

APA Style Guidelines:

What's the Difference between APA 6 and APA 7?

The American Psychological Association (APA) published the 7th Edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* in October 2019. This guide will compare APA 6 and APA 7 so that APA updates can be easily understood for quick adaptation.

Please note: your institution or instructor may still be using the 6th Edition of APA. Be sure to carefully review your syllabus, assignment instructions, and professor expectations to determine which edition you should be using.

	APA 6	APA 7
General Layout	<i>General layout changes include increased flexibility regarding fonts, a change in the running head, and an update in heading formatting to improve readability</i>	
Title Page	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Include the following identifying information: full title, your name, and the name of the college that you attend - Identifying information should be centered, all in regular font (i.e. not boldface or italics) and double-spaced - Include page number and Running Head - Running head should be formatted as following in the header of the title page (Running head: TITLE OF ESSAY) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Include the following identifying information: full title, your name, the name of the college that you attend, your course title, your instructor, and the due date - Title of paper should be boldfaced and separated by a double space line break from the rest of the information - Include a page number in the top, right-hand corner - Running head is now optional. See below.
Page Numbering	Add page numbers to the top, right-hand corner of each page (including the title page)	Same as APA 6
Running Head	<p>Add a version of the title to the header of each page. The letters should all be capitalized, and there should be no more than 50 characters.</p> <p>Include "Running head:" before the header on the title page (but omit these words on all other pages).</p>	<p>The running head is now optional. However, your instructor may still require this for your paper. Double check your assignment details!</p> <p>If required by your instructor, add a shortened version of the title to the header of each page. You do not need to include "Running head" before the header on the title page (it now contains only a page number and the (shortened) paper title. If required, use full capitalization, keep the length under 50 characters, and include the header on every page.</p>
Text Style	Use a readable font such as Times New Roman. Font size must be 12 pt.	Use an accessible font throughout your entire document such as Times New Roman (12 pt. font), Calibri (11 pt. font), or Arial (11 pt. font).

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Spacing	All papers must be double-spaced with 1" margins on all sides	Same as APA 6
Paragraphs	Align to left (do not justify). Indent the first line of every new paragraph. Do not add an extra line break between paragraphs.	Same as APA 6
Section Labels	Requires section labels to be on a separate line at the top of the page. These section labels should be centered and use Title Capitalization. Section labels should NOT be bold, underline, or use quotation marks for the title. Labels include: "Author Note," "Abstract," "References," "Footnotes," and "Appendix XX." Note that the paper title on the first page is technically a section label.	Section labels essentially stay the same, except they should be placed in boldface . As in APA 6, do NOT underline or use quotation marks.
Abstract	Start the abstract on a new page after the title page and include the page header. On the first line of the page, center the word "Abstract" (no bold, formatting, italics, underlining, or quotation marks). The abstract is a double-spaced, single paragraph of 150–250 words. The paragraph is not indented. Summarize the key points of the paper including the research topic, research questions, participants, methods, results, data analysis, and conclusions. Writers often list their papers' keywords under the abstract. To add this, type <i>Keywords:</i> and list them without italics. Indent the keywords line as if you were beginning a new paragraph.	Requires the use of boldface for the word "Abstract," which should still appear centered on the first line of the page. All other rules for APA 6 apply.
Page Order	APA style uses the following order for a paper: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Title Page 2. Abstract (if necessary) 3. Text of Paper 4. References 5. Optional Elements (in order: Footnotes, Tables, Figures, Appendices) 	Same as APA 6
Headings	<i>APA style has five heading levels. Writers can use as many headings as they deem necessary for their papers. Levels may not be skipped. APA 7 has updated heading levels 3-5 to improve readability.</i>	

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Level 1	<p>Level 1 Headings Are Centered and Written in Boldface Using Title Capitalization</p> <p>Begin a new paragraph below the Level 1 heading.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not use “Introduction” as the title of your first heading, as it is assumed. 	Same as APA 6
Level 2	<p>Level 2 Headings are Flushed Left and Written in Boldface Using Uppercase and Lowercase Heading</p> <p>Indent to begin the paragraph below the Level 2 heading.</p>	Same as APA 6
Level 3	<p>Level 3 headings are indented as a paragraph heading and written in boldface using lowercase; they end with a period. Start the paragraph after the Level 3 heading.</p>	<p><i>Level 3 Headings are Flush Left, Written in Boldface with Italics Using Title Capitalization.</i></p> <p>Begin a new paragraph below the Level 3 heading.</p>
Level 4	<p><i>Level 4 headings are indented as a paragraph heading, italicized, and written in boldface using lowercase; they end with a period.</i> Start the paragraph after the Level 4 heading.</p>	<p>Level 4 Headings are Indented as a Paragraph Heading, Written in Boldface Using Title Capitalization, and end with a period. Start the paragraph on the same line after the Level 4 heading.</p>
Level 5	<p><i>Level 5 headings are indented as a paragraph heading, italicized, and written using lowercase; they end with a period.</i> Start the paragraph after the Level 5 heading.</p>	<p>Level 5 Headings are Indented as a Paragraph Heading, Written in Boldface with Italics, Using Title Capitalization, and end with a period. Start the paragraph on the same line after the Level 5 heading.</p>
General Conventions	<i>APA 7 requires less spaces after periods and provides more guidance around inclusive language. Notably, “they” is recognized in APA 7 as a singular pronoun.</i>	
Punctuation Spacing	Requires two spaces at the end of a sentence.	Only requires one space at the end of a sentence.
Punctuation	<u>Comma</u> : requires the serial, or Oxford, comma when writing series. For example, cities in Spain include Madrid, Barcelona, and Valencia.	Same as APA 6

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Punctuation (cont.)	<p><u>Period:</u> required when abbreviating names (e.g. J. W. Smith) but not with acronyms (e.g. APA, IQ, PhD, etc.)</p> <p><u>Quotation Marks:</u> quotation marks required with direct quotes, book chapter titles, or, periodical article titles. <i>Place commas or periods inside the quotation mark.</i></p>	
Italics	Use italics for titles of books, reports, webpages, periodicals, and other stand-alone works.	Same as APA 6
Numbers	Use numerals to express numbers more than 10. Numbers less than 10 should be written in text (e.g. nine, one, etc.). When making a number a plural (e.g. 1970s), simply add an “-s” or “-es”; do not use an apostrophe.	Same as APA 6. See APA Style Guide – 6 th or 7 th Edition for more on numbers.
Inclusive and Bias-free Language	<p><u>Gender:</u> Refrain from using gender terms when they are not necessary. Writers should not write “he,” “men,” or “his” when the sex of a human is not clear. Recommended methods of avoiding gender bias include rephrasing sentences, using nouns, or dropping the pronoun if possible.</p>	<p><u>Gender:</u> Use terms people use to describe themselves. Avoid the use of “man” in occupations (e.g. “Policeman” vs. “Police Officer”).</p> <p>APA 7 recognizes and recommends using the singular they. Avoid using “he or she,” “he/she,” “(s)he,” or other combinations.</p> <p><u>Disability:</u> APA encourages person-first or identify-first language, depending on the preference of the people the author refers to. Person-first language emphasizes the person (e.g. “a youth with epilepsy”). Identify-first language emphasizes the disability (e.g. “an amputee”).</p> <p><u>Race & Ethnicity:</u> APA suggests categorizing participants as specifically as possible (e.g. “Korean American” vs. “Asian American”). Commonly accepted designations such as census categories should be used. Racial and ethnic groups are proper nouns and should be capitalized. For example: “Black,” “White,” Native American,” “Hispanic,” etc.</p> <p><u>Sexual Orientation:</u> APA requires the term “sexual orientation” instead of “sexual preference.” APA encourages using self-identified terms when available; common terms include gay, straight, bisexual, queer, pansexual, lesbian, etc. APA recommends using LGBTQ+, sexual and gender minorities, or other abbreviations when referring to groups.</p>

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Inclusive and Bias-free Language <i>(cont.)</i>		Socioeconomic Status: Socioeconomic status (SES) includes not just income information, but also education and occupation. Avoid broad terminology that carries negative connotation such as “the homeless,” “inner-city,” or “welfare reliant.” Instead, use specific, person-first language (e.g. people who are homeless). APA encourages including racial or ethnic descriptions with SES details when appropriate to avoid unintentional negative stereotyping based on historical descriptors.
Lists	When writing numbered or bulleted lists, writers should incorporate a comma, semicolon, or period after each item. They should add periods—but no parentheses—after numbers. In terms of in-text lists, writers should use letters within parentheses.	When writing numbered or bulleted lists, writers should use parallel structure for each item. Lettered Lists: APA requires parentheses when using letters with a series. Commas or semicolons should be used between each item in the list. Numbered Lists: APA requires complete sentences for numbered lists. Bulleted Lists: APA uses bulleted lists to avoid the perception of importance/priority connotated in numbered lists. Bulleted lists may be comprised of complete sentences or phrases. If a bulleted list contains phrases, each bullet should begin with a lowercase letter. APA allows the use of bulleted lists with or without punctuation.
Citation	<i>APA 7 has changed a few things about citing sources within text, including shortening the formatting for citing three or more authors</i>	
One Author	The standard format for all internal citations is (Author, Year). Narrative: Smith (2003) formulated... Parenthetical: (Smith, 2003, p. 100)	Same as APA 6
Two Authors	Name both authors in the signal phrase or in parentheses each time you cite the work. Use "and" between the authors' names within the text and use “&” in parentheses. Narrative: Smith and Taylor (2003) stated... Parenthetical: (Smith & Taylor, 2003)	Same as APA 6

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Three to Five Authors	<p>Write out all last names in the first in-text citation:</p> <p>Narrative: Bills, Cummings, and Sabine (1986) argue...</p> <p>Parenthetical: (Bills, Cummings, & Sabine, 1986)</p> <p>Only include the first author with “et al.” for subsequent citations</p> <p>Narrative: Bills et al. (1986) argue...</p> <p>Parenthetical: (Bills et al., 1986)</p>	<p>The in-text citation for works with three or more authors is shortened right from the first citation. Only include the first author’s name and “et al.”</p> <p>Narrative: Garcia et al. (2010) ...</p> <p>Parenthetical: (Garcia et al., 2010).</p>
Organizational Author	<p>Mention organization in the signal phrase or in parenthetical the first time citing the source. If organization has known acronym, use in parentheses or brackets.</p> <p>Narrative:</p> <p><u>First citation:</u> American Psychological Association (APA, 2020) ...</p> <p><u>All subsequent citations:</u> APA (2020) ...</p> <p>Parenthetical:</p> <p><u>First citation:</u> (American Psychological Association [APA], 2020).</p> <p><u>All subsequent citations:</u> (APA, 2020).</p>	Same as APA 6
Direct Quotations	<p>When referencing direct quotations, page numbers, author name, and year of publication are needed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do not use page numbers for website quotations. Instead, refer to a paragraph number or heading section and paragraph number. Use the abbreviations “para.” and the number (“Tutoring,” n.d., para. 6). - <u>Quotes less than 40 words:</u> incorporate into the text using quotation marks. Always introduce a short quotation with a signal phrase that includes the author’s 	<p>Most rules similar to APA 6.</p> <p>APA 7 recommends paraphrasing the work of others to fit the information into the context of your paper and the style of your writing. However, direct quotes may be used with exact definitions or particularly insightful/memorable author statements.</p> <p>When directly quoting, follow the same format of the citation style noted in APA 6. APA requires page numbers for direct quotes.</p>

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Direct Quotations (cont.)	<p>last name followed by the date of publication (e.g. According to Smith (2002), “students...” (p. x))</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Quotations over 40 words</u> use block format without quotation marks. The quote should be started on a new line, indented 0.5 inches from the left, and double spaced. The citation should be included at the end of the quote (outside of punctuation) or before the quote. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Missing page number</u>: If the source you quote does not have page numbers (e.g. website, unnumbered ebook or PDF, etc.), APA requires an alternative way to assist the reader in finding the quote. APA provides the following options: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Provide heading or section name 2) Provide a paragraph number (count the paragraphs manually if needed) 3) Provide a section name and paragraph number together
Reference Page	<i>The reference page changes slightly with APA 7 with listing the names of more authors, placing “References” in boldface, and excluding publication location in the citation.</i>	
General Formatting	<p>The word “References” is centered at the top of a new page and is not bolded, italicized, or underlined</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - References are listed in alphabetical order by the first author’s last name. - All entries should be double-spaced, with hanging indent (i.e. second and subsequent lines indented by 0.5”). - Use sentence capitalization for titles of books or journal articles. Use title capitalization for periodical titles. - Put the titles of books in italics. - Provide the issue number for periodicals. - Do not put the name of a chapter in italics. - Do not put the edition number of a book in italics. - Provide page numbers for print articles. 	<p>Most of the general formatting remains the same in APA 7.</p> <p>However, the reference page, which should be found at the end of the document, now features “References” in boldface at the top of the page.</p>
Elements of Reference Entry	<p>Include the following elements in every reference entry in the following order:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Author - Date - Title - Source - Source location 	<p>Include the following elements in every reference page entry in the following order:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Author (<i>who should be credited for work?</i>) - Date (<i>when was the work created/published?</i>) - Title (<i>what is the work called?</i>) - Source Element (<i>where can the work be found?</i>)

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Author Element	<p>APA allows individuals, groups, multiple people, and a combination thereof to be authors. In addition, APA recognizes the specialized roles individuals can play in creating a work (e.g. Editors, Directors, etc.).</p> <p><u>Individuals:</u> In reference entries, individual names are formatted as:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Last Name, F. M.</p> <p><u>Multiple authors:</u> Surnames and initials for up to seven authors should be provided in the reference list, after which an ellipsis should be used. For example:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Miller, T. C., Brown, M. J., Wilson, G. L., Evans, B. B., Kelly, R. S., Turner, S. T., ... Lee, L. H. (2018).</p> <p><u>Groups:</u> Refer to full group name (not the acronym or abbreviation). In addition, the most specific agency should be listed if the group is part of a larger agency. For example:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">American Psychological Association National Institute of Nursing Research (NOT US Dept. of Health and Human Services)</p> <p><u>Roles:</u> The specialized role is immediately placed after the name of the individual. For example:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Last Name, F. M. (Director) Last Name, F. M. (Ed.) Last Name, F. M., & Williams, K. (Eds)</p> <p><u>No author:</u> If the author of a work is unknown, move the title element to the author position (i.e. first in the entry). Only use "Anonymous" if this is noted for the author in the source.</p>	<p>Most of the author element stays the same in APA 7, except for how multiple authors are cited. Surnames and initials for up to 20 authors should be provided in the reference list. For example:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Miller, T. C., Brown, M. J., Wilson, G. L., Evans, B. B., Kelly, R. S., Turner, S. T., Lewis, F., Lee, L. H., Cox, G., Harris, H. L., Martin, P., Gonzalez, W. L., Hughes, W., Carter, D., Campbell, C., Baker, A. B., Flores, T., Gray, W. E., Green, G., ... Nelson, T. P. (2018).</p>
Date Element	<p>Generally, APA dates refer to publication dates. Most of the time, these dates are simply noted as the year. However, there may be times when the year, month, day, or season are included. Examples of date formats are below:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">(2020, Spring/Summer)</p>	Same as APA 6

	APA 6	APA 7
Date Element <i>(cont.)</i>	(2018, November 13) <u>No Date:</u> If the date of a source is not known, use “n.d.” (which means “no date”).	
Title Element	<p>APA uses two categories for titles of works: stand-alone works and works that are part of a whole. Both categories have unique formatting considerations. Titles in the Title Element of the reference entry use sentence capitalization.</p> <p><u>Works that are part of a whole:</u> These works (e.g. journal articles, newspaper articles, episode of a TV Series, etc.) should not be italicized or use quotation marks in the reference entry. For example:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Title of journal article: Capitalize the first word after colon or any proper nouns (like Egypt or Angela Merkel).</p> <p><u>Stand-alone works:</u> These works (e.g. reports, books, websites, movies, etc.) should be italicized in the reference entry. For example:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>Title of book: Follow sentence capitalization rules.</i></p> <p><u>No Title:</u> If the work doesn’t have a title, provide a description of the work in [brackets]. For an untitled comment or post, include the first 20 words.</p>	Same as APA 6
Reference Entry Examples	<i>Small changes were made in formatting reference entries, including publications no longer requiring publisher location, changes in DOI format, and shift in language (such as “retrieved from” in certain cases)</i>	
Book	Author, A. A. (Publication Year). <i>Title of work: Capital letter also used for subtitle.</i> Location: Publisher.	Author, A.A., & Author, B.B. (Year). <i>Title of work: Capital letter also used for subtitle</i> (C. Editor, Ed.). Publisher. https://xxxxx - <i>No longer requires publisher location</i>
Ebooks	Author, A. A. (Publication Year). <i>Title of work: Capital letter also used for subtitle</i> [Kindle version]. Retrieved from http://xxxxx - <i>Use “doi” label in front of DOIs: doi: doi.org/xxxxx</i>	Author, A. A. (Publication Year). <i>Title of work: Capital letter also used for subtitle</i> [Kindle version]. Publisher. https://doi.org/xxxx - <i>DOI’s new format: https://doi.org/xxxxxxxxx</i>

	APA 6	APA 7
Journal Article	Author, A. A., Author, B. B., & Author, C. C. (Year). Title of article: Do not use italics or title capitalization. <i>Title of Periodical, volume number</i> (issue number), pages. doi: xx.xxxxxx/xxx	Author, A. A., Author, B. B., & Author, C. C. (Year). Title of article: Do not use italics or title capitalization. <i>Title of Periodical, volume number</i> (issue number), pages. https://doi.org/xxxxx - No longer need "Retrieved from"
Generic Webpage	Author, A. A., & Author, B. B. (Date of publication). <i>Title of document</i> . Retrieved from http://Web address	Author, A. A., & Author, B. B. (Date of publication). <i>Title of webpage</i> . Site name. https://xxxxxxx - Your instructor may require a retrieval date. If so, format the URL like this: Retrieved Month DD, YYYY, from https://xxxxxxx
Blog Post	Author, A. A. (year, month day). Title of entry: Not every word capitalized. [Web log comment]. Retrieved from http://www.etc.org - The phrase [Web log comment] is the term used for a blog. Other options in those brackets could include [Video file] or [PowerPoint presentation] as applicable.	Author, A. A. (YYYY, Month DD). Title of blog: Do not use italics or title capitalization. https://xxxxx
YouTube Video	Author, A. A. [Screen name]. (year, month day). <i>Title of video</i> [Video file]. Retrieved from https://www.someaddress.com/full/url/ - The "author" is the person who uploaded the video file. The screen name should be spelled and capitalized exactly as it appears, even if it does not observe standard spelling and capitalization rules.	Author, A. [Username]. (YYYY, Month DD). <i>Title of Video</i> [Video]. YouTube. https://xxxxx - Note that the person (or group) who uploaded the video is the author. - A [Username] is not required in the author element, though should be included if uploaded by an individual using a username.
Brainfuse Style Guide	Brainfuse APA Style Guide – 6th Edition	Brainfuse APA Style Guide – 7th Edition
Brainfuse Sample Essay	Brainfuse APA 6th Edition – Sample Essay	Brainfuse APA 7th Edition – Sample Essay

To browse specific information on writing style and usage not addressed in this guide, see the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th or 7th Edition, depending on your course expectations). Alternatively, visit the official APA Style blog, here: <http://www.apastyle.org/learn/tutorials/basics-tutorial.aspx>