point rather than to elicit an answer. Though a rhetorical question does not require a direct answer, in many cases it may be intended to start a discussion or at least draw an acknowledgement that the listener understands the intended message.

The above is a Wikipedia definition. The problem with rhetorical questions is that they are questions and the reader may believe that they represent the focus of your study and that you intend to answer them. There are lots of figures of speech and they are all intended to be non-literal. In research writing, in order to reduce ambiguity we have to be as literal as possible. So, do not use rhetorical questions.

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Metaphors

A metaphor is another figure of speech. It is a word or phrase to be regarded as representative or symbolic of something else. We use these constantly in our language. In some forms of writing they are consider eloquent. That is not true in research writing. Metaphors cannot be avoided but use them sparingly. Look especially for metaphorical phrases that sound like they are supposed to be catchy, trendy, or erudite. If you are reading your work and become aware that you used a metaphor, it probably means you should find a more direct way to say what you need to say.

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Websites and Their Addresses

Use electronic references with caution. Information moves on the web with great regularity so your reader may not be able to find what your referenced. When citing published materials, always try to use print-based sources whenever possible. Remember not to use electronic references to sources that are in proprietary databases because others who do not have access to the databases will not be able to follow the path you have provided. So, do not include URLs to materials that you have accessed through EBSCO or other services available in the UP library.

**Avoid citing informal online materials unless absolutely necessary.** The links are less likely to be stable and, of course, the material is unlikely to have been vetted in any significant manner.

Citing Electronic Sources

First, if you are referring to a whole website and not something specific in a website then refer to the address of the website in the text of your paper but do not put it in the references.

Example:

The course website includes many important resources (http://teaching.up.edu/edresearch).

Notice that the entire URL is used including http://. This can be a problem when the URL is really long but you still need to do it.

Next, if you are referring to a specific article or other piece of information that is housed in a website then the citation becomes like other citations for references—Author, A. (date). Title. Source. in the reference and (Author, date) in the citation. In this case, the *source* becomes the URL of the website preceded by Retrieved from. I am not sure why titles are not in italic like they would be for a book title but they are not.

Citing No-Author Electronic Materials

If the material you are citing has no discernable author, then the title becomes the author.

Example *reference*:

Now is the time for all good people. (2016). Retrieve from http://teaching.up.edu/edresearch

Example *citation*: (“Now is the time,” 2016)

Notice that in the *citation* that you do not have to use the full title, a few words will do, but that the title as author is placed in quotation marks.

Missing reference information in online materials is a constant problem. Enough so that people who should know (<http://www.apastyle.org/learn/faqs/web-page-no-author.aspx)> have provided an outline for what to do in those cases.

*Completing Electronic References With Missing Information*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Reference Template | | | |
| What is missing? | Author | Date | Title | Source |
| Author | Title of document [Format]. | (date). |  | Retrieved from |
| Date | Author, A. | (n.d.). | Title of document [Format]. | Retrieved from |
| Title | Author, A. | (date). | [Description of document]. | Retrieved from |
| Author and date | Title of document [Format]. | (n.d.). |  | Retrieved from |
| Author and title | [Description of document]. | (date). |  | Retrieved from |
| Date and title | Author, A. | (n.d.). | [Description of document]. | Retrieved from |
| Author, date, and title | [Description of document]. | (n.d.). |  | Retrieved from |
| Nothing | Author, A. | (date). | Title of document [Format]. | Retrieved from |

Remember that you only need to list the document format if it is something other than an article. Also, you will know when to use square brackets when you are inserting information into the reference that is not originally part of it.

Adding Electronic Source Type

The last thing to remember about websites is that the APA guidelines are designed so that you can cite articles that are available from a website. Often there are other kinds of material that you are citing. When that is the case you have to indicate the type of information in the website and enclose that in square brackets.

Example:

Carroll, D. (2017). Mama’s jambalaya: Laissez les bons temps rouler! [Web log]. Retrieved from http://www.batterjunkie.com

(Notice that nothing is in italic. This is one of the rare cases when that happens in references.)

Certainly, there could be other kinds of materials you could be citing from a website but these are the basic designations that APA lists:

[Online forum comment] Message posted to a newsgroup, online forum, or discussion group.

[Electronic mailing list message] Message posted to an electronic mailing list.

[Web log message] Blog post.

[Video file] Video blog post.

Whatever you are referencing, make the inserted description short and clear. By the way, blog is a reduction of web log which is why APA uses web log.

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Page Numbers and Running Heads

Each institution will have its own style manual for dissertations. Ours does and you need to look up precisely how to number all of the introductory pages in the dissertation.

The APA manual is designed as a guide to those who are writing published articles.

Page numbers and a running head go into the Header section of the paper. Page numbers start with page 1 on the title page. They should be in the top header and flush right. The running head is on the same line as the page number but flush left. Type the words Running head: followed by a shortened version of you title not to exceed 50 characters including spaces and typed in all capital letters.

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Personal Attribution (Sections 3.09 and 3.18)

Remember that research writing is all about clarity. The stylistic devise of referring to yourself in the third person (this researcher …) is a hold-over from an attempt in research writing from years ago to suggest that you were writing in a neutral voice about what was happening in a study. The best solution is to keep references to yourself out of the study altogether. Understandably, if you are reporting on qualitative research this is almost impossible and probably not appropriate anyway. APA says make it clear who you are talking about. That means using I or we when you have to.

Passive Voice

This is a good place to talk about passive voice. When a sentence is written in active voice, the subject of the sentence performs the action described by the verb. In the sentence, if the action is performed on the subject it is passive voice.

The researcher gathered the data. (Active voice)

The data were gathered by the researcher. (Passive voice)

This is a fairly straightforward example but passive voice can get confusing. Who is doing what to whom? It violates the clarity dictum. Avoid passive voice as much as possible.

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Title Case (Section 4.15)

This applies to journal names, table titles, and, of course, to the title of your paper or dissertation (remember that figures have captions and not titles and are in sentence case). The only element that is all upper case is the running head of a paper. Title case applies only to the first letter of words. The rule is that all major words are capitalized. The question is what are minor words? In general, they are words of three or fewer letters and usually conjunctions, articles, and short prepositions. So, if a title word has four or more letters then it is capitalized. Three or fewer letters you have to make a decision.

Important Reminder About Sentence Case in References

Both the title and subtitle (what follows the colon) are in sentence case. Often when you copy references from database services like EBSCO the first letter of the subtitle is not capitalized even if it says it is in APA style. Most database services store references using Machine Readable Cataloging standards (MARC). The references you copy from a database are built from the original MARC codes. For some reason the APA version of the MARC codes often leaves off the subtitle capitalization.

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Grammar and SpellCheck

MS Word does a pretty good job with identifying grammar problems but it is not perfect. When Word does identify something, take a look and see if you agree. Some of the most frequent problems that academic writers have in drafts are subject and verb agreement and parallel structure. Word will find many of these. Take advantage of what the program is telling you.

Most of us are used to using SpellCheck. The one place where writers forget to pay attention is in references. Word picks up lots and lots of things in references that are not incorrect. There are so many that writers stop looking for the things that are wrong. You need to train yourself to methodically go through the reference list and make sure that every marked item is, in fact, correct.

Parentheses

Reading research reports takes a lot of energy. Your readers will be happier if you make that job easier. Anything that breaks up a sentence or a paragraph slows down reading. Parentheses are the prime offender. We have to use them, particularly for citations. Think about ways not to use them. Stop adding parenthetical comments. Most of the time another sentence would do the same job just as well. Think about referencing authors directly instead of doing it indirectly inside of parentheses. Write Smith and Johnson (2001) found instead of something like Cooperative learning was found to be useful (Smith & Johnson, 2001). Actually, this is a better form anyway because it makes it clear that you are talking about Smith and Johnson and not reporting on your own idea and then saying these other authors support your idea. It is perfectly acceptable to take the date out of the parentheses as well: In a 2001 study, Smith and Johnson found….

Sometimes writers try to solve this problem by using long dashes instead of parentheses for parenthetical comments. That is grammatically correct but it ends up being the same problem: lots of long dashes that are disruptive to the flow of the reading.

Direct Quotations

Direct quotations create the same reading flow problems for readers as parentheses. It is one thing for short quotations to be inserted in a sentence but block quotes are a huge distraction. Readers will start skipping the block quotes because it slows down reading so much. My advice to you is to stop using direct quotations. Your job is to paraphrase and not repeat. Tell the reader what the author said instead of restating the exact words.

I have been telling candidates to stop using direct quotations for 20 years with little or no success. Please think about how unproductive direct quotations are in your writing.