Sample APA Paper: Brief Outline of APA Requirements

FirstName LastName

Name of College/University

Sample APA Paper

This handout both explains and demonstrates key elements of APA formatting. APA, which stands for American Psychological Association, publishes guidelines for writing and formatting. These guidelines are used by many researchers and students, particularly in the social sciences such as psychology, sociology, and education. While this sample paper overviews key formatting rules of APA, you can find more details at the APA Style website (<https://apastyle.apa.org/>) or Purdue University’s Online Writing Lab (<https://owl.purdue.edu/>). Please note that this handout is based on the APA’s 6th edition manual; the APA released the 7th edition in 2020.

One aspect of APA is document formatting. Unless otherwise instructed, use Times New Roman, size 12, double-spaced font. APA papers often have a title page, which consists of the title of the paper, the author’s name, and the university or affiliation of interest. Include a running head and page numbers in the header. The running head is the short version of the title in all caps. The first page, which is usually the title page, has a different running head than the rest of the paper. This paper exemplifies the formatting required in APA style.

Another aspect of APA formatting is citations. There are two parts to citations: in-text citations and a reference page. In-text citations consist of the author’s last name and the year of publication enclosed in a parenthetical citation at the end of the sentence (LastName, Year). When you use a direct quotation, include also the page number of the quotation (LastName, Year, PageNumber). If you directly identify the author or source in the text of your essay, you don’t need to mention the author in the in-text citation. For example, the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (2010) states, “If the name of the author appears as part of the narrative…cite only the year of publication in parentheses” (174). In this case, the citation year occurs directly after you mention the source in the narrative, rather than at the end of the quote. However, if you were to paraphrase someone’s words without quoting them directly, or if you don’t mention the source directly in your essay, the citation needs to include the author’s name and the year of publication (American Psychological Association, 2009).

See the following page for instructions and examples regarding the reference page.

References

Note below that the second line of the reference list is indented; this is because when your citation spans more than a single line of text, a *hanging indent* is required to help differentiate between the different sources on your list. In Microsoft Word, the easiest way to format a hanging indent is to select the text you wish to indent and then press Ctrl + t on the keyboard. Alternately, you may highlight the desired text, right click on your selection, and select “Paragraph” from the dropdown menu. Under the indentation section, select “Hanging” from the “Special” dropdown menu.

References should be in alphabetical order, as demonstrated below. If a source does not have a certain bit of information, simply omit it from the reference. Below are reference templates for some common source types, as well as a reference for the APA manual itself.

American Psychological Association. (2009). *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association.* Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Book: Author, A. A. (Year of publication). Title of work. Location: Publisher.

Periodical: Author. A. A. (Year of publication). Article Title. Title of Periodical, volume number(issue number), pages. URL/DOI

Website: Author. (Year of publication). *Title of publication.* Retrieved from URL