# A Brief Guide to APA Format
The College of Saint Rose Writing Center

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**References**

Find this document and other Saint Rose Writing Center resources at: [http://www.strose.edu/writingcenter](http://www.strose.edu/writingcenter)
A Brief Guide to the Use of APA
This handout is based on the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association. It is not meant to serve as a substitute for the handbook but rather as an overview of the most common formatting guidelines.

APA format specifies how academic papers should be structured and how the sources used in the paper should be referenced. Sources are cited in two ways: in parenthetical citations (in the text) and on the References page. Citations provide essential information about how readers can find the sources used in the paper.

APA format is used most frequently in the fields of Education, Communication Science and Disorders, Psychology, and other Social Sciences. It is always recommended that students ask their professors which format s/he prefers for students to use.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism
It is necessary to cite sources to give appropriate credit and to avoid plagiarism. Students at The College of Saint Rose are expected to be honest in every aspect of their academic work. All work presented as a student’s own must be the product of her or his own efforts. Plagiarism, cheating, academic misconduct, or any other submission of another’s work as one’s own is unacceptable. Students working in groups are each individually responsible for the academic integrity of the entire group project.

Plagiarism includes but is not limited to:
- Purchasing, copying, down-loading, printing, or paraphrasing another’s book, article, paper, speech, exam, portfolio, creative work, argument, or any other work and presenting it as one’s own, either in whole or in part.
- Incorporating portions of another’s work without proper acknowledgement and documentation.

Academic misconduct includes but is not limited to:
- Using means other than academic achievement or merit to influence one’s academic evaluation.
- Knowingly providing assistance in a manner not authorized by the instructor in the creation of work to be submitted for academic evaluation, including papers, projects, and examinations. A student who does an assignment for another student will also be held as accountable as the other. A student who knowingly permits another student to copy her/his own work will be held as accountable as the student who submits the copied material.
- Receiving assistance in a manner not authorized by the instructor in the creation of work to be submitted for academic evaluation, including papers, projects, and examinations.
- Presenting the same, or substantially the same, papers or projects in two or more courses without the explicit permission of the instructor(s) involved.
- Obtaining and/or reporting research data in an unethical and intentionally misleading manner.

Plagiarism can result in failure of the assignment, failure of the course, and/or expulsion from the college. Professionally, plagiarism can result in being terminated and/or sued.

A safe guideline for avoiding plagiarism is: ANY time you use ANY idea, from ANYONE or ANYWHERE else, it is necessary to document it.
Basic APA Format:
- Typed, double-spaced, on standard-sized paper (8.5x11), 1 inch margins on all sides
- Times New Roman is recommended, 12 pt. font
- Two spaces after punctuation that ends a sentence
- The running head continues at the top of each page. (see example below)
- The title of the paper is on the first page, after the Abstract
- Page number in the upper right corner
- Titles of long works (books, journals, plays, movies, CDs, paintings, etc.) are italicized
- Titles of short works (articles, poems, short stories, songs, etc.) are in “quotation marks”
- Headings may be used to organize the text of advanced research papers.

General components of an APA format paper:
- Title Page—centered, double-spaced on the top half of the page, numbered 1 in upper right corner, in line with the running head
  - Title—(no more than 12 words), relevant to the topic
  - Your Name
  - Your Affiliation—as a current student, your affiliation is The College of Saint Rose
- *Abstract—a brief summary of the paper, maximum 250 words
- Text pages—the body of the paper, sometimes organized according to section headings
- Reference page—a list of sources used in the paper
- *Tables and figures
- *Appendices—materials relevant to the paper’s topic that would be distracting if presented within the paper (charts, tests, questionnaires, interviews, etc.)
- *Footnotes or endnotes—information about the author, content, copyright permissions, or tables that you want to include but which would be distracting in the body of the paper.
*See the Publication Manual of the APA, 6th edition, for more detailed information.

Running Head—a shortened form of the title (50 characters or fewer). On the title page, the words “Running head” appear at the top left in the header, followed by a colon and the shortened form of your title, in all caps. The header continues on the each page, using the same shortened title but without the words “Running head” (below).
Any subheadings should be formatted according to the following chart:

<table>
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<th>APA Heading Levels</th>
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<td>Level</td>
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**APA Writing Style**

Clear and logical
- Use transition words (then, next, furthermore, consequently, therefore, conversely, etc.).
- Be aware of verb tenses.
  - Use past tense (Jones showed) or present-perfect tense (Jones has shown) when writing a literature review or the Procedure section.
  - Use past tense when describing the Results (“Anger increased significantly”).
  - Use present tense to discuss the Results and to write the Conclusion (“This change signifies that…”)
  - Be specific with pronouns (use “This test” instead of just “This”).

Concise
- Avoid jargon, wordiness, and colloquial (informal, conversational) language.
- Avoid repetition and redundant ideas

Objective
- Do not use “I” in a research paper unless instructed by your professor. Using “I” and “we” can be acceptable when writing a personal reflection or discussing the steps you took to complete an experiment. (See the *Publication Manual of the APA* for more information.)
- Avoid biases in regard to gender, race, economic class, sexual orientation, ethnicity, disability, and so on. Be aware of any labels used, both for sensitivity to preferences and for appropriate levels of specificity (see the *Publication Manual* for more information).

**Integrating Research**

**In-text Citations, Using APA to Document Sources**
A brief mention of each source found in the body of the paper. Sources are cited in parenthetical citations, within parentheses ( ). Citations provide essential information about how readers can find the sources used in the paper.
Cite sources within your paper, whenever you:
• quote from a text (use the exact wording of the original text)
• paraphrase from a text (put a section of text into your own words, approximately the same length as the original text)
• summarize a text (present a shorter, condensed version of a text)
• use facts, statistics, or data from a text
• refer to an idea or source in passing
• use a photograph, painting, chart, table, graph, or other visual from a source.

In-text citations generally include: Author’s last name, year of publication, and page number.

Form 1- The author’s name, the year, and the page number are in parentheses after the idea:
Although some current educators disagree, studies show that “Today’s students study more than their parents did” (Smith, 1998, p. 24).

Form 2- The author’s name and the year are integrated into the wording of the sentence:
According to Smith (1998), “Today’s students study more than their parents did (p. 24).

Note that the page number is indicated with a p. only and that it always appears after the source material, even if the author and year were included earlier in the sentence.

• The first time you mention an author, use the author’s full name. After that, last name only.
• Capitalize major words in the titles of sources: verbs, nouns, adjectives, adverbs, pronouns

Quoting
Quoting involves presenting the exact wording of a text, signified by the use of quotation marks to bracket the portion you used. The author’s last name must be provided for most sources, along with page numbers (websites being an exception).

A quote cannot stand on its own but must be introduced by and followed with your own words:
Introduce-the author and/or quote
Cite-the quote
Explain-how the quote relates to and/or supports your idea

Short Quotes
• Fewer than 40 words
• Marked by quotation marks
• Author’s last name, the publication year, and page number in the citation
• Introduced, cited, and explained
• Punctuation:
  o A period is placed after the citation
  o A comma is placed before the end quotation marks
  o A semicolon, question mark, or exclamation point is placed within the quotation marks when they are part of the quote or after the final quotation mark when they are not part of the quoted material
  o An ellipsis (…) is used to indicate where you omit words within a quote
  o Brackets [ ] are placed around words that you have added to the quote to facilitate readability
  o Quoted words within a quote are marked by ‘single quotation marks.’
Example: Harris (2001) suggests that in order to help students better understand why plagiarism is so troubling, teachers can require “students to think about who is really being cheated when someone plagiarizes” (p. 33). Students can consider how authors are hurt when others steal their work and how students miss valuable educational experience by producing a text of their own.

Long Quotes:
- Longer than 40 words
- Printed in a block, tabbed in .5 inches from the left margin
- No quotation marks used (the block is doing the same work as the quotation marks)
- End punctuation is placed before the citation (the notable exception to the rule)
- Introduced, cited, and explained.

Example:
Students plagiarize for a variety of reasons. As Harris (2001) explains:

Many students are simply not convinced that the hard work required for a real education is worth it. The reasons may be manifold. Some students believe that the diploma will be a magic ticket to a high-paying job regardless of what they learn, so that all the shortcuts they can find are appropriate. (p. 4)

This perception shows that education’s role in preparing individuals for life is sometimes perceived as an obstacle to overcome, rather than important in its own right.

**Summarizing**
Summarizing involves taking information from a passage and condensing it, then putting it into your own words (similar to a book report). The author’s name and the year of publication are cited. The page number is not required, but it is encouraged, in order to help readers find the information more easily. A citation appears in parentheses directly following the summarized idea, with the author, year, and—sometimes—page number, separated by commas.

Original text: “These excerpts explain the very important role of emotions in sanctioning or promoting violence. First of all, the inability to experience empathy and thus the complete lack of self-restraint in the use of violence relies on one particular emotion: fear, or more precisely, the fear of death. For much of human history, the fear of death has pushed people to extreme behavior” (Lacassagne, 2015, p. 324).

Summary example: Throughout history, the fear of mortality has often been the driving force behind individuals resorting to violence (Lacassagne, 2015).
**Paraphrasing**
Paraphrasing involves interpreting a section of text and putting it into your own words, approximately the same length as the original. The author’s last name and year of publication must be provided for most sources. The page number is not required, but it is encouraged, in order to help readers find the information more easily. A citation appears in parentheses directly following the paraphrased idea, with the author’s last name, the year, and—sometimes—the page number, separated by commas.

In order for a paraphrase to be successful, it is important to use **not only** different wording but **also** different sentence structure. Check the paraphrase against the original for wording and structure change and also for accuracy.

Original text: “Violence is depicted in multifaceted ways in the series in accordance with the varied perspectives of the characters” (Lacassagne, 2015, p. 320).

Incorrect paraphrase (too similar to the original):

Brutality shown many novels

“Violence is depicted in multifaceted ways in the series in accordance with the varied viewpoints of the characters” (Lacassagne, 2015).

The incorrect paraphrase above would read:
Brutality is shown in many ways in the novels in accordance with the varied viewpoints of the characters (Lacassagne, 2015).

Correct paraphrase:
Throughout the series, it is the characters’ differing viewpoints that depict violence in a variety of ways (Lacassagne, 2015).

**In-Text Citations in Various Cases**
Works with two authors (list the authors in the order they appear in the source):
- Use an ampersand (&) to separate the authors’ names when you place them in parentheses.
  (Smith & Jones, 2004, p. 44)
- Use the word “and” to separate them if you write their names in the sentence.
  As Smith and Jones (2004) maintain…(p. 44).

Works with 3-5 authors (list the authors in the order they appear in the source):
- Write out all of the authors’ last names the first time you reference them in your paper.
  (Smith, Lewis, & Clark, 2005) OR Smith, Lewis, and Clark (2005) found…
- Each subsequent time you refer to the authors, write the first author’s last name only and “et al.”
  (Smith et al., 2005) OR Smith et al. (2005) found…

Works with 6 or more authors:
- You do not have to write out all of their names. Simply list the first author’s last name and the abbreviation “et al.”
  (Bell et al., 1997, p. 32) OR Bell et al. (1997) claim that…(p. 32).
Works with a group author:
• Spell out the full name of the organization in each citation
• If the name of the organization is long, and if the abbreviation is familiar or easily identified, abbreviate the name after the first citation.
  First citation—(Mothers against Drunk Driving, 2000)
  Subsequent citations—(MADD, 2000)

More than one author with the same last name:
• Add the first initial to each duplicate name
  (M. Jones, 1997) OR According to M. Jones (1997)…

The source has no known author:
• In parentheses, use an abbreviated version of the title
• If referring to the source in your sentence, use the full title
• Note: Rules regarding capitalization and the use of quotation marks to signal a title differ here from guidelines for the Reference page.
  Original title: an article called “The Truth about Constructivism”
  Abbreviated form—(“The Truth,” 2002)
  Full title in the sentence—In “The Truth about Constructivism” (2002), this concept…

The source has no date:
• If no date is available, write n.d. (no date) where you would have written the year.

Two or more works in the same parentheses:
• Used when multiple sources address the same idea
• Arrange sources alphabetically in the parentheses; separate each source with a semi-colon
  (Leonard & West, 1997; Lewis, 1985; Smith, 1978)

Specific part of a source:
• (Lewis, 1985, Chapter 10, p. 5) OR According to Lewis (1985)…(Chapter 10, p.5).

Personal Communication (email, personal interview, conversation, etc.):
• Cited only in the text – does not appear on the Reference page
• list the person’s first initial(s)
  Cite as: (J.S. Jones, personal communication, September 4, 2000) OR
  J.S. Jones (personal communication, September 4, 2000) stated that….

Webpage:
• Cite using the author, or, if none is listed, follow the rules for a text without an author
  (Smith, 2001) OR In “APA Today: New Rules” (2001), the idea that…

• With a website that has no page numbers, indicate the paragraph number or a section heading and paragraph number
Indirect Quote/Paraphrase: If the source you are using cites another author’s idea, make it clear that the idea is from a secondary source:


**Reference Page Guidelines**

The Reference page is a complete list of every source referenced in a paper, providing the information needed for readers to locate the sources used. Each source on the Reference page should appear in the paper and vice versa. Format:

- The word References is centered at the top of the page, no bold, underlining, large font, or quotations marks
- Running Head continues to appear
- Double-spaced throughout
- Sources are arranged alphabetically according to the first word (Author’s last name, first name)
  - If there is no author listed, alphabetize by the first important word in the title.
  - For multiple works by the same author, organize them by publication date.
- Hanging indent—the first line is left-aligned, and any subsequent lines are indented.
- **Capitalize only the first word of the title and the subtitle of non-periodicals (books) and articles, essays, and other sections of larger texts, along with proper nouns in those titles**
- Italicize the volume number for journals and other periodicals.

**Sample Reference Page**

- The word References is centered at the top of the page
- Hanging indent for each entry
- Two works by the same author.
- Linch margins on all sides
- Running head and page number appear at the top of the page
- Note the way the title of an article is capitalized.
- Double spacing throughout
- Note the way the title of a book is italicized and capitalized.

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**References**


A Note on Formatting: Format citations to fit on one line, when possible, though many citations will be longer and will continue on to a second or third line.

A Note on Capitalization of Titles: Capitalize only the first word of titles and the first word of a subtitle that follows a colon.

A Note on DOI Numbers: Include the Digital Object Identifier (DOI) number, when provided, for journal articles and other online sources. This number helps readers to find the cited sources more easily; typing the DOI number takes you directly to the source. It is usually found on the first page of the article, and it always begins with the number 10. DOI numbers appear last in the entry.

A Note on Retrieval Dates: Retrieval dates for web sources are necessary only if the material on the website is likely to change (the retrieval date is unnecessary for online journal articles or books but needed for wikis, blogs, and general web pages).

An Article in a Periodical when the DOI number is provided
Author, A. (Year). Title of article. Title of Periodical, volume #(issue #), Page range. doi: number


An Article in a Periodical [no DOI number provided]:


An Article in an Internet Periodical or Database: Including the database from where an article was obtained is not necessary if the DOI number is provided. However, if there is no DOI number, the homepage URL should be listed (even if the article was accessed through a database). If the journal is in limited circulation, with no official website, list the database name. If retrieval isn’t free or readily accessible, use “Available” instead of “Retrieved” in the entry.


Magazine Article:


Online Magazine Article: List the volume and issue number and the URL of the homepage.


Newspaper Article:
Author, A. (Year, Month Day of publication). Article title. Newspaper Title, Page range.


Online Newspaper Article: Follow the format for a newspaper article and list the URL of the newspaper homepage.


Corporation Name. (Date of publication). Title of brochure (edition) [Brochure]. Place of publication: Publisher (if the publisher is the same as the author, write Author).


A Book:
Author, A. (Year of publication). Title of work: Capital letter for the first word of a subtitle, following a colon. Location: Publisher.

A Book that Names an Editor:
Editor, A. (Ed.) (Date). Title of work: Capital letter for subtitle. Place of publication: Publisher.


Book Chapter (a chapter written by an author that is different from the book’s author or editor):
Author, A., & Author, B. (Year of publication). Title of chapter. In A. Editor & B. Editor (Eds.), Title of book (Page range). Location: Publisher.


Online Book: Following the title, place the version type of the document in bracket. Follow this with retrieval information: either the DOI number or the website URL.

Entry in a Reference Book: If no author is listed, begin with the entry title. If edition, volume, and/or editor are not known, omit from the citation.
Author, A. (Date). Entry title. In A. Editor, B. Editor, & C. Editor (Eds.), Title of book (# ed., Vol. # pp. range). Place of publication: Publisher.

Online Reference Entry: Use (n.d.) to indicate no date is available
Report or Other Document from a Government or Private Organization (Print and Online)

Print: If there is no report or document number, omit from the citation.
Author, A. (Date). Title of work (report #). Location: Publisher.

Online: Include the name of the publishing website only if it is different from the author.
Author, A. (Date). Title of work (report #). Retrieved from http://web address


General Guidelines for Web Documents: Italicize the titles of reports and stand-alone documents from the web. When referring to an entire website, include the site URL.


Film:
Producer, A. (Producer) & Director, A. (Director). (Date). Film title [Motion Picture]. Place of production: Movie Studio.


Data Set:
Author, A. (Date). Title of data set [medium of the data or file type]. Retrieved from http://web address


Author and Other Publication Variations

A Text with 2-7 Authors: List all of the authors in the order in which they are listed in the text. Separate the last author listed from the others with an ampersand (&).

Clark, S. E., Hero, R. E., Sidney, M. S., Fraga, L. R., & Erlichson, B. A. (2006). Multiethnic moments...
A Text with More than 7 Authors: List the first 6 authors (in the order in which they are listed in the text), followed by three ellipses and then the last author’s name.

Groden, J., Goodwin, M. S., Baron, M. G., Groden, G., Velicer, W. F., Lipsitt, L. P., . . . Pine, N.

A Text with a Group Author: List the group in the author section of the citation followed by a period.

National Institute of Mental Health. (2006). The family and the ADHD child…

Two Texts by the Same Author in the Same Year: Arrange the entries alphabetically according to the title of the text. Attach a suffix to the date (lowercase letters) to differentiate between the two texts.

Smith, J. (2005a). Effects of the sun on anemic individuals…


A Text with No Author: Begin the entry with the title of the text, followed by the date. If “Anonymous” is presented as the author, include that in place of the author’s name in the entry.


A Text with No Date: Write (n.d.) in place of the date.


References


