

APA Style Guidelines

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APA Style Guidelines

This guide is intended to be used in conjunction with the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). Only select topics are highlighted in this guide. If you have questions not answered by this guide refer to the book for more details.

APA Format Issues

Typeface: Use 12pt font for the manuscript with a serif font such as Times New Roman. For figures use a sans serif font such as Ariel.

Spacing: Paper should be double-spaced.

Margins: One inch uniform margins on the top, bottom, and sides.

Pagination: The title page is page one. Page number should appear in the header on the right hand side of the page at least one inch from the right-hand edge of the page.

Using citations

1. Generally you will need to cite your references in the following cases:
 - a. When you define a term, unless the definition is your own.
 - b. When you are paraphrasing information from a book, research article, or other source but not using a direct quote.
 - c. If you say something like most research agrees or research has stated, then you should cite what research studies support that.
 - d. If taking information from a .org or .gov website

In text citations:

Articles with one or two authors: When citing an article in the text you must include all the authors' last names and the year of the publication each time, like this: (Hurst, 2006) or (Bird & Lantz, 2007).

Articles with three to five authors: When citing the article in the text you must include all the authors' last names and the year of the publication like this: (Hurst, Bird, & Lantz, 2006). After you use this citation once in the paper you can then use a shortened form from that point on like this: (Hurst et al., 2006).

Articles with six or more authors: When citing the article in the text you include first authors' last name and the year of the publication like this: (Hurst et al., 2006) anytime you use the citation.

In text citations that are direct quotes: If you are citing something because it is a direct quote and it is from a source that is paginated (i.e., has page numbers) you must also add a page number where the quote came from in the article to the normal citation like this: (Hurst, Bird, & Lantz, 2006, p. 36). If the quote is from a source without pagination you should use the paragraph number instead of the page number. In addition, quotes that are 40-words or more must be indented ½ inch on the left and right margins as follows:

Educational reform, instituted through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997 (IDEA), has centered on improving secondary education completion for students with disabilities with hopes of increasing postsecondary access. These efforts have met with some success, reflected in the steady increase in students with disabilities graduating from high school and transitioning into postsecondary education. (Hurst, 2006, p. 2)

Where to put the period: The period of a sentence goes after the citation like this: Treadmill running to a better aerobic workout than using a bicycle (Visek & Watson, 2005). The exception is on a block quote as is demonstrated in the above example.

How many spaces after a period: In APA format there are two spaces after a period. This has been changed from one space.

Third Person Language

Literature reviews are technical writing so they are written in 3rd person language. What this means is that you should not be using things like: I, me, my, you, your, we, or our. For example:

Not in Third Person Language

“I think it is important to explore gender when you think about this issue.”

Third Person Language

“Gender will be an important factor to explore within this issue, therefore it will be addressed in the following paragraph.”

Using headers: Headers can help to provide structure to your paper. APA format uses a specific system for headers. Generally most papers use two levels of headers that would look like the following:

Aggression Theory (First Level Header)

Frustration-Aggression Theory (Second Level Header)

Title Page

Running head

“The running head is an abbreviated title that is printed at the top of the pages of a manuscript or published article to identify the article for readers” (APA, 2010, p. 229). You will write the words “Running head” followed by a colon. The running head is limited to 50 characters. “It should appear flush left in all uppercase letters at the top of the title page and all subsequent pages,” (APA, p. 229). Section 8.03 discusses this topic.

Title

Use care when selecting your title. It should be concise and summarize the main idea of the paper. The title should explain the topic of the paper when standing alone. A title that avoids words that serve no useful purpose (e.g., “A Study of” or “The Relationship of”) and easily shortens is recommended. Abbreviations should not be used in a title. The maximum length of a title should be 12 words. “The title should be typed in uppercase and lowercase letters, centered between the right and left margins and positioned in the upper half of the page” (APA, 2010, p. 23). If the title is more than one line, double space between the lines. *The title also appears on the first page of the text* (not counting the abstract). It should be centered at the top of the page with a double-space separating it from the beginning of the text. Refer to code 2.01.

Author's Name

“The preferred form of an author’s name is the first name, middle initial(s), and last name” (APA, 2010, p.23). Titles (e.g., Dr.) and degrees (e.g., Ph.D.) should be omitted. The names of the authors should be typed in the order of their contributions. Use uppercase and lowercase letters, centered between the side margins, one double-spaced line below the title (see code 2.02 and Table 2.1 for more information and p.41 for an example).

Institutional Affiliation

The institution name distinguishes where the research was conducted or the paper written. Center the name of the institution under the author’s name. There should be a double-spaced line separating the author and institution (see code 2.02 and Table 2.1 for more information and p. 41 for an example).

Date Submitted

This component is not listed in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, but you should include it on the title page anyway. Actually type the words “Date Submitted” followed by a colon and then the date. This should appear a quadruple space below the institution name.

Correspondence

Flush left and indented five spaces around the bottom third of the page should be information on how to contact the author. Type “Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to” followed by your name, address and e-mail address.

Refer to the title page of this document for a sample title page.

Tables and Figures

Tables

Tables should be included in your writing when you have a large amount of data to be presented and writing it in the text would make it difficult for the reader to follow. Be selective in choosing information to be in a table. The information in the table is meant to supplement the text not duplicate it. The text should address only the table’s highlights. Too many tables make the reading difficult to comprehend. When including tables in your writing, number them consecutively based on the order they appear in the text. Each table should start a new page and be identified by the word **Table** followed by an Arabic number flush left. The table title is one double space down flush left also. The title should be brief but clear and explanatory and italicized. The running head and page number should be included in the top margin as usual. For more information and examples see chapter 5 in the APA Manual.

Figures

Figures are considered any type of illustration other than a table (i.e. graphs, charts, maps, drawings, photographs). Figures are useful for showing an overall pattern of results and should exhibit simplicity, clarity and continuity. Figures will be numbered consecutively in the order they appear in the text. Use the italicized word **Figure** and an Arabic numeral placed flush left below the figure to label it. Follow the Arabic numeral with a period and then the caption describing the figure. The caption is not italicized and only the first word and proper nouns are capitalized. The purpose of the caption is to explain the figure

and be a figure title. Use a brief but descriptive phrase as your caption. Remember the figure should be understood without having to refer to the text. Refer to chapter 5 in the APA Manual for more information and examples.

General Suggestions about Technical Writing

Technical writing means supporting ideas and information

One mistake many young writers make in crafting a review/discussion of literature is they treat it more like a creative writing paper than technical writing. One thing to understand about good technical writing is that it is ALWAYS grounded in existing research literature. Another typical mistake made, which complicates the writing of a good paper, is that students will decide up front what factors they want to explore and then only look for those things. The difficulty in this approach is the review is incomplete and does not account for some potentially important factors. The student needs to start broad and be willing to consider potential factors that he or she had not thought about. Once the student has collected several resources, the review of literature is created from these resources. This “research” process is vital to a good paper and necessary to developing sound reasoning that is grounded in the research literature.

When an author makes statements and discusses topics, he or she needs to provide evidence that the topic or factor is of relevance. For example, if an author states that perceived barriers have been associated with physical activity level, he or she needs to do two things to make this an effective and worthwhile component of a literature review. First, they have to describe the nature of the relationship between perceived barriers and physical activity based on the review of the research literature. What about perceived barriers and physical activity? The author would use the articles collected to draw conclusions about this relationship. Once they draw a conclusion they have to address the second aspect, which is providing evidence for that conclusion. The author would do this by highlighting and citing the research studies that helped them come to the conclusion they did about barriers and physical activity. This is supporting your conclusions and ideas with research evidence.

If an author does not provide references to previous literature, then it is assumed the concepts come from the author alone. It might help to imagine as if you have to defend your paper in front of the Supreme Court. The judges are not going to accept the argument, “Well because that is what I think.” They will expect you to provide specific rationale and evidence that your conclusions and ideas make sense, considering what we already know. You can back up what you put in your paper with evidence/references from the articles and materials you collect.

Typically, technical writing contains a lot of reference citations. It is not uncommon for every third sentence to have a reference and some sentences to have more than one reference. With literature reviews you are taking the information you have collected and re-explaining it in your own words, within the context of the purpose of your paper. Your review of literature section should reflect the information you have collected through your research on this topic.

Incorporating Research Evidence In Concise and Effective Manners

It is unnecessary to describe in detail all of the studies that you find. Here are two different ways that relevant research can be utilized to support conclusions and ideas in a literature review. The first is to draw a conclusion and then use citations to support the statement. For example:

Past research has found that higher perceived environmental barriers has a negative relationship with adherence to physical activity (Hurst & Harris, 2002; Visek et al., 1999).

In this example the author has made a statement and then cited two studies that would support that statement. This helps the reader to know that the author is drawing the conclusion based on evidence from past research.

A second technique is to highlight a single research study, particularly if it relates very closely with your chosen topic and population group you wish to explore or has significant findings you wish to highlight. To effectively highlight a single study, the author wants to indicate what the purpose of the study was, what type of sample was used, the major relevant results, and any important conclusions. For example:

Heiserman, Lawson, and Hurst (2006) surveyed 550 male and female undergraduate students to explore whether social support, stage of change, or self-efficacy were predictive of self-reported physical activity level. The researchers found that self-efficacy and stage of change was most predictive of self-reported physical activity level for females, whereas self-efficacy and social support of friends was most predictive for males. These results suggested that one-size fits all interventions may not be appropriate for male and female college students.

For this example you can see that it is possible to address more than one issue with one sentence. In the first sentence the author identified both the sample and purpose. This is part of writing concisely and not being too wordy. Also, only discussing the relevant results of a study will help you to keep your writing concise. **You will find that some research studies will have multiple results and not all will be directly related to your topic. This does not mean you cannot utilize the study; you just focus on reporting the results that are pertinent to the purpose of your literature review.** Typically authors will utilize both techniques for incorporating research into a literature review.

Tips for Writing the Introduction of a Paper

The purpose of an introduction is three fold: (a) provide a rationale for addressing the topic you have chosen, (b) providing the purpose of the paper, and (c) providing the reader with a preview of what will be discussed in the paper. First, a good introduction will establish an importance for the topic addressed in the paper in a concise way. The reader should be drawn into the paper by the introduction, because the author helps the reader see why the topic is worth exploring. Some people use stories that exemplify the topic or issue. Others will use statistics or other research evidence to briefly support the importance of their topic (this is typical for technical lit reviews). The structure of the introduction starts broad and narrows down into the purpose statement; imagine a funnel. Notice in the example below how the author progressively narrows the discussion from sedentary living in America to specifically addressing her target population obese adolescent females.

Second, the introduction should clearly state the purpose of the paper. Technical writing should always have a purpose/thesis. This purpose is what guides the creation of the paper and assists in determining what's included in the discussion. Whenever considering whether or not information should be included in the paper, refer back to your purpose statement. If the material supports the purpose, include it. In the example the purpose statement is the second to last sentence.

Lastly, the introduction should conclude with a sentence or two that provides the reader with a preview of how the author will accomplish the purpose. Providing this preview gives the reader a heads up on what to expect as he or she goes through the paper and gives a mental map on how to approach the material contained within it. The preview is usually the last sentence of the introduction. In the example, the author provides the reader with a specific preview on what the reader will encounter in the paper and in what order.

NOTE: Many times, with the exception of the purpose statement, the introduction is actually written last as it reflects the structure and content of the paper.

Example Introduction

Sedentary living and decreased physical activity levels have risen significantly in the American population in the last 20 years (Lox et al., 2006). A trend formerly seen mostly in adults, physical inactivity is beginning to rise in younger populations. In fact, 27% of students in grades 9 to 12 do not participate in regular moderate physical activity (Lox et al., 2006). With respect to gender, female adolescents are engaging in less physical activity than their male counterparts (Corbin, Pangrazi, & LeMasurier, 2004). In addition, obese children may experience psychological and social barriers that may complicate efforts to adopt and engage in regular physical activity. The purpose of this review is to explore physical, social, and psychological factors that may influence the adoption and adherence of physical activity in obese female adolescents. The author will first review the prevalence of sedentary lifestyles within the adolescent population, followed by an exploration of various physical, social, and psychological factors that may influence physical activity participation in female adolescents. Lastly, the author will review several interventions aimed at increasing physical activity in obese female adolescents.

Conclusion Section

You want to tie everything together with a nice conclusion section. Reiterate your main points to the reader again and leave them with a take home message. Typically the conclusion is only one to two paragraphs. Review through the example provided below. As you can see it reiterates the important points and wraps up the paper with a take home message for the reader. As you can also see, the conclusion does not stand on its own. You may be wondering how the author arrived at the conclusion she did, but it is not the conclusion's responsibility to reiterate everything in the paper.

Example Conclusion

How steroids affect the body, the MLB's steroid policy, athletes' views, and ethics of sport all play a role in the steroid banning decision. After much thought and consideration of the information presented it was concluded that steroids should be allowed in baseball. Steroids do not harm athletes anymore than an extreme weight lifting program would. They also do not affect the past records anymore than current technological advances in equipment do. With proper supervision and education by parents and coaches, children will not engage in steroid use at too young of an age. All of these reasons help support that steroids are not as bad as some people make them out to be, and that they could have a place in Major League Baseball.

APA Reference Examples

Periodical: 1 author

Allison, M. T. (1991). Role conflict and the female athlete: Preoccupations with little grounding. *Journal of Sport Psychology*, 3, 49-60.

Periodical: 2 authors

Adler, P., & Adler, P. (1987). Role conflict and identity salience: College athletics and the academic role. *Social Science Journal*, 24(4), 443-455.

Periodical: DOI available

Pincus, A. L., Ansell, E. B., Pimentel, C. A., Cain, N. M., Wright, A. G. C., & Levy, K. N. (2009). Initial construction and validation of the pathological narcissism inventory. *Psychological Assessment, 21*, 365-379. doi: 10.1037/a0016530

Book: 1 author

Coakley, J. (1978). *Sport in society*. St. Louis: C. V. Mosby Co.

Chapter in Edited Book

Broom, E. F. (1981). Detraining and retirement from high level competition: A reaction to “Retirement from high level competition” and “Career crisis in sport.” In T. Orlick, J. Partington, & J. Salmela (Eds.), *Mental training for coaches and athletes* (pp. 183-188). Ottawa: Fitness and Amateur Sport.

Published Abstracts

Sack, A. L., & Thiel, R. (1985). College basketball and role conflict: A national survey. *Sociological Abstracts, 33*, 1743. (Ms. No. S17330).

Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation

Brewer, B. W. (1991). *Athletic identity as a risk factor for depressive reaction to athletic injury*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ.

Dissertation Abstracts International

Andrew, T. (1988). Relationship between role conflict and satisfaction and performance of intercollegiate student-athletes. (Doctoral dissertation, University of Virginia). *Dissertation Abstracts International, 49*, (1989) A3302.

Conference Presentation

Brewer, B. (1992). Self-identity in sport: Correlates of athletic identity. *Paper presented at the annual meeting of the North American Society for the Psychology of Sport and Physical Activity*. Pittsburgh, PA.