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## APA Formatting and Style Guide

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Last full revision by **Jodi Wagner and Kristen Seas**.

Last edited by Allen Brizee on February 6th 2008 at 1:16PM

***Summary:** APA (American Psychological Association) is most commonly used to cite sources within the social sciences. This resource, revised according to the **5th edition** of the APA manual, offers examples for the general format of APA research papers, in-text citations, endnotes/footnotes, and the reference page. Please use the example at the bottom of this page to cite the Purdue OWL in APA.*

### 1. General Format

#### General APA Guidelines

Your essay should be typed, double-spaced on standard-sized paper (8.5" x 11") with 1" margins on all sides. You should use 10-12 pt. Times New Roman font or a similar font.

Include a **page header** in the upper right-hand of every page. To create a **page header**, type the first 2-3 words of the title of the paper, insert five spaces, then give the page number.

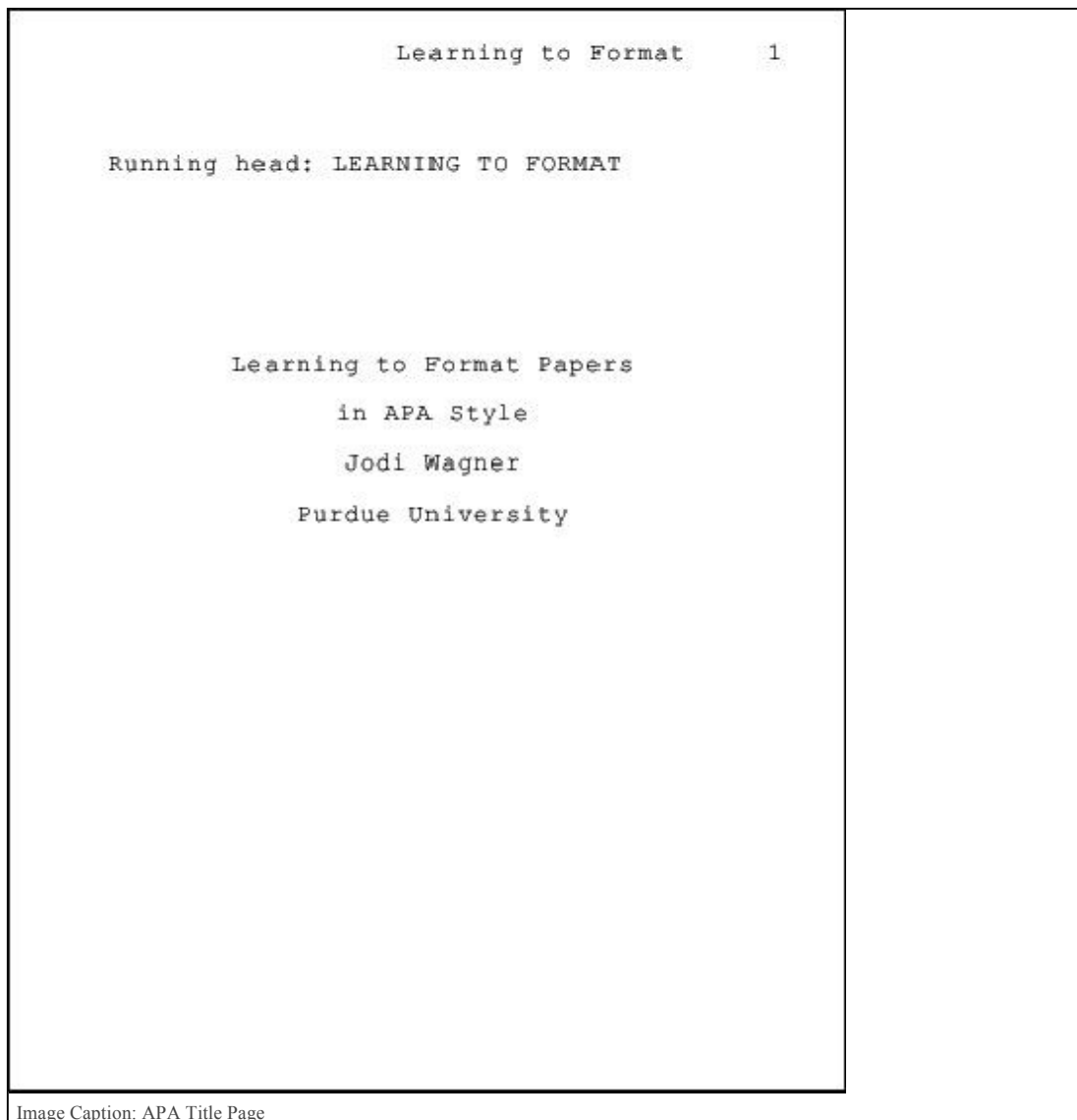
#### Major Paper Sections

Your essay should include **four** major sections: the **Title Page**, **Abstract**, **Main Body**, and **References**.

##### Title Page

Your title page should already include the **page header** (described above). On the first line of the title page flush-left, add a **running head**. Begin the running head with the words “Running Head” followed by a colon. Then give an abbreviated title of your paper in 50 characters or less in all caps. Note: Remember that the **page header** will appear on every page of your paper, whereas the **running head** will only appear on your title page.

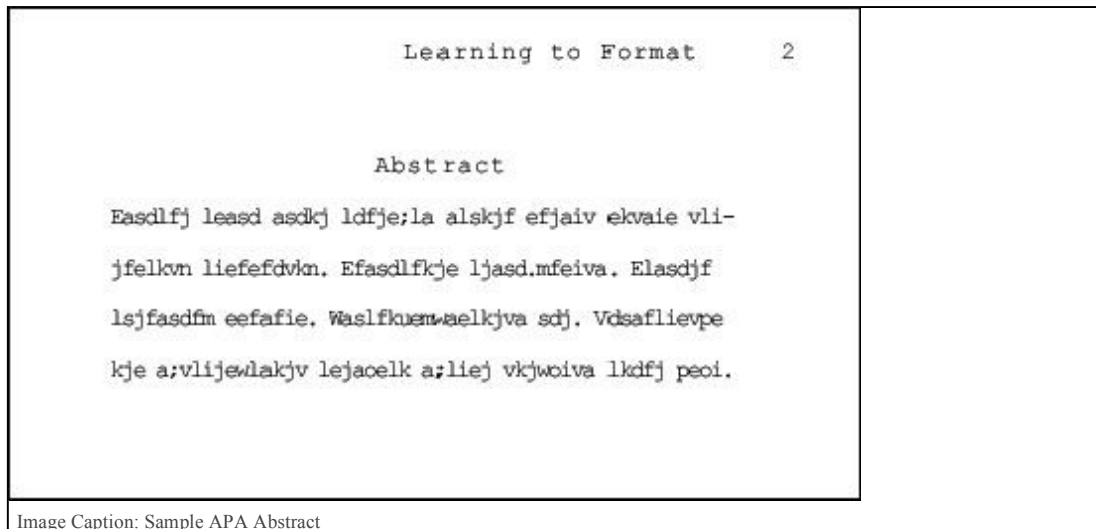
In the upper half of the title page, type your full **title**, your **byline** (name[s]), and **affiliation** (university, etc.) centered on separate lines. Your **title** may take up one or two lines as in the example below:



## Abstract

Begin a new page. Your abstract page should already include the **page header** (described above). On the first line of the abstract page, center the word “Abstract” (otherwise unformatted, no bold, italics, underlining, or quotation marks).

Beginning with the next line, write a concise summary of the key points of your research. (Do not indent.) The abstract should be a single paragraph double-spaced of less than 120 words.



Please see our [Additional Resources](#) page for examples of APA papers.

Cite the Purdue OWL in APA:

Purdue University Online Writing Lab (OWL) (Last edited date available in the gray box at the top of the resource). *Title of resource*. Retrieved month day, year, from <http://Web address for OWL resource>.

## 2. In-Text Citations: The Basics

Reference citations in text are covered on pages 207-214 of the Publication Manual. What follows are some general guidelines for referring to the works of others in your essay.

**Note:** APA style requires authors to use the past tense or present perfect tense when using signal phrases to describe earlier research. E.g., Jones (1998) **found** or Jones (1998) **has found**...

## APA Citation Basics

When using APA format, follow the author-date method of in-text citation. This means that the author's last name and the year of publication for the source should appear in the text, E.g., (Jones, 1998), and a complete reference should appear in the reference list at the end of the paper.

If you are referring to an idea from another work but **NOT** directly quoting the material, or making reference to an entire book, article or other work, you only have to make reference to the author and year of publication in your in-text reference.

## In-Text Citation Capitalization, Quotes, and Italics/Underlining

- Always capitalize proper nouns, including author names and initials: D. Jones.
- If you refer to the title of a source within your paper, capitalize all words that are four letters long or greater within the title of a source: *Permanence and Change*. Exceptions apply to short words that are verbs, nouns, pronouns, adjectives, and adverbs: *Writing New Media*, *There Is Nothing Left to Lose*.

(**Note:** in your References list, only the first word of a title will be capitalized: Writing new media.)

- When capitalizing titles, capitalize both words in a hyphenated compound word: *Natural-Born Cyborgs*.
- Capitalize the first word after a dash or colon: "Defining Film Rhetoric: The Case of Hitchcock's *Vertigo*."
- Italicize or underline the titles of longer works such as books, edited collections, movies, television series, documentaries, or albums: *The Closing of the American Mind*; *The Wizard of Oz*; *Friends*.
- Put quotation marks around the titles of shorter works such as journal articles, articles from edited collections, television series episodes, and song titles: "Multimedia Narration: Constructing Possible Worlds"; "The One Where Chandler Can't Cry."

## Short Quotations

If you are directly quoting from a work, you will need to include the author, year of publication, and the page number for the reference (preceded by "p."). Introduce the quotation with a signal phrase that includes the author's last name followed by the date of publication in parentheses.

According to Jones (1998), "Students often had difficulty using APA

style, especially when it was their first time" (p. 199). Jones (1998) found "students often had difficulty using APA style" (p. 199); what implications does this have for teachers? If the author is not named in a signal phrase, place the author's last name, the year of publication, and the page number in parentheses after the quotation. She stated, "Students often had difficulty using APA style," (Jones, 1998, p. 199), but she did not offer an explanation as to why.

## Long Quotations

Place direct quotations longer than 40 words in a free-standing block of typewritten lines, and omit quotation marks. Start the quotation on a new line, indented five spaces from the left margin. Type the entire quotation on the new margin, and indent the first line of any subsequent paragraph within the quotation five spaces from the new margin. Maintain double-spacing throughout. The parenthetical citation should come after closing punctuation mark.

Jones's (1998) study found the following:  
Students often had difficulty using APA style, especially when it was their first time citing sources. This difficulty could be attributed to the fact that many students failed to purchase a style manual or to ask their teacher for help. (p. 199)

## Summary or Paraphrase

If you are paraphrasing an idea from another work, you only have to make reference to the author and year of publication in your in-text reference, but APA guidelines encourage you to also provide the page number (although it is not required.)

According to Jones (1998), APA style is a difficult citation format for first-time learners.  
APA style is a difficult citation format for first-time learners (Jones, 1998, p. 199).

## 3. In-Text Citations: Author/Authors

APA style has a series of important rules on using author names as part of the author-date system. There are additional rules for citing indirect sources, electronic sources, and sources without page numbers.

## Citing an Author or Authors

**A Work by Two Authors:** Name both authors in the signal phrase or in the parentheses each time you cite the work. Use the word "and" between the authors' names within the text and use the ampersand in the parentheses.

Research by Wegener and Petty (1994) showed...

(Wegener & Petty, 1994)

**A Work by Three to Five Authors:** List all the authors in the signal phrase or in parentheses the first time you cite the source.

(Kernis, Cornell, Sun, Berry, & Harlow, 1993)

In subsequent citations, only use the first author's last name followed by "et al." in the signal phrase or in parentheses.

(Kernis et al., 1993)

In *et al.*, *et* should not be followed by a period.

**Six or More Authors:** Use the first author's name followed by et al. in the signal phrase or in parentheses.

Harris et al. (2001) argued...

(Harris et al., 2001)

**Unknown Author:** If the work does not have an author, cite the source by its title in the signal phrase or use the first word or two in the parentheses. Titles of books and reports are italicized or underlined; titles of articles and chapters are in quotation marks.

A similar study was done of students learning to format research papers ("Using APA," 2001).

**Note:** In the rare case the "Anonymous" is used for the author, treat it as the author's name (Anonymous, 2001). In the reference list, use the name Anonymous as the author.

**Organization as an Author:** If the author is an organization or a government agency, mention the organization in the signal phrase or in the parenthetical citation the first time you cite the source.

According to the American Psychological Association (2000),...

If the organization has a well-known abbreviation, include the abbreviation in brackets the first time the source is cited and then use only the abbreviation in later citations.

First citation: (Mothers Against Drunk Driving [MADD], 2000)

Second citation: (MADD, 2000)

**Two or More Works in the Same Parentheses:** When your parenthetical citation includes two or more works, order them the same way they appear in the reference list, separated by a semi-colon.

(Berndt, 2002; Harlow, 1983)

**Authors With the Same Last Name:** To prevent confusion, use first initials with the last names.

(E. Johnson, 2001; L. Johnson, 1998)

**Two or More Works by the Same Author in the Same Year:** If you have two sources by the same author in the same year, use lower-case letters (a, b, c) with the year to order the entries in the reference list. Use the lower-case letters with the year in the in-text citation.

Research by Berndt (1981a) illustrated that...

**Personal Communication:** For interviews, letters, e-mails, and other person-to-person communication, cite the communicators name, the fact that it was personal communication, and the date of the communication. Do not include personal communication in the reference list.

(E. Robbins, personal communication, January 4, 2001).

A. P. Smith also claimed that many of her students had difficulties with APA style (personal communication, November 3, 2002).

## Citing Indirect Sources

If you use a source that was cited in another source, name the original source in your signal phrase. List the secondary source in your reference list and include the secondary source in the parentheses.

Johnson argued that...(as cited in Smith, 2003, p. 102).

**Note:**When citing material in parentheses, set off the citation with a comma, as above.

## Electronic Sources

If possible, cite an electronic document the same as any other document by using the author-date style.

Kenneth (2000) explained...

**Unknown Author and Unknown Date:** If no author or date is given, use the title in your signal phrase or the first word or two of the title in the parentheses and use the abbreviation "n.d." (for "no date").

Another study of students and research decisions discovered that students succeeded with tutoring ("Tutoring and APA," n.d.).

## Sources Without Page Numbers

When an electronic source lacks page numbers, you should try to include information that will help readers find the passage being cited. When an electronic document has numbered paragraphs, use the ¶ symbol, or the abbreviation "para." followed by the paragraph number (Hall, 2001, ¶ 5) or (Hall, 2001, para. 5). If the paragraphs are not numbered and the document includes headings, provide the appropriate heading and specify the paragraph under that heading. Note that in some electronic sources, like Web pages, people can use the Find function in their browser to locate any passages you cite.

According to Smith (1997), ... (Mind over Matter section, para. 6).

**Note:** Never use the page numbers of Web pages you print out; different computers print Web pages with different pagination.

## 4. Footnotes and Endnotes

APA does not recommend the use of footnotes and endnotes because they are often expensive for publishers to reproduce. However, if explanatory notes still prove necessary to your document, APA details the use of two types of footnotes: content and copyright.

When using either type of footnote, insert a number formatted in superscript following almost any punctuation mark. Footnote numbers should not follow dashes ( — ), and if they appear in a sentence in parentheses, the footnote number should be inserted within the parentheses.

Scientists examined—over several years<sup>1</sup>—the fossilized remains of the woolly-wooly yak.<sup>2</sup> (These have now been transferred to the Chauan Museum.<sup>3</sup>)

All footnotes should appear on the final page of your document (usually this is after the References page). Center the word “Footnotes” at the top of the page. Indent five spaces on the first line of each footnote. Then, follow normal paragraph spacing rules. Double-space throughout.

<sup>1</sup> While the method of examination for the woolly-wooly yak provides important insights to this research, this document does not focus on this particular species.

### Content Notes

Content Notes provide supplemental information to your readers. When providing Content Notes, be brief and focus on only one subject. Try to limit your comments to one small paragraph.

Content Notes can also point readers to information that is available in more detail elsewhere.

<sup>1</sup> See Blackmur (1995), especially chapters three and four, for an insightful analysis of this extraordinary animal.

## Copyright Permission Notes

If you quote more than 500 words of published material or think you may be in violation of “Fair Use” copyright laws, you must get the formal permission of the author(s). All other sources simply appear in the reference list.

Follow the same formatting rules as with Content Notes for noting copyright permissions. Then attach a copy of the permission letter to the document.

If you are reproducing a graphic, chart, or table, from some other source, you must provide a special note at the bottom of the item that includes copyright information. You should also submit written permission along with your work. Begin the citation with “*Note.*”

*Note.* From “Title of the article,” by W. Jones and R. Smith, 2007, *Journal Title*, 21, p. 122. Copyright 2007 by Copyright Holder. Reprinted with permission.

## 5. Reference List: Basic Rules

Your reference list should appear at the end of your paper. It provides the information necessary for a reader to locate and retrieve any source you cite in the body of the paper. Each source you cite in the paper must appear in your reference list; likewise, each entry in the reference list must be cited in your text.

Your references should begin on a new page separate from the text of the essay; label this page References (with no quotation marks, underlining, etc.), centered at the top of the page. It should be double-spaced just like the rest of your essay.

### Basic Rules

- All lines after the first line of each entry in your reference list should be indented one-half inch from the left margin. This is called hanging indentation.
- Authors' names are inverted (last name first); give the last name and initials for all authors of a particular work unless the work has more than six authors. If the work has more than six authors, list the first six authors and then use et al. after the sixth author's name to indicate the rest of the authors.

- Reference list entries should be alphabetized by the last name of the first author of each work.
- If you have more than one article by the same author, single-author references or multiple-author references with the exact same authors in the exact same order are listed in order by the year of publication, starting with the earliest.
- When referring to any work that is NOT a journal, such as a book, article, or Web page, capitalize only the first letter of the first word of a title and subtitle, the first word after a colon or a dash in the title, and proper nouns. Do not capitalize the first letter of the second word in a hyphenated compound word.
- Capitalize all major words in journal titles.
- Italicize titles of longer works such as books and journals.
- Do not italicize, underline, or put quotes around the titles of shorter works such as journal articles or essays in edited collections.

## 6. Reference List: Author/Authors

The following rules for handling works by a single author or multiple authors apply to all APA-style references in your reference list, regardless of the type of work (book, article, electronic resource, etc.)

### Single Author

Last name first, followed by author initials.

Berndt, T. J. (2002). Friendship quality and social development.  
*Current Directions in Psychological Science, 11*, 7-10.

### Two Authors

List by their last names and initials. Use the ampersand instead of "and."

Wegener, D. T., & Petty, R. E. (1994). Mood management across affective states: The hedonic contingency hypothesis. *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology, 66*, 1034-1048.

### Three to Six Authors

List by last names and initials; commas separate author names, while the last author name is preceded again by ampersand.

Kernis, M. H., Cornell, D. P., Sun, C. R., Berry, A., & Harlow, T.

(1993). There's more to self-esteem than whether it is high or low: The importance of stability of self-esteem. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 65, 1190-1204.

### More Than Six Authors

If there are more than six authors, list the first six as above and then "et al.," which stands for "and others." Remember not to place a period after "et" in "et al."

Harris, M., Karper, E., Stacks, G., Hoffman, D., DeNiro, R., Cruz, P., et al. (2001). Writing labs and the Hollywood connection. *Journal of Film and Writing*, 44(3), 213-245.

### Organization as Author

American Psychological Association. (2003).

### Unknown Author

*Merriam-Webster's collegiate dictionary* (10th ed.). (1993). Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster.

**NOTE:** When your essay includes parenthetical citations of sources with no author named, use a shortened version of the source's title instead of an author's name. Use quotation marks and italics as appropriate. For example, parenthetical citations of the two sources above would appear as follows: (*Merriam-Webster's*, 1993) and ("New Drug," 1993).

### Two or More Works by the Same Author

Use the author's name for all entries and list the entries by the year (earliest comes first).

Berndt, T.J. (1981).  
Berndt, T.J. (1999).

When an author appears both as a sole author and, in another citation, as the first author of a group, list the one-author entries first.

Berndt, T. J. (1999). Friends' influence on students' adjustment to school. *Educational Psychologist*, 34, 15-28.

Berndt, T. J., & Keefe, K. (1995). Friends' influence on adolescents' adjustment to school. *Child Development, 66*, 1312-1329.

References that have the same first author and different second and/or third authors are arranged alphabetically by the last name of the second author, or the last name of the third if the first and second authors are the same.

Wegener, D. T., Kerr, N. L., Fleming, M. A., & Petty, R. E. (2000). Flexible corrections of juror judgments: Implications for jury instructions. *Psychology, Public Policy, & Law, 6*, 629-654.

Wegener, D. T., Petty, R. E., & Klein, D. J. (1994). Effects of mood on high elaboration attitude change: The mediating role of likelihood judgments. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 24*, 25-43.

## Two or More Works by the Same Author in the Same Year

If you are using more than one reference by the same author (or the same group of authors listed in the same order) published in the same year, organize them in the reference list alphabetically by the title of the article or chapter. Then assign letter suffixes to the year. Refer to these sources in your essay as they appear in your reference list, e.g.: "Berndt (1981a) makes similar claims..."

Berndt, T. J. (1981a). Age changes and changes over time in prosocial intentions and behavior between friends. *Developmental Psychology, 17*, 408-416.

Berndt, T. J. (1981b). Effects of friendship on prosocial intentions and behavior. *Child Development, 52*, 636-643.

## 7. Reference List: Articles in Periodicals

### Basic Form

APA style dictates that authors are named last name followed by initials; publication year goes between parentheses, followed by a period. The title of the article is in sentence-case, meaning only the first word and proper nouns in the title are capitalized. The periodical title is run in title case, and is followed by the volume number which, with the title, is also italicized or underlined.

Author, A. A., Author, B. B., & Author, C. C. (Year). Title of article. *Title of Periodical, volume number(issue number), pages.*

## Article in Journal Paginated by Volume

Journals that are paginated by volume begin with page one in issue one, and continue numbering issue two where issue one ended, etc.

Harlow, H. F. (1983). Fundamentals for preparing psychology journal articles. *Journal of Comparative and Physiological Psychology*, 55, 893-896.

## Article in Journal Paginated by Issue

Journals paginated by issue begin with page one every issue; therefore, the issue number gets indicated in parentheses after the volume. The parentheses and issue number are not italicized or underlined.

Scruton, R. (1996). The eclipse of listening. *The New Criterion*, 15 (30), 5-13.

## Article in a Magazine

Henry, W. A., III. (1990, April 9). Making the grade in today's schools. *Time*, 135, 28-31.

## Article in a Newspaper

Unlike other periodicals, p. or pp. precedes page numbers for a newspaper reference in APA style. Single pages take p., e.g., p. B2; multiple pages take pp., e.g., pp. B2, B4 or pp. C1, C3-C4.

Schultz, S. (2005, December 28). Calls made to strengthen state energy policies. *The Country Today*, pp. 1A, 2A.

## Letter to the Editor

Moller, G. (2002, August). Ripples versus rumbles [Letter to the editor]. *Scientific American*, 287(2), 12.

## Review

Baumeister, R. F. (1993). Exposing the self-knowledge myth [Review of the book *The self-knower: A hero under control* ]. *Contemporary*

*Psychology*, 38, 466-467.

## 8. Reference List: Books

### Basic Format for Books

Author, A. A. (Year of publication). *Title of work: Capital letter also for subtitle*. Location: Publisher.

**Note:** For "Location," you should always list the city, but you should also include the state if the city is unfamiliar or if the city could be confused with one in another state.

Calfee, R. C., & Valencia, R. R. (1991). *APA guide to preparing manuscripts for journal publication*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

### Edited Book, No Author

Duncan, G.J., & Brooks-Gunn, J. (Eds.). (1997). *Consequences of growing up poor*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

### Edited Book with an Author or Authors

Plath, S. (2000). *The unabridged journals* (K.V. Kukil, Ed.). New York: Anchor.

### A Translation

Laplace, P. S. (1951). *A philosophical essay on probabilities*. (F. W. Truscott & F. L. Emory, Trans.). New York: Dover. (Original work published 1814).

**Note:** When you cite a republished work, like the one above, work in your text, it should appear with both dates: Laplace (1814/1951).

### Edition Other Than the First

Helper, M.E., Keme, R.S., & Drugman, R.D. (1997). *The battered child* (5th ed.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

## Article or Chapter in an Edited Book

Author, A. A., & Author, B. B. (Year of publication). Title of chapter.  
 In A. Editor & B. Editor (Eds.), *Title of book* (pages of chapter).  
 Location: Publisher.

**Note:** When you list the pages of the chapter or essay in parentheses after the book title, use "pp." before the numbers: (pp. 1-21). This abbreviation, however, does not appear before the page numbers in periodical references, except for newspapers.

O'Neil, J. M., & Egan, J. (1992). Men's and women's gender role journeys: Metaphor for healing, transition, and transformation. In B. R. Wainrib (Ed.), *Gender issues across the life cycle* (pp. 107-123). New York: Springer.

## Multivolume Work

Wiener, P. (Ed.). (1973). *Dictionary of the history of ideas* (Vols. 1-4). New York: Scribner's.

## 9. Reference List: Other Print Sources

### An Entry in An Encyclopedia

Bergmann, P. G. (1993). Relativity. In *The new encyclopedia britannica* (Vol. 26, pp. 501-508). Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica.

### Work Discussed in a Secondary Source

List the source the work was discussed in:

Coltheart, M., Curtis, B., Atkins, P., & Haller, M. (1993). Models of reading aloud: Dual-route and parallel-distributed-processing approaches. *Psychological Review*, *100*, 589-608.

**NOTE:** Give the secondary source in the references list; in the text, name the original work, and give a citation for the secondary source. For example, if Seidenberg and McClelland's work is cited in Coltheart et al. and you did not read the original work, list the Coltheart et al. reference in the References. In the text, use the following citation:

In Seidenberg and McClelland's study (as cited in Coltheart, Curtis, Atkins, & Haller, 1993), ...

## Dissertation Abstract

Yoshida, Y. (2001). Essays in urban transportation (Doctoral dissertation, Boston College, 2001). *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 62, 7741A.

## Government Document

National Institute of Mental Health. (1990). *Clinical training in serious mental illness* (DHHS Publication No. ADM 90-1679). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

## Report From a Private Organization

American Psychiatric Association. (2000). *Practice guidelines for the treatment of patients with eating disorders* (2nd ed.). Washington, D.C.: Author.

## Conference Proceedings

Schnase, J.L., & Cunnius, E.L. (Eds.). (1995). Proceedings from CSCL '95: *The First International Conference on Computer Support for Collaborative Learning*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

# 10. Reference List: Electronic Sources

## Article From an Online Periodical

Online articles follow the same guidelines for printed articles. Include all information the online host makes available, including an issue number in parentheses.

Author, A. A., & Author, B. B. (Date of publication). Title of article. *Title of Online Periodical*, volume number(issue number if available). Retrieved month day, year, from <http://www.someaddress.com/full/url/>  
Bernstein, M. (2002). 10 tips on writing the living Web. *A List Apart: For People Who Make Websites*, 149. Retrieved May 2, 2006, from

<http://www.alistapart.com/articles/writeliving>

## Online Scholarly Journal Article

Author, A. A., & Author, B. B. (Date of publication). Title of article. *Title of Journal*, volume number. Retrieved month day, year, from <http://www.someaddress.com/full/url/>

Kenneth, I. A. (2000). A Buddhist response to the nature of human rights. *Journal of Buddhist Ethics*, 8. Retrieved February 20, 2001, from <http://www.cac.psu.edu/jbe/twocont.html>

If the article appears as a printed version as well, the URL is not required. Use "Electronic version" in brackets after the article's title.

Whitmeyer, J.M. (2000). Power through appointment [Electronic version]. *Social Science Research*, 29, 535-555.

## Article From a Database

When referencing material obtained from an online database (such as a database in the library), provide appropriate print citation information (formatted just like a "normal" print citation would be for that type of work). Then add information that gives the date of retrieval and the proper name of the database. This will allow people to retrieve the print version if they do not have access to the database from which you retrieved the article. You can also include the item number or accession number in parentheses at the end, but the APA manual says that this is not required. (For more about citing articles retrieved from electronic databases, see page 278 of the Publication Manual.)

Smyth, A. M., Parker, A. L., & Pease, D. L. (2002). A study of enjoyment of peas. *Journal of Abnormal Eating*, 8(3). Retrieved February 20, 2003, from PsycARTICLES database.

## Nonperiodical Web Document, Web Page, or Report

List as much of the following information as possible (you sometimes have to hunt around to find the information; don't be lazy. If there is a page like <http://www.somesite.com/somepage.htm>, and somepage.htm doesn't have the information you're looking for, move up the URL to <http://www.somesite.com/>):

Author, A. A., & Author, B. B. (Date of publication). Title of document. Retrieved month day, year, from <http://Web address>.

**NOTE:** When an Internet document is more than one Web page, provide a URL that links to the home page or entry page for the document. Also, if there isn't a date available for the document use (n.d.) for no date.

### **Chapter or Section of a Web document**

Author, A. A., & Author, B. B. (Date of publication). Title of article.

In Title of book or larger document (chapter or section number).

Retrieved month day, year, from

<http://www.someaddress.com/full/url/>.

Engelshcall, R. S. (1997). Module mod\_rewrite: URL Rewriting Engine. In

*Apache HTTP Server Version 1.3 Documentation* (Apache modules.)

Retrieved March 10, 2006, from

[http://httpd.apache.org/docs/1.3/mod/mod\\_rewrite.html](http://httpd.apache.org/docs/1.3/mod/mod_rewrite.html)

**NOTE:** Use a chapter or section identifier and provide a URL that links directly to the chapter section, not the home page of the Web site.

### **E-mail**

E-mails are not included in the list of references, though you parenthetically cite them in your main text: (E. Robbins, personal communication, January 4, 2001).

### **Online Forum or Discussion Board Posting**

Message posted to an online newsgroup, forum, or discussion group. Include the title of the message, and the URL of the newsgroup or discussion board.

Frook, B. D. (1999, July 23). New inventions in the cyberworld of

toylandia [Msg 25]. Message posted to

<http://groups.earthlink.com/forum/messages/00025.html>

**NOTE:** If only the screen name is available for the author, then use the screen name; however, if the author provides a real name, use their real name instead. Be sure to provide the exact date of the posting. Follow the date with the subject line, the thread of the message (not in italics). Provide any identifiers in brackets after the title, as in other types of references.

### **Computer Software**

Ludwig, T. (2002). *PsychInquiry* [computer software]. New York: Worth.

For more help with citing electronic sources, please use these links:

- [Documenting Electronic Sources](#)
- [APA style web site's coverage of electronic references](#)
- [APA Frequently Asked Questions](#)

## 11. Reference List: Other Non-Print Sources

### Interviews, Email, and Other Personal Communication

No personal communication is included in your reference list; instead, parenthetically cite the communicators name, the fact that it was personal communication, and the date of the communication in your main text only.

(E. Robbins, personal communication, January 4, 2001).

A. P. Smith also claimed that many of her students had difficulties with APA style (personal communication, November 3, 2002).

### Motion Picture

Basic reference list format:

Producer, P. P. (Producer), & Director, D.D. (Director). (Date of publication). *Title of motion picture* [Motion picture]. Country of origin: Studio or distributor.

**Note:** If a movie or video tape is not available in wide distribution, add the following to your citation after the country of origin: (Available from Distributor name, full address and zip code).

### A Motion Picture or Video Tape with International or National Availability

Smith, J.D. (Producer), & Smithee, A.F. (Director). (2001). *Really big disaster movie* [ Motion picture]. United States: Paramount Pictures.

### A Motion Picture or Video Tape with Limited Availability

Harris, M. (Producer), & Turley, M. J. (Director). (2002). *Writing labs: A history* [Motion picture]. (Available from Purdue University Pictures, 500 Oval Drive, West Lafayette, IN 47907)

## Television Broadcast or Series Episode

Producer, P. P. (Producer). (Date of broadcast or copyright). Title of broadcast [ *Television broadcast or Television series* ]. City of origin: Studio or distributor.

## Single Episode of a Television Series

Writer, W. W. (Writer), & Director, D.D. (Director). (Date of publication). Title of episode [Television series episode]. In P. Producer (Producer), *Series title*. City of origin: Studio or distributor.

Wendy, S. W. (Writer), & Martian, I.R. (Director). (1986). The rising angel and the falling ape [Television series episode]. In D. Dude (Producer), *Creatures and monsters*. Los Angeles: Belarus Studios.

## Television Broadcast

Important, I. M. (Producer). (1990, November 1). *The nightly news hour* [Television broadcast]. New York: Central Broadcasting Service.

## A Television Series

Bellisario, D.L. (Producer). (1992). *Exciting action show* [Television series]. Hollywood: American Broadcasting Company.

## Music Recording

Songwriter, W. W. (Date of copyright). Title of song [Recorded by artist if different from song writer]. On *Title of album* [Medium of recording]. Location: Label. (Recording date if different from copyright date).

Taupin, B. (1975). Someone saved my life tonight [Recorded by Elton John]. On *Captain fantastic and the brown dirt cowboy* [CD]. London: Big Pig Music Limited.

For more about citing audiovisual media, see pages 266-269 of the Publication Manual.

For information about citing legal sources in your reference list, see [the Westfield State College page on Citing Legal Materials in APA Style](#).

## 12. Additional Resources

It's always best to consult the Publication Manual first for any APA question. If you are using APA style for a class assignment, it's a good idea to consult your professor, advisor, TA, or other campus resources for help with using APA style—they're the ones who can tell you how the style should apply in your particular case. For extraordinary questions that aren't covered clearly in the style manual or haven't been answered by your teacher or advisor, contact the Writing Lab for help at (765) 494-3723 or [email by using our OWL tutor email form](#).

### Print Resources

Here are some print resources for using APA style. Click The Purdue OWL does not make any profit from nor does it endorse these agencies; links are merely offered for information. Most of these books are probably available in your local library. From the American Psychological Association:

- *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (5th edition) (ISBN: 1557987912)
- *Mastering APA Style: Student's Workbook and Training Guide* (ISBN: 1557988919)
- *Mastering APA Style: Instructor's Resource Guide* (ISBN: 1557988900)
- *Displaying Your Findings: A Practical Guide for Creating Figures, Posters, and Presentations* (ISBN: 1557989788)

From other publishers:

- *The World's Easiest Guide to Using the APA* (ISBN: 0964385317)
- *Writing With Style: APA Style Made Easy* (ISBN: 0534363652)
- *Writing With Style: APA Style for Social Work* (ISBN: 0534263119)

### Online Resources from the APA

- [APA Style Website](#)
- [Electronic References in APA Style](#)
  - [Electronic Media and URLs](#)

- [Citations in Text of Electronic Material](#)
- [APA Style Tips](#)
- [Tip of the Week](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions about APA Style](#)
- [APA Style Helper](#) (software program; requires purchase)

### **Other Online Resources: Formatting and Writing in APA Style**

- [APA Documentation](#) (from the University of Wisconsin-Madison Writing Center)
- [APA-Style Checklist](#) (from Bill Southerly)

### **Other Online Resources: Style Templates and Sample Papers**

- [Sample paper: APA style](#) (Diana Hacker)
- [APA Simulated Journal Article](#) (from Elmira College)
- [A Sample Paper in American Psychological Association Style](#) (From Valencia Community College)
- [Sample reference list](#) (from Vanier College)

### **Other Online Resources: Documenting and Referencing Sources**

- [Using APA Style to Cite and Document Sources](#) (from Bedford St. Martin's *Online!*)
- [APA Style crib sheet](#) (from the University of Minnesota at Crookston)
- [How to Cite Online Nursing Resources Using APA Style](#) (from the University of Nevada at Reno)
- [APA Citation Style: Examples for Nursing Students](#) (from College of St. Benedict/St. John's University)
- [Citing Legal Materials in APA Style](#) (Westfield State College)

## **13. Types of APA Papers**

There are two common types of papers written in fields using APA Style: the literature review and the experimental report. Each has unique requirements concerning the sections that must be included in the paper.

### **Literature Review**

A literature review is a summary of what the scientific literature says about your specific topic or question. Often student research in APA fields falls into this category.

Your professor might ask you to write this kind of paper to demonstrate your familiarity with work in the field pertinent to the research you hope to conduct.

A literature review typically contains the following sections:

- title page
- introduction section
- list of references

Some instructors may also want you to write an abstract for a literature review, so be sure to check with them when given an assignment. Also, the length of a literature review and the required number of sources will vary based on course and instructor preferences.

**NOTE:** A literature review and an annotated bibliography are **not** synonymous. If you are asked to write an annotated bibliography, you should consult the *Publication Manual* for the APA Format for Annotated Bibliographies.

## Experimental Report

In many of the social sciences, you will be asked to design and conduct your own experimental research. If so, you will need to write up your paper using a structure that is more complex than that used for just a literature review. We have a complete resource devoted to writing an experimental report in the field of psychology here.

This structure follows the scientific method, but it also makes your paper easier to follow by providing those familiar cues that help your reader efficiently scan your information for:

- why the topic is important (covered in your introduction)
- what the problem is (also covered in your introduction)
- what you did to try to solve the problem (covered in your methods section)
- what you found (covered in your results section)
- what you think your findings mean (covered in your discussion section)

Thus an experimental report typically includes the following sections:

- title page
- abstract
- introduction
- method
- results

- discussion
- references
- appendixes (if necessary)
- tables and/or figures (if necessary)

Make sure to check the guidelines for your assignment or any guidelines that have been given to you by an editor of a journal before you submit a manuscript containing the sections listed above.

As with the literature review, the length of this report may vary by course or by journal, but most often it will be determined by the scope of the research conducted.

### **Other Papers**

If you are writing a paper that fits neither of these categories, follow the guidelines about **General Format**, consult your instructor, or look up advice in the Publication Manual.

When submitting a manuscript to a journal, make sure you follow the guidelines described in the submission policies of that publication, and include as many sections as you think are applicable to presenting your material. Remember to keep your audience in mind as you are making this decision. If certain information is particularly pertinent for conveying your research, then ensure that there is a section of your paper that adequately addresses that information.

## **14. APA Stylistics: Avoiding Bias**

Researchers who use APA often work with a variety of populations, some of whom tend to be stereotyped by the use of labels and other biased forms of language.

Therefore, APA offers specific recommendations for eliminating bias in language concerning race, disability, and sexuality.

### **Make Adjustments to Labels**

Although you should avoid labeling whenever possible, it is sometimes difficult to accurately account for the identity of your research population or individual participants without using language that can be read as biased. Making adjustments in how you use identifiers and other linguistic categories can improve the clarity of your writing and minimize the likelihood of offending your readers.

In general, you should call people what they prefer to be called, especially when

dealing with race and ethnicity. But sometimes the common conventions of language inadvertently contain biases towards certain populations - e.g. using "normal" in contrast to someone identified as "disabled." Therefore, you should be aware of how your choice of terminology may come across to your reader, particularly if they identify with the population in question.

You can find an in-depth discussion of this issue and specific recommendations for how to appropriately represent people in your text on the APA website on the following pages:

- [Removing Bias in Language: Disabilities](#)
- [Removing Bias in Language: Race & Ethnicity](#)
- [Removing Bias in Language: Sexuality](#)

### **Avoid Gendered Pronouns**

While you should always be clear about the sex identity of your participants (if you conducted an experiment), so that gender differences are obvious, you should not use gender terms when they aren't necessary. In other words, you should not use "he," "his" or "men" as generic terms applying to both sexes.

APA does not recommend replacing "he" with "he or she," "she or he," "he/she," "(s) he," "s/he," or alternating between "he" and "she" because these substitutions are awkward and can distract the reader from the point you are trying to make. The pronouns "he" or "she" inevitably cause the reader to think of only that gender, which may not be what you intend.

To avoid the bias of using gendered pronouns:

- Rephrase the sentence
- Use plural nouns or plural pronouns - this way you can use "they" or "their"
- Replace the pronoun with an article - instead of "his," use "the"
- Drop the pronoun - many sentences sound fine if you just omit the troublesome "his" from the sentence
- Replace the pronoun with a noun such as "person," "individual," "child," "researcher," etc.

For more about addressing gender in academic writing, visit the OWL's handout on [non-sexist language](#) use.

### **Find Alternative Descriptors**

To avoid unintentional biases in your language, look to the parameters of your research itself. When writing up an experimental report, describe your participants by the measures you used to classify them in the experiment, as long as the labels are not offensive.

**Example:** If you had people take a test measuring their reaction times and you were interested in looking at the differences between people who had fast reaction times and those with slow reaction times, you could call the first group the "fast reaction time group" and the second the "slow reaction time group."

Also, use adjectives to serve as descriptors rather than labels. When you use terms such as "the elderly" or "the amnesiacs," the people lose their individuality. One way to avoid this is to insert an adjective (e.g., "elderly people," "amnesic patients"). Another way is to mention the person first and follow this with a descriptive phrase (e.g., "people diagnosed with amnesia"), although it can be cumbersome to keep repeating phrases like this.

## 15. APA Stylistics: Basics

Writing in APA is more than simply learning the formula for citations or following a certain page layout. APA also includes the stylistics of your writing, from point of view to word choice.

### Point of View and Voice

When writing in APA Style, you rarely use the first person point of view ("I studied ..."). First person is not often found in APA publications unless the writer is a senior scholar who has earned some credibility to speak as an expert in the field.

You should use the third person point of view ("The study showed ...") unless you are co-authoring a paper with at least one other person, in which case you can use "we" ("Our finding included ..."). In general, you should foreground the research and not the researchers.

However, it is a common misconception that foregrounding the research requires using the passive voice ("Experiments have been conducted ..."). This is inaccurate.

APA Style encourages using the active voice ("We conducted an experiment ..."). The active voice is particularly important in experimental reports, where the subject performing the action should be clearly identified (e.g. "We interviewed ..." vs. "The

participants responded ...").

Consult the OWL handout for more on the distinction between [passive and active voice](#).

## Clarity and Conciseness

Clarity and conciseness in writing are important when conveying research in APA Style. You don't want to misrepresent the details of a study or confuse your readers with wordiness or unnecessarily complex sentences.

For clarity, be specific rather than vague in descriptions and explanations. Unpack details accurately to provide adequate information to your readers so they can follow the development of your study.

**Example:** "It was predicted that marital conflict would predict behavior problems in school-aged children."

To clarify this vague hypothesis, use parallel structure to outline specific ideas:

"The first hypothesis stated that marital conflict would predict behavior problems in school-aged children. The second hypothesis stated that the effect would be stronger for girls than for boys. The third hypothesis stated that older girls would be more affected by marital conflict than younger girls."

To be more concise, particularly in introductory material or abstracts, you should pare out unnecessary words and condense information when you can (see the OWL handout on [Conciseness](#) in academic writing for suggestions).

**Example:** The above list of hypotheses might be rephrased concisely as:  
"The authors wanted to investigate whether marital conflict would predict behavior problems in children and they wanted to know if the effect was greater for girls than for boys, particularly when they examined two different age groups of girls."

Balancing the need for clarity, which can require unpacking information, and the need for conciseness, which requires condensing information, is a challenge. Study published articles and reports in your field for examples of how to achieve this balance.

## Word Choice

You should even be careful in selecting certain words or terms. Within the social sciences, commonly used words take on different meanings and can have a significant effect on how your readers interpret your reported findings or claims. To increase clarity, avoid bias, and control how your readers will receive your information, you should make certain substitutions:

- Use terms like "participants" or "respondents" (rather than "subjects") to indicate how individuals were involved in your research
- Use terms like "children" or "community members" to provide more detail about who was participating in the study
- Use phrases like "The evidence *suggests* ..." or "Our study *indicates* ..." rather than referring to "proof" or "proves" because no single study can prove a theory or hypothesis

As with the other stylistic suggestions here, you should study the discourse of your field to see what terminology is most often used.

### **Avoiding Poetic Language**

Writing papers in APA Style is unlike writing in more creative or literary styles that draw on poetic expressions and figurative language. Such linguistic devices can detract from conveying your information clearly and may come across to readers as forced when it is inappropriately used to explain an issue or your findings.

Therefore, you should:

- minimize the amount of figurative language used in an APA paper, such as metaphors and analogies unless they are helpful in conveying a complex idea
- avoid rhyming schemes, alliteration, or other poetic devices typically found in verse
- use simple, descriptive adjectives and plain language that does not risk confusing your meaning

## **16. APA Headings**

APA Style uses a unique headings system to separate and classify paper sections. There are 5 **heading levels** in APA. *They are not, however, used in order.* Their respective formatting is as follows:

Level 1 Headings Are Centered and Require Standard Capitalization

*Level 2 Headings Are Centered and Italicized with Standard Capitalization*

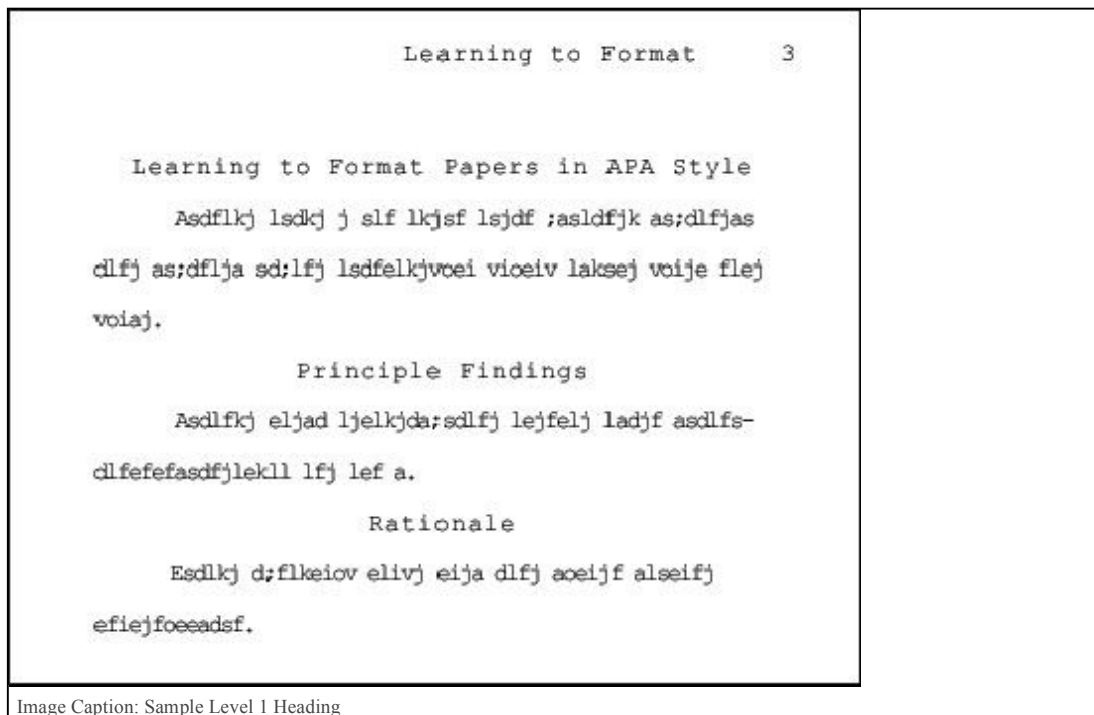
*Level 3 Headings Are Italicized, Flush-Left with Standard Capitalization*

*Level 4 headings are indented: Only first words and words after colons capitalized; end with a period.* Text follows immediately.

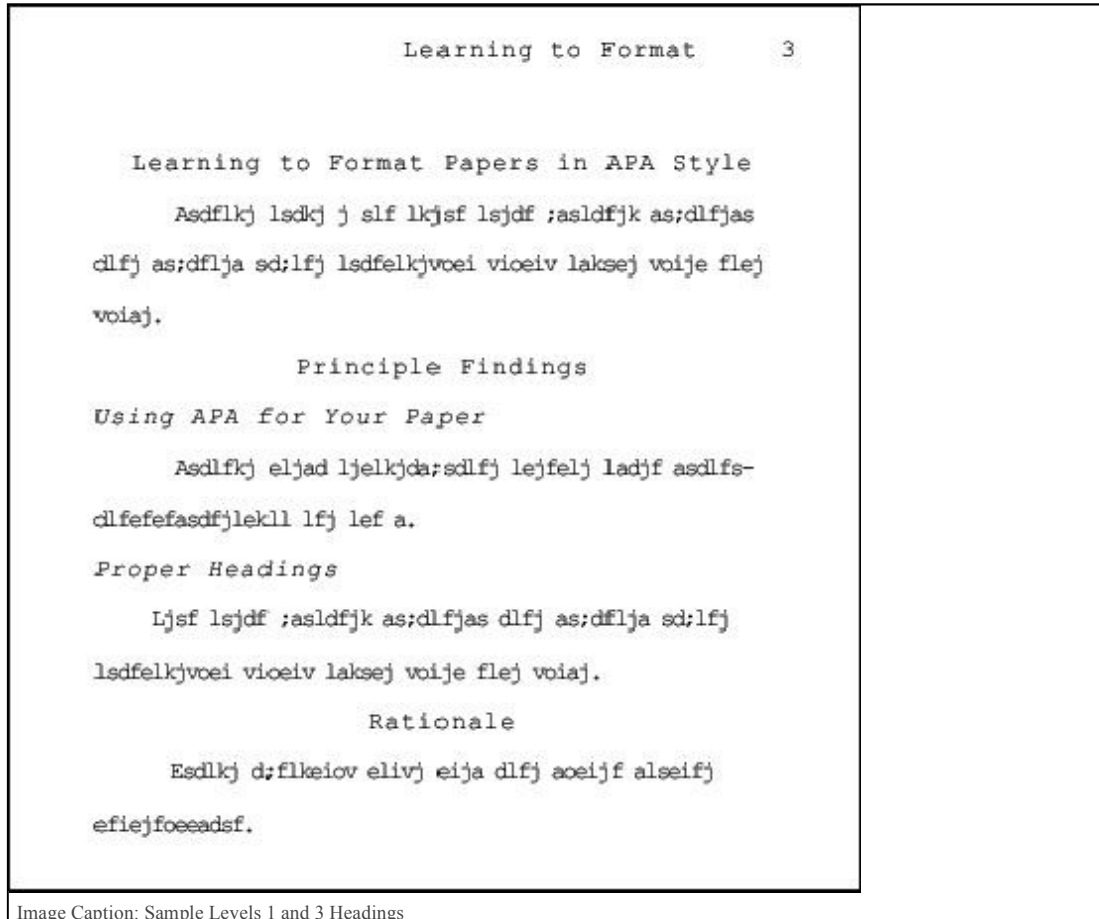
## LEVEL 5 HEADINGS ARE CENTERED IN ALL CAPS

Determine how many **headings** your paper will require. The introduction of a paper is never given its own section name (e.g. Introduction). You may only need one level of basic headings (i.e. Methods, Results, etc.). However, you may require sub-headings within those basic headings and sub-headings below those sections. Most undergraduate papers will use three levels of headings or less. After determining how many headings your paper will require, follow these guidelines:

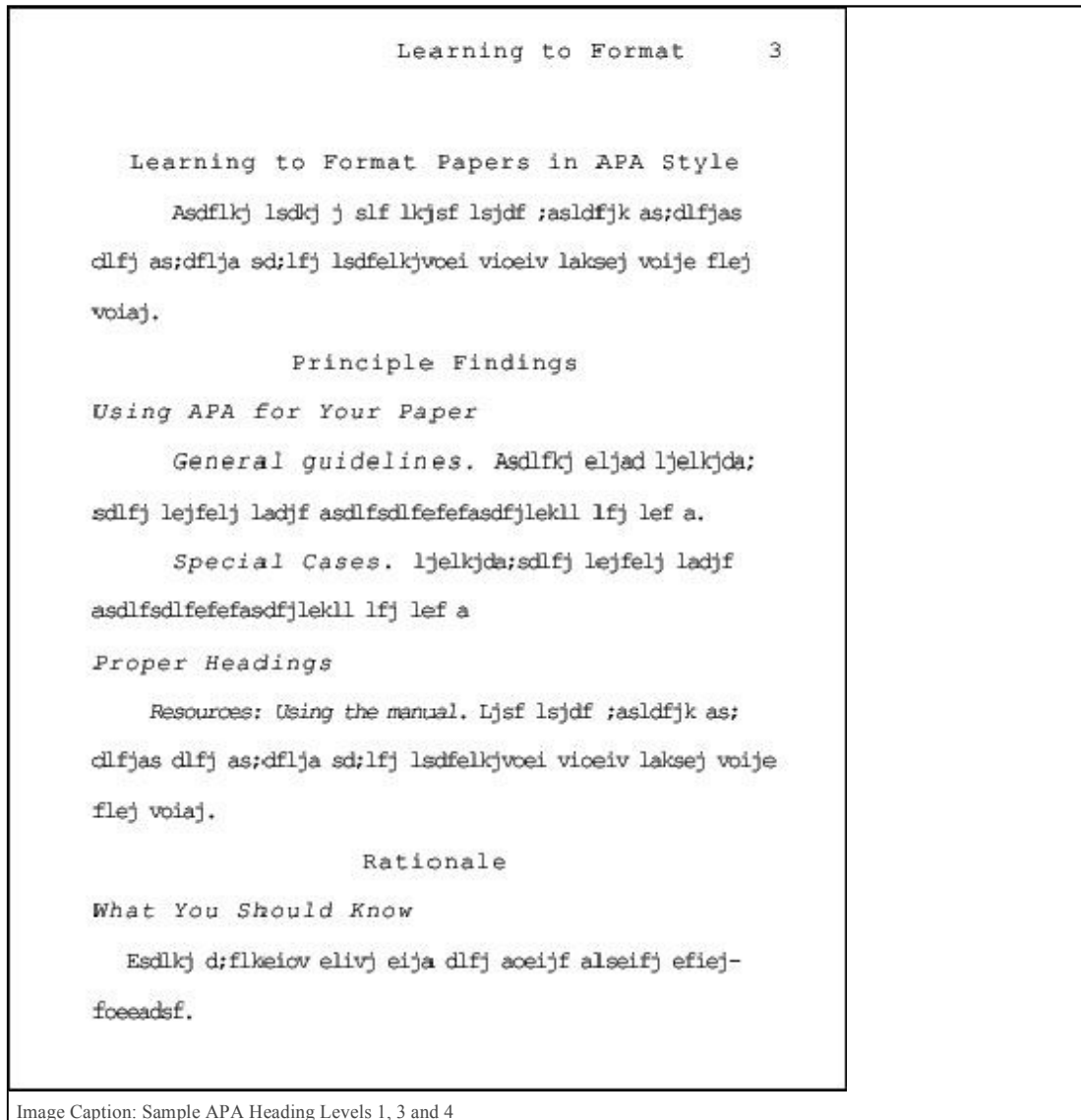
For one level of headings, use **Level 1**. In the example below, we use “Principle Findings” and “Rationale” as our only headings.



**For two levels of headings, use Levels 1 and 3.** Level 3 will act as a sub-heading to Level 1. In the example below, “Principle Findings,” a Level 1 heading, requires two subsections with Level 3 formatting “Using APA for Your Paper” and “Proper Headings.” The next section of the paper, “Rationale,” returns to Level 1 formatting.



**For three levels of headings, use Levels 1, 3, and 4.** Level 1 serves as the main heading. Level 3 goes under Level 1, and Level 4 goes under Level 3. In the example below, we “General guidelines.” and “Special cases.” as Level 4 headings under our existing Level 3 heading “Using APA for your paper. Neither “Proper Headings” (Level 3) or “Rationale” (Level 1) require additional headings at this time.



**For four levels of headings, use Levels 1, 2, 3, and 4.** Level 1 acts as the main heading. Level 2 works under Level 1. Level 4 works under Level 3. In the example below we break up Level 1’s “Principle Findings” into two Level 2 sections “Using APA in the University” and “Using APA in the Field.” Levels 3 and 4 follow Level 2.

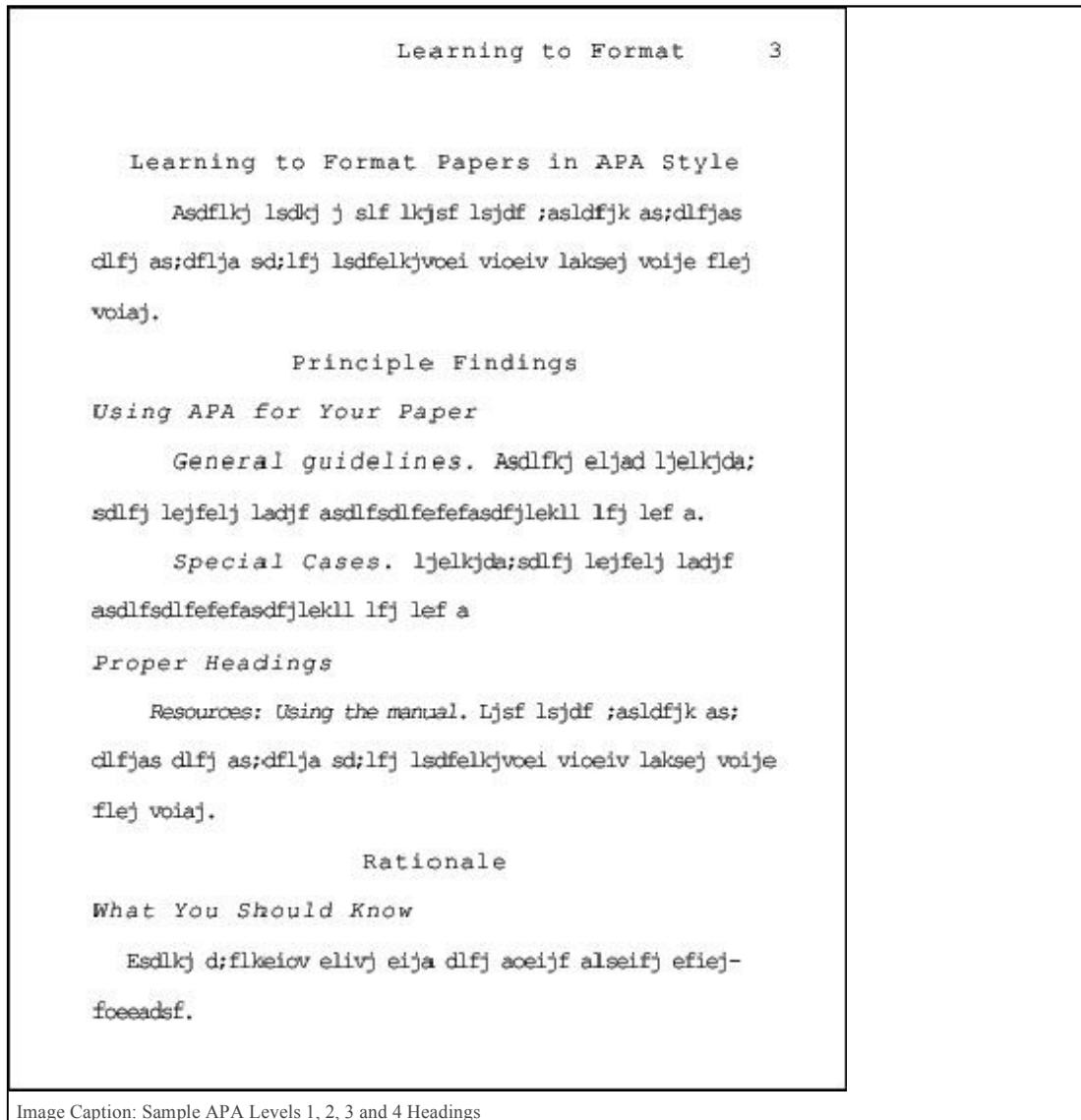


Image Caption: Sample APA Levels 1, 2, 3 and 4 Headings

**For five levels of headings, use Levels 5, 1, 2, 3, and 4.** Level 5 serves as the main heading. Levels 1, 2, 3, and 4 then work in order. Level 5 adds an upper level. Often this level is the title as in the example below. This method is employed more in publishing than in standard university papers.

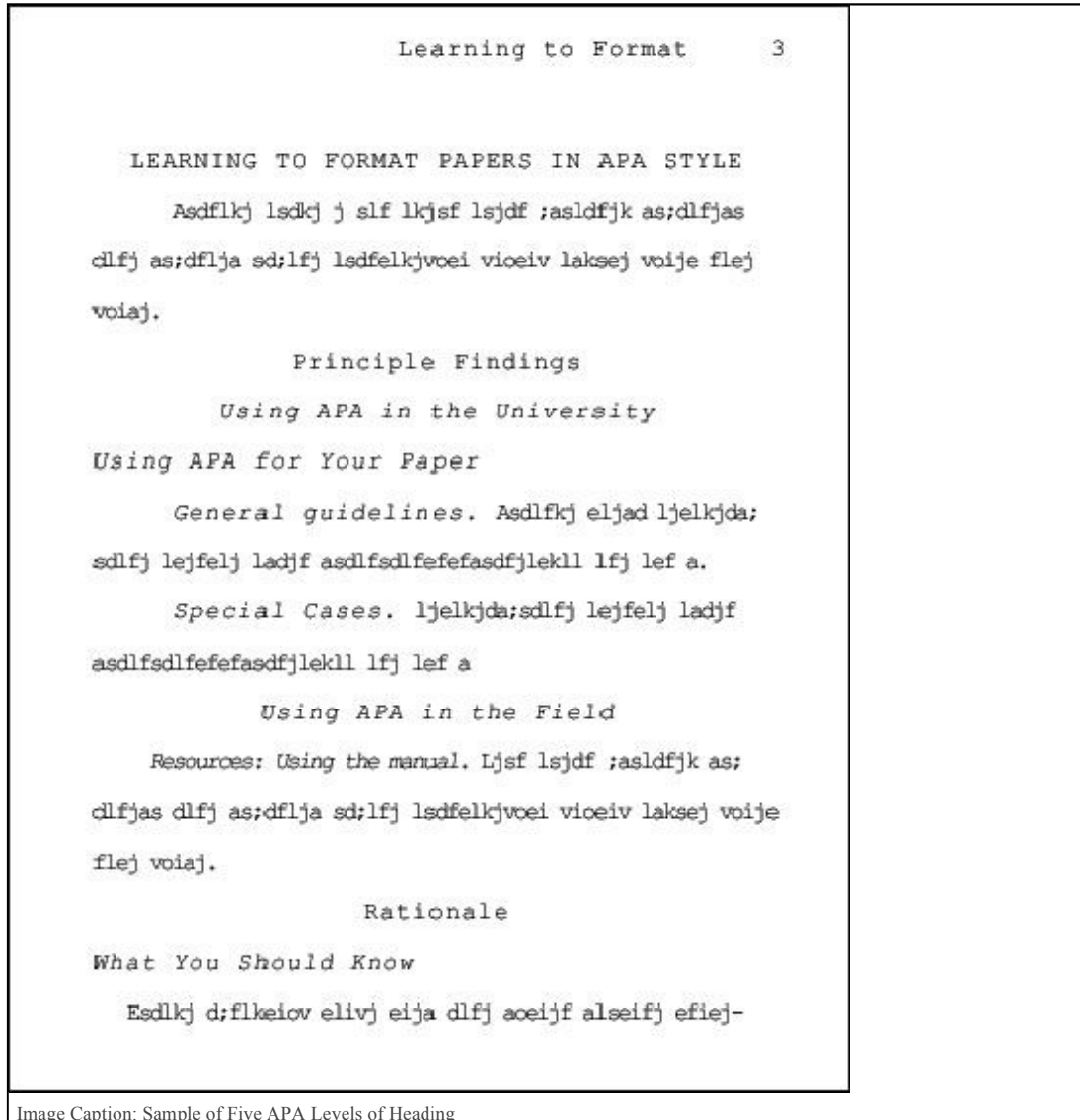


Image Caption: Sample of Five APA Levels of Heading

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