APA Style Guide

The Center

If you are writing an academic paper in the social sciences, you will cite your sources using APA style (American Psychological Association). To cite means to give credit to others whose ideas you are using to write your paper. Using our quick guide can help you get started. You should also consult more comprehensive guides. We recommend the APA Style Guide (6th edition) and the Purdue OWL: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/.

General Formatting

- Font: Times New Roman or other legible 12-point font
- Title page: Use a header at the top left: “Running head: TITLE OF YOUR PAPER” (shortened to no more than 50 characters). The abbreviated title of your paper should be in all caps. Center the full title of your paper halfway down the page and include your name, title of course, instructor’s name and paper due date. [Always check with your instructor – s/he may have specific preferences for a title page!]
- Running header: On subsequent pages, the header should be your title in all caps (TITLE OF YOUR PAPER)
- Page numbers: Number all pages in the upper right corner. (Title page should be numbered 1)
- Margins: Use 1-inch margins on all sides.

Keeping Track of your Research

To use in-text citations and create a references page, you will need to keep track of all your sources. It is important to know each TYPE OF SOURCE you are using. APA style is organized by the type of source. For instance, for a book you will use the author’s last name and date, but for a website you will need such information as the website title and date you accessed the website.

In-Text Citations

In-text citations are the sources you refer to in the body of your paper. After a quotation or paraphrase you will include source information in parentheses. For APA style, the most important source information is the last name of the author, the date, and the page number.

When you refer to the author in a signal phrase, make sure to follow it with the date in parentheses and the page number at the end of the quotation: Landin
(2012) claims, “writing center tutors are the most intelligent people on the planet” (p. 236).

[Note: The phrase “Landin claims” is the signal phrase; it signals a quotation is coming.]

If you do not refer to the author in the signal phrase, put the author’s last name, date, and page number in parentheses:

Visiting the writing center can help students improve their papers because Super Tutors are awesome (Landin, 2012, p. 236).

To cite a source with two authors: Landin and Raymond (2012) believe that “the TCC South Campus Writing Center is the best on the planet” (p. 236) OR at the end of your quotation or paraphrase (Landin & Raymond, 2012, p. 236).

For three to five authors: Use all the authors’ last names the first time you cite the source: Landin, Raymond, and Moe OR (Landin, Raymond & Moe, 2012, p. 236)

But in subsequent citations use the first author’s last name followed by et al. in the signal phrase: Landin et al. (2012), OR after the quotation in parentheses: (Landin et al., 2012, p. 236).

References
The references list comes at the end of your paper. Center the word References at the top. Here are some other basics:

- Alphabetize sources by the last name of the authors
- Put the first line of each entry all the way to the left margin
- Use a hanging indent the second (and subsequent) lines ½ inch
- Double space the entries

Here are sample entries for some of the most common types of sources.

Book: For a book, include the author’s last name but only initials for the first name. Follow it with the date, title of book, city of publication, and the publisher.

Landin, J. (2012). South campus writing center: Why our tutors are the best.

Fort Worth, TX: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux.

Article in a journal: For a journal article, include the title of the article in regular type but the title of the journal in italics. Notice how the volume number 8 is italicized; it is considered part of the title. The issue number is NOT (4), and is thus in regular type.

**Article from a database:** Include the author, date of publication, title of article, name of periodical, volume and issue number, page numbers, DOI (digital object identifier), and URL for the journal’s home page (if there is no DOI).


**Section in a web document:** Include the author, date of publication or recent update, title of section, title of document, URL of section.


**Map or chart:** Use the title of the chart or map, retrieval information, and the website.