

APA Formatting Guidelines

APA style is a writing style that has a distinct format both within the body of the work and in the reference page. This style typically includes a title page, abstract, and specific heading levels; in addition, the style emphasizes parenthetical citations. While APA style is most commonly used in the behavioral and social sciences, there are many other disciplines that use this style as well.

General Formatting

- 1” margins on each side of the paper
- Double spaced
- Page number in the upper right-hand corner (part of the header)
- Recommended fonts are as follows:
 - Times New Roman, 12pt
 - Calibri, 11pt
 - Arial, 11pt
 - Lucida Sans Unicode, 10pt
 - Georgia, 11pt

Title Page

Per the 7th Edition of the *APA Publication Manual*, papers no longer have a “running head” notation in the page header. Student papers also do not include the title in the header of the title page—only the page number in the upper right-hand corner. (Professional papers do include the title in the header.)

- The title page will be numbered “1.”
- The CENTER of the page will include the full title of the paper (which will be **BOLDED**), the name of the student, the department and affiliated university, title of the course, name of the professor, and the date.
- The details listed above are included in the APA-specified title page format, but students are encouraged to follow the guidelines of their professor (as they may vary).
 - Some instructors will require additional information.
 - If no guidelines are given, students should default to using the format provided here (from the *APA Publication Manual*).
- An example of the title page is provided on the next page.

The Effect of Early Childhood Trauma on Childhood Development

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PSYC 100W: Writing Workshop

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Abstract

An abstract is a brief summary of the complete paper used for quick reference. The abstract serves as culmination of important findings, data, and evidence in a paper. Because it includes all the salient points of a paper in a short paragraph, it should be written thoughtfully. To make it easier to include all aspects of a paper, write the abstract last!

- The abstract will begin on the second page of the paper, which will be numbered “2.”
- Write “Abstract” in the center of the top of the page, in **BOLD** title case.
- The abstract should typically be in one single paragraph; do not indent the first line.
- Typically, abstracts are limited to 250 words or less. This word count may vary slightly depending on the parameters of the assignment or publication.
- To learn more in-depth information about writing an abstract, refer to our [Abstracts handout](#).

Body

Body paragraphs are the building units of a paper. In APA style, the first line of each paragraph is indented 0.5 inch from the left margin. Make sure to use the tab key and not the spacebar to create the indent. You can also use the ruler at the top of your document.

Levels of Headings

Headings in an APA-formatted paper serve as a way to organize and clarify ideas. The headings will not be numbered. There are five different levels of headings, but how many are used depends on the paper/assignment. One significant change in the 7th Edition of the *APA Publication Manual* is that all headings are in title-case text (meaning that all major words within the heading are capitalized). Note that for heading levels four and five, the regular body text continues on the same line.

First level	Centered, Bold, Title-Case Heading
Second level	Flush Left, Bold, Title-Case Heading
Third level	<i>Flush Left, Bold, Italic, Title-Case Heading</i>
Fourth level	Indented, Bold, Title-Case Heading with a Period.
Fifth level	<i>Indented, Bold, Italic, Title-Case Heading with a Period.</i>

<p style="text-align: center;">Literature Review (Level 1)</p> <p>Social Impacts of Trauma (Level 2)</p> <p><i>Relationships with Peers (Level 3)</i></p> <p><i>Relationships with Parents (Level 3)</i></p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Lack of Secure Attachments. (Level 4)</p> <p>Emotional Impacts of Trauma (Level 2)</p> <p><i>Inability to Communicate Emotional Needs (Level 3)</i></p>

Citation Guide

What to Cite?

- Anything that is not your idea and is not common knowledge
- Quotes (using quotations marks)
- Paraphrased information
- Anything from another source (graphs, tables, social posts, videos, images, etc.)

Paraphrasing vs. Quoting

Paraphrasing and quoting are two ways to reference someone else's work. As the name suggests, quoting includes quotation marks and indicates that you are using the exact same sentence structure and word choice of another author. In other words, it consists of copying and pasting a piece of information from a paper into your work.

“And all the lives we ever lived and all the lives to be are full of trees and changing leaves”
(Woolf, 1989).

On the other hand, when paraphrasing a piece of information, you should fully rephrase it in your own words. As a general rule, APA style encourages paraphrased information instead of direct quotations. For more information about quoting and paraphrasing, refer to the [Plagiarism: Understanding Quoting, Paraphrasing, and Citing handout](#).

Block Quotations

When a quotation is over 40 words, **block quotes** are used. When using block quotes, make sure you follow these steps:

- Offset the quote from the regular text.
- Indent half an inch from the left margin.
- Do NOT use quotation marks.
- Include parenthetical citations at the end, *after* the period.

Urban food production, comprising urban agriculture, community gardens, allotment gardens, and household gardens, is an important component of urban ecosystems.

There is growing interest in urban gardens as part of what the local food movement sees as an alternative to the mainstream food system, based on the assumption that they cannot only contribute to improving human physical, psychological and social health, but to environmental health as well. (Cleveland et al., 2016)

Paraphetical vs. In-Text/Narrative Citations

There are two ways to cite paraphrased information: using paraphetical or in-text/narrative citations.

<i>Narrative Citations</i>	<i>Paraphetical Citations</i>
Name(s) and date are embedded within the text of the sentence.	Name(s) and date appear at the end of the sentence in parentheses.
Lam (2011) concluded that today more children prefer to play games on electronic devices than in person with others.	Today, more children prefer to play games on electronic devices than in person with others (Lam, 2011) .
Arden (2016) discovered that “many college students study well past midnight the day before an exam” (p. 321) because students often multitask on social media while studying.	Compared to college students’ study habits in the 1920s, today, “...college students study well past midnight the day before an exam” (Arden, 2016, p. 321) .
<i>Rules to Remember</i>	
Narrative citations spell out the word “and” when including multiple authors.	Paraphetical citations use the ampersand “&” when including multiple authors.
<i>For sources with two authors, always include both authors’ names:</i>	
Anza and Rivas (2014) noted that...	... (Anza & Rivas, 2014)
<i>For sources with three or more authors, use only the first author’s name followed by “et al.” in every citation, even the first:</i>	
Walls et al. (2016) discovered...	... (Walls et al., 2016)
<i>For sources with three or more authors, only list more authors’ last names to avoid ambiguity, e.g., other sources with similar last names:</i>	
Walls, Smith, et al. (2016) discovered...	... (Walls, Smith, et al., 2016)
Walls, Miller, et al. (2016) discovered...	... (Walls, Miller, et al., 2016)

Citing AI (Fundamentals)

Because AI tools (such as ChatGPT) cannot reproduce the same answer when given a prompt, quoting, citing, and/or retrieving AI-generated information is complex. However, there are a few ways you can cite AI in your text:

- Quote generative AI using quotation marks and explaining the input (prompt) given.
- Add generative AI answers in your appendices (especially useful for longer answers).

For more information about citing AI, refer to our [AI Writer Toolbox](#) and [guidelines from the APA Style Blog](#).

Reference Page

The reference page is the last section of a paper if there are no appendices. It can be multiple pages long depending on your number of sources.

- Write “References” in the center of the top of the page, in **BOLD** title case.
- Organize your sources by alphabetical order of the author’s last name (or first author’s last name if multiple authors).
- Use hanging indent (i.e., all lines are indented beside the first line of each source).

This table offers a few examples of specific source types. For a more comprehensive citation guide, refer to our [APA Citation Guide, 7th Edition handout](#).

YouTube	Spicy Moustache. (2023, July 2). <i>6 FLOWERS to make your own MEDICINE</i> . [Video]. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vfTTaCNkQZs&t=349s
Podcast Episode	Graber, C. & Twilley, N. (Hosts). (2025, April 8). Seed oil scare: the curious case of canola [Audio podcast episode]. In <i>Gastropod</i> . https://gastropod.com/seed-oil-scare-the-curious-case-of-canola/
ChatGPT	OpenAI. (2025). <i>ChatGPT</i> (version GPT-4o) [Large language model]. https://chat.openai.com/chat