American Psychological Association (APA) Format for Research Papers

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Abstract

This sample paper shows the basic rules for formatting research papers following the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (APA), sixth edition. Included are examples of general formatting rules, in-text citations and reference lists. For additional information refer to print versions of the complete *Publication Manual*, available in the Library & Learning Centers, or an online resource available from the Library & Learning Center website: [http://libguides.mjc.edu/CiteAPA](http://libguides.mjc.edu/CiteAPA) Note that this sample paper has been condensed; actual papers should have separate title, abstract and reference pages in addition to the body of the paper itself.
The Online Writing Lab (OWL) at Purdue University (2010) describes the general formatting for papers following APA style guidelines. Papers should have at least four primary sections—Title Page, Abstract, Main Body and References—written double-spaced in 12 pt. Times New Roman font. Margins should be 1” with indents used to start each paragraph, except for the Abstract, which should not be indented.

In-text citations include “the last name of the author and the year of publication” (Axelrod & Cooper, 2010, p. 778). However, Axelrod and Cooper explain that the page number is optional when referring to an idea in another work rather than using a direct quotation. Note that in-text citations can take various forms, such as a concluding parenthesis or a signal phrase with the author’s name.

References

- Arrange references alphabetically by the first author’s last name.
- Articles, books & webpages: capitalize the first letter of the first word and proper nouns.
- Journals: maintain punctuation and capitalization used by the journal.


For additional help, please make an appointment with a tutor or ask a librarian

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