

American Psychological Association (APA) Format Guide

The American Psychological Association (APA) created standardized formatting for publications, including research papers and essays. APA formatting requires that you [cite](#) any of the sources that you have incorporated into your writing. This includes when you [paraphrase](#) or directly [quote](#) from a source.

A complete citation includes two parts:

1. An in-text citation in the body of your writing.
2. A reference list at the end of your paper that includes a full citation for your source.

This handout will explain the formatting guidelines for the 7th edition of APA handbook as well as give examples for the major forms of citation.

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General Format

- Type the paper and print it out on standard-sized paper (8.5 X 11 inches).
- The font should be one of the fonts listed below:
 - 11 point – Arial
 - 10 point - Lucida Sans Unicode
 - 11 point - Calibri, Georgia

12 point - Times New Roman

- Double space the paper.
- Set the margins of the document to 1 inch on all sides.

Formatting the Cover Page

- In the header, insert page numbers in the upper right-hand corner of the page.
- Place the paper’s title four spaces from the top of the page. The title should be bolded.
- Below the title, insert one blank space. Then, in the order provided, list the following information in a double-spaced, un-bolded entry:
 - Author’s name
 - Title of department and school
 - Course name and number
 - Instructor’s name
 - Assignment due date

Here is an example of the cover page of an essay written in APA style:

1

Children of our Community: The Concern of Extended Care

Gigi Farquharson
Germanna Community College
English 111
Dr. B. Boilermaker
April 8, 2022

If the instructor requires an abstract, it should be placed before the body of the paper, immediately after the cover page. Reference the **Academic Center for Excellence's** [How to Write an Abstract](#) handout to learn more about the organization and content of an abstract.

Referencing the Works of Others Within a Paper

In APA style, works can be incorporated into the paper in two ways: quoting or paraphrasing. When quoting or paraphrasing information borrowed from a source:

- Provide the author's name (or the title of the work if there is no name provided) followed by the publication date and the location of the work within an **in-text citation**. The location of the work may be the quote's page number, paragraph number, time stamp, etc. If the information used is a paraphrase and is not a direct quote, then the APA guidelines encourage the use of a page number, but it is not required. For all direct quotes, the location information is required.
- Provide full citation information for the work in the **Reference** list.

In-text Citations: Parenthetical and Narrative Citations

APA in-text citations follow the author-date-location method of citation where the author's last name, the resource's publication date, and the location where the borrowed information was obtained must appear in the text. The author's name may appear either in the sentence itself (narrative) or in parentheses following the quotation or paraphrase (parenthetical). The author's name will always be followed by the publication date, whether in the text of the sentence or in the parenthetical citation, but the location should always appear in parentheses after the borrowed information. The following are examples of parenthetical and narrative citations:

Parenthetical:

"There is an ongoing political battle in America as to what identifies as a healthy outcome to an unhealthy situation" (Graziani, 2016, p. 3).

Narrative:

According to Graziani (2016), “There is an ongoing political battle in America as to what identifies as a healthy outcome to an unhealthy situation” (p. 3).

In 2016, Graziani stated: “There is an ongoing political battle in America as to what identifies as a healthy outcome to an unhealthy situation” (p. 3).

Common In-Text Citations

One Author: Use the author’s last name followed by a comma, the publication date of the source, another comma, and then the location of the reference.

Studies suggest that carpets can cause an increase of static electricity in the winter (Hart, 2016, p. 8).

Two Authors: Use the first author’s last name followed by an ‘&’. Then, list the second author’s last name followed by the publication date and the source location.

Crowd science has changed the way we participate in scientific research (Lyons & Zhang, 2019, p. 2).

Three or More Authors: Use the first author’s last name followed by the phrase ‘et al.’

They further argued that “If every person helped one child in some way, we could not only reform our foster care system: we can spread hope” (Holmes et al., 2016, p. 8).

Government Agency or Organization as Author: Use the agency or organization title rather than an author’s name. If the title's abbreviations are familiar, place the abbreviations in brackets after the first mention of the source. In all further references to the source, use the abbreviations.

Without abbreviations:

According to one government report, children in Virginia from ages 1-5 are adopted at rate of 42.7% (Administration for Children and Families, 2014, p. 3).

With abbreviations:

It is a common belief that crime has risen in the past decade, but this is false; crime was reported as being its lowest since 1991 (Department of Justice [DOJ], 2018, p.1).

Unknown Author: Use a shortened version of the source's title in place of the author's name in the in-text citation. If the source's title is italicized within the reference citation, then italicize the title within the in-text citation. If the article's title is not italicized within the reference citation, place the title within quotation marks for the in-text citation.

One author understood that children's perception of their parents would greatly impact their adult life ("Mini-me," 2019, para. 8).

No Date: Use the abbreviation "n.d." (for "no date") in place of the date within the parenthetical citation.

After looking at research, it was discovered that students succeeded with tutoring (Smith, n.d., para. 2).

Personal Communication/Interview: A personal communication, such as text messages, emails, phone calls, and anything else that cannot be accessed by the reader, will only need to be cited within the text of the paper and will not require a citation on the Reference page. Include the initials and last name of the communicator followed by the phrase 'personal communication' in the in-text citation. Also, use the exact date in which the communication/interview took place.

From funding a child's psychiatrist visit to adoption process, Virginia does not create a conducive environment for exacting change quickly (J. Schrader, personal communication, March 17, 2019).

Two Works Written by the Same Author within the Same Year: Place a lowercase letter of the alphabet after the date within the in-text citation and the Reference citation to specify which source the paper is referencing. In the Reference list, the sources should be alphabetized based on these lowercase letters.

First article written by M. Perez in 2018:

In-text citation:

The author noted that King Arthur was not a historical king of the British Isles (Perez, 2018a, p. 31).

Reference citation:

Perez, M. (2018a). Much Ado about Wizards. *The Chaucer Chronicles*, 5(8), 18-518.

<https://medievalistorbust.com//thechaucerchronicles>

Second article by M. Perez in 2018:

In-text citation:

It was determined that Boccaccio was one of the greatest influencers of medieval literature (Perez, 2018b, p. 20).

Reference citation:

Perez, M. (2018b). *Plagues, Poets, and Plagiarism*. The Chaucer Investigation.

<https://chaucerinvestigation.com//plagues-poets-plagiarism>

Quote within a Quote: In some cases, you may have to use a quotation from an indirect source. Quoting from an indirect source occurs when the words being quoted are not original to the source you are citing but come from a different original work. In these instances, begin the in-text citation with the phrase “as cited in,” and cite using the information from the indirect source.

Johnson argues that yoga can be useful only if “the exercises are practiced often” (as cited in Hallahan, 2019, p. 4).

Media Sources: In cases where video or audio media sources have been incorporated into a paper, the in-text citation should include the author’s name, along with the media’s production date and time stamp to show the specific location of the referenced material within the media source.

In a line from the song “Wanted Dead or Alive,” the singer points out that, “It’s all the same, only the names will change” (Bon Jovi, 1986, 00:00:35).

Quoting or Reproducing Text Created by an Artificial Intelligence Model: When using an AI tool, an explanation of how the tool was used must be included. Provide the prompt that was used and the relevant text that was generated in the response.

When prompted with “Is the left-brain right-brain divide real or a metaphor?” the ChatGPT-generated text indicated that although the two brain hemispheres are somewhat specialized, “the notation that people can be characterized as ‘left-brained’ or ‘right-brained’ is considered to be an oversimplification and a popular myth” (OpenAI, 2025).

Poem: When citing a poem, the following pattern should be used:

(Poet's Last Name, Publication Date of book or collection, p. Page number for shorter quotes, poem line #'s for longer quotes)

In the poem "Let America Be America Again," the poet pointedly states that, "Equality is in the air we breathe" (Hughes, 1994, p. 34) or (Hughes, 1994, line 14).

Block Quotations

Place quotations with **40 words or more** in a freestanding block and omit quotation marks. Start the quotation on a new line, indent the entire quote half an inch from the left margin, and maintain double spacing. In addition, the parenthetical citation should be placed after the closing punctuation mark.

One article points out the importance of a well-rounded education for STEM majors:

It is important that we provide a range of broad and varied educational experiences to students in engineering and STEM fields. It is in fact essential that such curricula not be one-sided or solely focused in STEM content alone. Rather we argue that a certain amount of richly varied liberal arts learning should be woven into the curricula of such subjects. (Mishra et al., 2013, p. 25)

Adding or Omitting Words in Quotations

If you add a word or words to a quotation, place brackets around the added words to indicate that they are not part of the original text.

One study mentions the importance of leadership in the classroom: "They [teachers] are placed in a pivotal position to recognize bullying early on and liaise with the healthcare providers for timely intervention" (Shamsi et al., 2019, p. 2396).

If you omit a word or words from a quotation, indicate the deleted word or words by using three spaced ellipses. Make sure that the words you omit do not change the original meaning of the quote.

One study mentions the importance of leadership in the classroom, saying that teachers “are placed in a pivotal position to recognize bullying early on . . . for timely intervention” (Shamsi, et al., 2019, p. 2396).

Reference List

The reference list is placed directly after the body of the paper and will include the complete citation of each source used within the paper. Important points on the Reference page are listed below:

- Title the references list ‘References’ and place the title at the top of the page. Center and bold the title.
- Alphabetize the reference list according to the first letter of each citation.
- Capitalize the first word of a source’s title, the first word of a source’s subtitle, and any proper nouns found within the title. All other words within the title must be lower case.
- If a source is not a written text, use brackets after the title to denote its medium (i.e. [Video], [Photograph], [Painting]).

Author Rules

One author	Smith, F.
Two authors	Smith, F., & Jones, B.
Three to twenty authors	Smith, F., Jones, B., Philips, T., & Parker, A.
More than twenty authors	Smith, F., Jones, B., Philips, T., Morrison, E., Bradley, A. T., Yoo, H., Williams, P., Moss, K., Peters, C., Lawrence, B., Zhao, L., Andrews, R., De’Marco, T., Hall, S., Jackson, K., Smith, O., Lee, Y., Anderson, T., McKinley, W., King, M.R., ... Franklin, W.S.

References List - Commonly Used Sources

Webpage

When citing web pages, if a website also publishes a printed version, the website will be italicized, and the article title will remain unitalicized. Examples of these types of sources include *National Geographic*, the *Washington Post*, and *TIME* magazine.

If a website does not publish a printed version of the site, then the article's title will be italicized, and the title of the website will remain unitalicized. Examples include articles from CNN, HuffPost, and BBC News.

Containing an Author/Authors

Available in print:

Last, F. (Date of Publication). Title of article or web page. *Title of Website*. Web address

Thornton, S. (2011, October 24). Looking for life. *National Geographic*.
<https://www.nationalgeographic.org/article/looking-life/>

Only Online:

Last, F. (Date of Publication). *Title of article*. Title of Website. Web address

Moye, D. (2019, November 14). *Cows swept off coast during hurricane Dorian survive 'Gilligan's Island'-style*. HuffPost. https://www.huffpost.com/entry/cows-hurricane-dorian_n_5dcd83fde4b0a794d1fc4c48?fi

Unknown Author

Available in print:

Title of article or web page. (Date of Publication). *Title of Website*. Web address

Introducing Time immersive, a new way to experience Time's journalism. (2019, July 18). *TIME*.
<https://time.com/longform/time-immersive-app/>

Only Online:

Title of article or web page. (Date of Publication). Title of Website. Web address

Italian cuisine. (n.d.). The Separation of Food and Plate. <https://sepoffoodandplate.com//italian>

Government Agency or Organization as Author

When there is no named author or authors, use the name of the government agency or organization as the author.

Available in print:

Organization Title. (Date of Publication). Title of source. *Title of Website.* Web address

National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States. (2004, July 22). The 9-11 commission report. *U.S. Government Publishing Office.*
<https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/GPO-911REPORT/pdf/GPO-911REPORT.pdf>

Only Online:

Organization Title. (Date of Publication). *Title of source.* Web address

Fredericksburg SPCA. (n.d.). *Who we are.* <https://fredspca.org/whoweare/>

Journal Article

Containing a DOI

Last, F. (Date of Publication). Title of article: Subtitle of article. *Journal Title, Volume number* (issue number), page range. <https://doi.org/doi number>

Shaw, T.V. & Webster, D. (2011). A matter of time: The importance of tracking reentry into foster care beyond one year after reunification. *Journal for Public Child Welfare, 5*(5), 501-520. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15548732.2011.617262>

Containing a URL

Last, F. (Date of Publication). Title of article: Subtitle of article. *Journal Title, Volume number* (issue number), page range. Web address

Shaw, T.V. & Webster, D. (2011). A matter of time: The importance of tracking reentry into foster care beyond one year after reunification. *Journal for Public Child Welfare*, 5(5), 501-520.
<http://ezgcc.vccs.edu:2048/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=67098531&site=ehost-live&scope=site>

Books, E-Books, and Textbooks

Printed Book

Last, F. (Copyright). *Title of book*. Publisher.

Richter, C. (1953). *The light in the forest*. Vintage Books.

E-Book

Last, F. (Copyright). *Title of book*. Publisher. Web address

Bronte, C. (1890). *Jane Eyre*. Crowell.
<https://play.google.com/books/reader?id=JuA0AAAAMAAJ&hl=en>

Printed Textbook

Last, F. (Date of Publication). *Title of book* (Edition number ed.). Publisher.

Miller, G. (2007). *The Prentice Hall reader* (8th ed.). Pearson.

Online Textbook

Last, F. (Date of Publication). *Title of book* (Edition number. Ed.). Publisher. Web address

Corbet, S.P., Janssen, V., Lund, J.M., Pfannestiel, T., & Vickery, P. (2019). *US history*. (S. Waskiewicz, Ed.; 2nd ed.). Rice University. <https://openstax.org/books/us-history/pages/preface>

Data/Government Documents

Title of group who authored the document. (Publication Date). *Title of document*. Title of larger government agency. Web address

National Center for Education Statistics. (2017). *Highlights from TIMSS and TIMSS advanced 2015*. US Department of Education. <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2017/2017002.pdf>

Poems

Book or Collection:

Poet's Last Name, First Initial. (Year of book or collection publication). Title of poem. In Editor First Initial. Second Initial. Last Name (Ed.), *Title of book or collection* (pp. pages). Publisher First Initial. Second Initial. Last Name.

Hughes, L. (1994). Let America be America again. In A. Rampersad (Ed.), *The collected poems of Langston Hughes* (p. 34). A. A. Knopf.

Website:

Poet's Last Name, First Initial. (year, month date posted on website). *Title of poem*. Website name. URL

Hughes, L. (n.d.). *Let America be America again*. Poets.org. <https://poets.org/poem/let-america-be-america-again>

Videos and Images

Online Video

When citing an online video, the author is the individual or group that uploaded the video.

When citing a TED Talk from YouTube, the author of the video is the channel that houses the uploaded content, TED. One exception is if the TED Talk is located on the TED website, then the author is considered to be the speaker in the video. Also note that after the title of the source, a bracket including a description of the media type should be used.

Last, F. (Date of Publication). *Title of video* [Video]. Internet Site. Web address

TED. (2016, October 6). *Architecture that's built to heal*. [Video]. YouTube.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MvXZzKZ3JYQ>

Film

When citing a film, the director is considered to be the author of the film.

Last, F. (Profession of the Author). (Date of Publication). *Title of video*. [Description of media].
Production Company.

Forman, M. (Director). (1975). *One flew over the cuckoo's nest* [Film]. United Artists.

Episode of a TV Series

When citing a TV episode, including the producer information before the series title is optional.

Last, F. (Profession of the author). (Date of Publication). Title of episode (Season number,
Episode number). [Description of media]. In F. Last (Producer), *Series Title*. Production
Company.

Forrester, B. (Writer), Whittingham, K. (Director). (2006, November 16). The merger (Season 3,
Episode 8) [TV series episode]. *The Office*. National Broadcasting Company; Global
Television Network.

Artwork in Museum

Last, F. (Date). *Artwork Title* [Type of artwork]. Museum Name, City, Country. Web address (if
applicable)

Cole, T. (1842). *The voyage of life: Childhood* [Painting]. National Gallery of Art, Washington
District of Columbia, United States. [https://www.nga.gov/collection/art-object-
page.52450.html](https://www.nga.gov/collection/art-object-page.52450.html)

Photograph – with Known Photographer

When citing a photograph, the photographer is considered to be the author of the photograph.

Last, F. (Year). *Title of picture* [Description]. Title of Website. Web address

McCurry, S. (1996). *Red boy at the Holi Festival* [Photo]. Magnum Photos.
<https://www.magnumphotos.com/photographer/steve-mccurry/>

Photograph – with Unknown Photographer

[Description]. (Year). Title of Website. Web address

[Portrait photograph of Mister Rogers in a red cardigan]. (2018). JSTOR Daily.
<https://daily.jstor.org/long-live-mister-rogers-quiet-revolution/>

Artificial Intelligence Models

When citing text or images from an Artificial Intelligence app, the model is the author.

Model. (Year). *Name of the model* (Version number) [Additional descriptor]. Specific Web address

OpenAI. (2025). *ChatGPT* (ChatGPT 4o version) [Large language model].
<https://chatgpt.com/share/68c9cada-4dd0-8010-b0df-fbfc717c6d8>

Additional APA Resources

For further information about the APA Style, please see the following the Academic Center for Excellence's handouts: [APA Sample Paper](#) and [APA Paper Checklist for College Writers](#).

The APA Style [video](#) and [interactive module](#) are also available on the Academic Center for Excellence's "Writing Resources" web page.

Additionally, the Academic Center for Excellence offers APA Style on-campus workshops. Contact the Academic Center for Excellence Locust Grove center at **(540) 423-9148**, the Fredericksburg center at **(540) 891-3017**, or the Barbara J. Fried Center in Stafford at **(540) 834-1993** for further information about scheduling an on-campus workshop.