Guide to
Using APA Style in the 6th Edition
In this guide, a brief overview of APA Style in the 6th Edition is provided. The primary focus of this guide is to provide a quick reference on the most basic and commonly needed information, including overall style and layout as well as format of citations and references. For information on other important topics in APA Style (e.g., language and bias, grammar preferences, etc.) as well as more detailed information on the topics in this guide, please refer directly to the 6th Edition of the APA Publication Manual. Page numbers referenced in this document refer to pages in the 6th Edition of the APA Publication Manual (2010).

**Overview of Style and Layout**

**Page Set-up and Font**
According to APA standards (see p. 228-229), manuscripts should be prepared on pages with 1-inch margins on all sides, double-spacing throughout, and preferably in Times New Roman Font size 12.

**Headings**
The use of headings and subheadings will provide greater organization and clarity for the reader. APA provides heading styles for up to five levels of headings, as exemplified below (see Table 3.1 on p. 62).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of heading</th>
<th>Format</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Centered, Boldface, Uppercase and Lowercase Heading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Flush Left, Boldface, Uppercase and Lowercase Heading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Indented, boldface, lowercase paragraph heading ending with a period.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Indented, boldface, italicized, lowercase paragraph heading ending with a period.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Indented, italicized, lowercase paragraph heading ending with a period.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Quoting and Paraphrasing**
It is important to always cite (see the following section on “In-text citations” for examples) the work of others that is informing the document you are writing. When describing the work of others, you can choose to either use a direct word-for-word quote, or to paraphrase the message. Paraphrasing another document’s message into your own words is generally preferable, but direct quotes may be used when you wish to preserve the language of the original author.

Whenever you use the exact language used in the original work, it is imperative that you use quotations and provide the exact page number of the original work where the passage appears. If incorporating the page numbers into a parenthetical citation, it should appear at the end of the citation as a suffix. For example:
- “This is a quote from some other document” (Authors et al., 2013, p. 7).
If, on the other hand, the author and/or year are provided earlier in the statement, only the page number needs to be included in the ending parentheses. For example:

- Authors et al (2013) described this “quote from the original piece” (p. 7).

As described in the APA Publication Manual (see p. 170-171), quotations that are 40 words or less can be written in line with the text and set off with double quotation marks. If additional information comes after the quotation (i.e., the quotation does not end the sentence), then no punctuation is needed. The APA manual provides the following example on p. 171:

Interpreting these results, Robbins et al. (2003) suggested that the “therapists in dropout cases may have inadvertently validated parental negativity about the adolescent without adequately responding to the adolescent’s needs or concerns” (p. 541), contributing to an overall climate.

If, on the other hand, the quotation is 40 words or longer, you may omit the quotation and instead use a block quotation, in which a new block of text containing the quote is used and indented a half inch from the margin (see p. 171).

**Formatting Citations and References**

**In-text Citations**

APA style uses an author-date method of citation when crediting the work of others in-text. Detailed instructions on correctly formatting in-text citations are provided on p. 174-179. Below are some general guiding principles on the guiding rules of in-text citations.

- Citations should include the last name of authors as well as the year (plus page numbers when direct quotes are used; see previous section on quoting and paraphrasing). If you have included the name of the authors within the text, you do not need to repeat the name in the parentheses. The APA manual provides the following examples on p. 174:
  - Kessler (2003) found that among epidemiological samples…
  - Early onset results in a more persistent and severe course… (Kessler, 2003).
- When a work has two authors, both names should be used every time, with “&” being used in parentheses but “and” being used in-text. For example (p. 175):
  - as Kurtines and Szapocznik (2003) demonstrated
  - as has been shown (Joreskot & Sorbom, 2007)
- When a work has between three and five authors, cite all authors the first time, but in subsequent citations use only the first author followed by “et al.” For example (p. 175):
  - Kisangau, Lyaruu, Hosea, and Joseph (2007) found [Use as first citation in text]
  - Kisangau et al. (2007) found [Use subsequently]
- When a work has six or more authors, cite only the first author’s name followed by “et al.” every time.
- When citing several works in a single parenthetical citation, the citations should be ordered alphabetically (see p. 177-178).
- For a very helpful table of basic citation styles based on number of authors, see Table 6.1 on p. 177.
Reference List
Every document cited in-text must be represented in the reference list, and vice versa. In the reference list, documents cited in-text appears alphabetically (see p. 181-182 for more information), with a hanging indent, and each generally contains the following four elements: author, year of publication, title, and publishing data. The format of these elements differs depending on the type of the resource. Below, select examples of some of the most commonly used reference types are provided. For a more comprehensive list of descriptions and examples, please refer to p. 180-224 of the APA Manual. All of the following examples are pulled in their original from this section of the manual.

Periodicals
The general reference form for periodicals is as follows:


Specific examples of periodicals:
- Journal article with DOI
- Journal article without DOI, more than seven authors (for up to seven authors, include all authors names)
- Journal article without DOI in a journal paginated by issue
- Newspaper article
- Online newspaper article

Internet Sites
An example internet citation is provided as follows:


Books, Reference Books, and Book Chapters
The general reference form for an entire book is as follows:

Author, A. A. (1967). Title of work. Location: Publisher.

The general reference form for a chapter in a book or entry in a reference book is as follows:


Specific examples of books and book sections:
- Entire book, print version
- Electronic-only book
- Book chapter, print version
- Reference book

**Technical and Research Reports**

The following passage can be found on p. 205 of the APA Manual:

Technical and research reports, like journal articles, usually cover original research but may or may not be peer reviewed. They are part of a body of literature sometimes referred to as gray literature, which “can serve a valuable supplementary role to formal publication, including additional resources, details, research methods and experimental techniques” (“Gray literature,” 2006). As much as possible, format references to technical research reports as you would a book.


Specific examples of technical and research reports:
- Corporate author, government report
- Authored report, from nongovernmental organization

- Issue Brief

**Meetings and Symposia**

If proceedings are published as a book, use the same format as for a book or book chapter. For contributions to presentations (e.g., symposia or paper/poster presentations), use the following templates:

**Symposium**

**Paper presentation or poster session**
Presenter, A. A. (Year, Month). *Title of paper or poster*. Paper or poster session presented at the meeting of Organization Name, Location.

Specific examples of meetings and symposia:
- Symposium contribution
- Conference paper abstract retrieved online

**Doctoral Dissertations and Master’s Theses**

Dissertations and theses emerge in many literature searches and can be retrieved in a variety of ways (e.g., institutional archives, databases such as ProQuest, etc.).

For dissertations or theses available from a database, use the following reference template:


For unpublished dissertations and theses, use the following template:
Specific examples of dissertations and theses:

- Master’s thesis, from a commercial database

- Doctoral dissertation, from an institutional database

**Conclusion**

In this guide, a brief overview of APA Style in the 6th Edition (2010) was provided. This document focused most on providing basic information on overall style, layout, and formatting of references and citations. It should be noted, however, that APA is a complex style and this guide is meant to serve as a basic reference and introduction. The reader should refer to the APA Manual for additional information and clarifications.