



## APA Checklist

This handout provides a brief checklist of the most important elements of formatting a paper according to the guidelines of the APA style manual. However, this handout should not be considered comprehensive. More comprehensive coverage can be found in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA)*, 6<sup>th</sup> edition. More sources are available online as well, many of which are linked from the library's APA Style Guide: <http://library.an.edu/ufairfax/apastyle>.

### Structure

The essay or paper includes four major sections:

1. Title Page
2. Abstract
3. Main Body
4. References

#### Title Page

1. Contains title of paper, author's name, and institutional affiliation, in that order.
2. Double-spaced
3. Contains a page header which includes the title of your paper and is not more than 50 characters long. The title page header should contain the phrase "Running head:" before the title.
  - a. Example: Running head: TITLE OF YOUR PAPER

#### Abstract

1. Contains a page header (remove the phrase "Running head:").
  - a. Example: TITLE OF YOUR PAPER
2. The word "Abstract" is centered on the top of the page.
3. The next line begins the abstract, which summarizes of the key points of your research.
  - a. The first line of your abstract should not be indented; all subsequent paragraphs should be indented regularly.

### Citations

#### General:

1. Citations are included in each sentence where a reference source is used.
2. All sources which were used and cited within the paper are included in the reference list.

#### In-text citations:

1. Author and publication date are included.
  - a. Example, (Smith, 2010).
2. Proper nouns are capitalized.
3. Titles of works are capitalized.



4. Short quotations adhere to the following rules:
  - a. Direct quotes are enclosed within quotation marks.
  - b. Citations include author, year of publication, and page number for reference.
    - i. Example: (Smith, 2010, p.75).
5. Long quotations (40 words or more) adhere to the following rules:
  - a. Quote is placed in a free-standing block of lines.
  - b. The entire quote block is indented ½ inch from the left and right margins.
  - c. No quotation marks are used around the quote.
  - d. All text is double-spaced.
  - e. Parenthetical citation is included after the closing punctuation mark.

### **Reference Page**

1. The reference page is double-spaced.
2. The title, "Reference," is centered.
  - a. The reference page may have any of the following titles, depending the requirements laid out by instructors: "References," "Works Cited," or "Bibliography."
3. All sources listed in the reference list have been used at least once in the paper.
4. All sources on the list include:
  - a. Author
  - b. Publication date
  - c. Title
  - d. Publication Information
  - e. Other relevant retrieval information
5. Every line after the first line of each entry in the list is indented ½ inch from margin. This is called a hanging indentation.
6. All references have been checked for proper punctuation, formatting, parentheses and brackets, and appropriate retrieval information, particularly for electronic sources.
7. Reference sources are alphabetized by the last name of the first author of each work.
  - a. For multiple resources by the same author: list resources chronologically, with the earliest published work listed first.
  - b. If a work has no author, use the title of the work to alphabetize it.

### **Additional Resources**

For more information on formatting your paper and citing sources, please visit the following sources:

- Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL): <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>
- University of Fairfax APA Style Guide: <http://library.an.edu/ufairfax/apastyle>
- University of Fairfax Writing Center: <http://library.an.edu/ufairfax/writingresearch>

Special thanks to the [Purdue Online Writing Lab \(OWL\)](#) and the [Walden University Writing Center](#) for inspiration for the checklist.