Five Minute APA Guide

3 EDITION

INTRODUCING

COMMUNICATION

RESEARCH

PATHS OF INQUIRY

DONALD TREADWELL

Five Minute APA Guide

APA (American Psychological Association) is a publication style commonly used in the social sciences and is likely to be the style required for reporting your literature reviews and research in communication. Other publication styles you may encounter include Chicago and MLA (Modern Language Association). There are also modified versions of APA. For example, some journals may use what is essentially APA style, but use the full name of the authors rather than initials, as APA style requires.

One purpose of a literature review is to introduce the work of other scholars in the field in order to help you make a case for the research of interest to you. The fastest way to introduce your readers to these other scholars, or at least their work, is to cite their work accurately, succinctly, and consistently so that readers can easily access it. This is the reason for using APA and other styles.

Citing scholarly material accurately is essential, especially as more than one version of a published paper may exist, as web publications become increasingly common, and as new ways of referencing materials, such as the DOI (digital object identifier) emerge.

Structuring Your Paper

Sections

An APA-style paper incorporates the following major sections, and uses a centered format for the eight headings shown below. Note that there is no specific "Literature Review" heading; logically, your literature review is part of the introduction.

Title Page
Abstract
Introduction
Method
Results
Discussion
References
Appendices

Type your entire paper double-spaced with a half-inch indent beginning each paragraph. Text is aligned left with a "ragged right" margin, and use a typeface like Times New Roman, in a 12 point size.

Number each page, top right, beginning with the title page as page 1.

At the top of the title page, position an uppercase running head that will continue on each page through to the end of the paper. Put the full title of the paper followed on a new line by the name(s) and affiliation(s) of the author(s). Below that you may add author information like contact information.

The following page—the Abstract page—should have a one- or two-paragraph summary of your paper that falls below the running head you set up at the top of the title page. Situate the abstract under the centered heading title: "Abstract."

Begin the "References" section and each "Appendix" on a new page. Label graphic content, such as tables or figures with a summary label like "Figure 1: Use of Social Media by Country" and place each on its own page, after the "References" section. Refer specifically to these labels when you discuss the tables or figures in your paper.

When submitting a manuscript for publication, situate tables and other similar content together at the end of your manuscript to allow an editor to decide their correct placement position in the final paper. You may include instructions that tell the editor where to place each graphic item in the final, published version.

For class assignments, you may be asked to locate tables and other such content in the body copy of your paper.

Headings

As shown in Exhibit A.1, APA uses five levels of headings to indicate the relative significance and relationships of the different elements of your paper.

Exhibit A.1. APA Heading Levels and Styles

Level of Heading	Style of Heading
1	**Centered, Boldface, Uppercase and Lowercase Heading**
2	**Flush Left, Boldface, Uppercase and Lowercase Heading**
3	**Indented, boldface, lowercase paragraph heading ending with a period.**
4	***Indented, boldface, italicized, lowercase paragraph heading ending with a period.***
5	*Indented, italicized, lowercase paragraph heading ending with a period.*

Heading levels 3, 4, and 5 begin a paragraph; that is, the paragraph text begins on the same line, immediately following the heading.

Each heading summarizes or indicates the material substance of the paragraphs following it, and the relative importance of those paragraphs. The more extensive the paper, the more likely it is that you will need to use four or even five heading levels, but this is not an APA requirement. Shorter papers with a simple structure may require only two levels of heading.

In-Text Citations

APA uses an "author-date" style in the body of the text. This gives you the advantage of not having to plan for footnotes or to use a numbering system that has to be changed every time the reference list changes. At its simplest, the style is as follows: (Author(s) Last Name(s), year of publication)—for example, (Rowden, 2015).

When more than one author is cited in text, you use an "and" or an "&"depending on whether or not the authors are cited in a signal phrase or in parentheses:

Signal phrase: Rowden *and* Organ (2015) discuss the significance of birth order in family communication.

Parenthesis: The significance of birth order in family communication has recently been reviewed (Rowden *&* Organ, 2015).

Direct Quotes

Frequently, citations like the examples above are all that you need to direct readers to the source of your information. Sometimes, however, an author's words are important enough that you want to bring them to your readers directly. It is then necessary to quote the words exactly and to provide the specific source and page number(s) (identified by "p.") where the quote can be found. There are two ways to handle direct quotes.

For short quotes, under 40 words, use the following style:

According to Rowden and Organ (2015), "Communication and birth order studies lie at the intersection of nature and nurture" (p. 15).

For quotations over 40 words in length, start the quotation on a new line and make it a separate block of text indented a half-inch from the regular margin. Omit the quotation marks. Unlike the short quote above, the page citation (p. 15) comes after the closing period in the quote. For example:

According to Rowden and Organ (2015),

Historically, the nature/nurture issue as it relates to communication style and human behavior more generally has had scholars placing themselves in an "either/or" camp. There have been advocates of behavior as inborn traits and advocates of behavior as learned experiences. While the debate continues, as in explaining intelligence for example, most researchers today accept behavior as a product of both nature and nurture—genetics and environment. (p. 15)

The Reference List

Under the heading "References" at the end of your paper, but before any "Appendices" section and any figures and tables, is the location for the full details of the material you cited in the body of your paper. Full citations are formatted with a hanging indent, as in the fictitious examples below, for ease of finding the authors' names.

Rowden, E. S., & Organ, C. S. (2015). Does birth order explain conversational dominance in siblings? *Journal of Birth Order and Communication, 3*(4), 123–134.

In the example above, we have the authors' last names and initials (no first names), the title of the article (in lowercase except for the first letter), the name of the journal in which the article was published (in italics), the volume and issue numbers, and the page numbers.

The DOI and Electronic Content

An classification sometimes added to the traditional citation style is the DOI or **digital object identifier**. The DOI is used for citing electronic sources. It provides a unique identifier for items of electronic content so that if the item's location on the Web changes, it can still be found using its DOI. Where a DOI is available, you do not need to supply Web addresses for an item. [

For example, if the above article is available on the Web and has a DOI, the citation becomes

Rowden, E. S., & Organ, C. S. (2015). Does birth order explain conversational dominance in

siblings? *Journal of Birth Order and Communication, 3*(4), 123–134. doi:12.3456/7890/-

4321.12.3.456

If the same article is available on the Web, but with no DOI, the citation becomes

Rowden, E. S., & Organ, C. M. (2015). Does birth order explain conversational dominance in

siblings? *Journal of Birth Order and Communication, 3*(4), 123–134. Retrieved from

http://www.joboac.edu

Books, e-Books, Websites, Film, Video, Social Media, and More

You may need to cite many different resources—especially, perhaps, in the communication field with its

studies of film, television, gaming, advertising, social media, and the like. Exhibit A.2 provides a brief

explanatory citation guide for a few of these formats. Note that personal communications (see the Szydlo

example) are handled differently

than other retrievable content.

Exhibit A.2. How to Cite Nonprint Media

In Text	*In "References" Section*
Book: (Treadwell, 2016)	Treadwell, D. (2016). *Introducing communication research: Paths of inquiry* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
Web page, no author: ("New research funding," 2016)	New research funding available for student projects. (2016, March 15). *Research News*. Retrieved March 23, 2016, from http://researchnews.com/news/ A retrieval date is provided because the source material may change over time.
Newspaper article: (Manjoo, 2014)	Manjoo, F. (2014, July 9). Urban legends told online: "Slender Man" story and the new urban legends. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com It's this simple for a stable, searchable site, such as *The New York Times*. A retrieval date is not provided because the site is presumed stable, searchable, and unlikely to change.

Facebook status update: (McLeod, 2015)	McLeod, J. H. A. [James]. (2015, March 27). Just found out about the funding available for student research in communication. Check it out at http://researchnews.com/news/ [Facebook status update]. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/jamesmcleod/posts/12345679010111213
E-mail: (B. M. Szydlo, personal communication, December 25, 2015)	No citation! Do not cite this e-mail under "References." Q: Why not? A: Because reference lists contain only retrievable content. Do not reference content people cannot access. A personal communication cannot be retrieved, so it does not get listed under "References." Unpublished person-to-person communications should be explained in the body copy in parentheses, but not listed in the Reference file.
Film: (Able & Baker, 2015)	Able, B. C. (Producer), & Baker, D. E. (Director). (2015). *APA style: The movie* [Motion picture]. United States: Educational Pictures Inc.

For blogs, podcasts, wikis, software, television, radio, e-books, and other formats, see the APA tutorials and other resources at http://www.apastyle.org/learn/index.aspx.