
Cook's APA "Cheat Sheet" (6th edition)

(The APA Manual is the best guide to APA, but there are also many excellent online guides as well – e.g., <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/1/>)

Headers

Headers should organize the paper for your reader and alert them to the topic of each section. Levels of APA headings are:

Level	Format
1	Centered, Boldface, Uppercase and Lowercase Headings
2	Left-aligned, Boldface, Uppercase and Lowercase Heading
3	Indented, boldface, lowercase heading with a period.
4	<i>Indented, boldface, italicized, lowercase heading with a period.</i>
5	<i>Indented, italicized, lowercase heading with a period.</i>

If your paper uses one level of heading (e.g., just Introduction, Method, Results, Discussion), use the level 1 header. If your paper uses two levels of headings, which I suspect will be common for class papers, use level 1 headings as major headings, level 2 headings as sub-headings (see below). If your paper uses three levels of headings, use level 1 headings as major headings, level 2 headings as sub-headings, and level 3 headings as sub-sub-headings. (see below).

Two levels of headers:

Method

This section contains a summary of how the research study was conducted.

Participant

The participant in this study was a 3rd grade male with a learning disability ...

Setting

The study took place in a fully self-contained special education classroom in an urban setting in Hawaii ...

Instrumentation

I measured self-esteem using the Student Self-esteem Scale (SSS) ...

Results

Three levels of headers:

Method

This section contains a summary of how the research study was conducted.

Participants

The participants in this study consisted of 24 students with learning disabilities ...

Setting

Participants were instructed in two different settings.

Setting one. The first setting was a small, rural elementary school on the windward side of Oahu. Participating students with learning disabilities at this school were instructed a in self-contained classroom taught by ...

Setting two. The second setting was a large, urban elementary school on Oahu. Participating students in this school were instructed in four different inclusive classes.

Instrumentation

I measured self-esteem using the Student Self-esteem Scale (SSS) ...

Results

Format

Spacing:

Unlike this cheat sheet, everything (no exceptions) is double spaced in APA – even for block quotes, references, etc. Do not (ever) skip extra lines – even after paragraphs.

Margins:

Margins should be 1 inch around the entire paper.

Font:

A standard, **12-point font** should be used throughout.

Alignment:

Justify text left (text, except when new paragraphs and other material are purposefully indented, should be flush left); do not justify right or center text. Do not slit and hyphenate words at the end of lines.

Citations

Reference **citations** are required in text whenever the thought expressed in writing comes from someone else. Below are examples of reference citations:

- a. **one author:** It is a good idea to wash your hands (Smith, 1994). Or Smith (1994) suggested that it is a good idea to wash your hands.
- b. **multiple authors:** It is a good idea to wash your hands (Smith, Jones, & Been, 1994). Or Smith, Jones, and Been (1994) suggested that it is a good idea to wash your hands. (note the use of “&” inside parentheses, and “and” in text).
- c. **Multiple works:** It is a good idea to wash your hands (Adams, 2001; Smith, Jones, & Been, 1994). (note alphabetization by last name of first author within parentheses)
- d. **Use of et al.:** After you cite a work that has three or more authors once, subsequent citations can be shortened by using “et al.” to refer all authors after the first author. It is a good idea to wash your hands (Smith et al., 1994). Or Smith et al. (1994) suggest that it is a good idea to wash your hands. Works with six or more authors can use et al. each time the work is cited (even the first time).

Quotations

When a direct **quote** is used, place quotation marks around it and note the page number in the citation:

“It is a good idea to wash your hands” (Smith, 1994, p. 34). Or Smith (1994) said that, “it is a good idea to wash your hands” (p. 34).

- a. Quotes of 40 words (**block quotes**) are indented on the left, begin on their own line, and do not use quotation marks; but are still double-spaced and use 12-point font:

Smith (1994, p. 34) noted that,

It is a good idea to wash your hands, and you should eat lots of vegetables and wear sunscreen. And never smoke cigarettes either. I have read that is very bad for you. Also, watch out crossing the street, even when there is a crosswalk.

References

The final page(s) of your paper is the **References**. It begins on its own page, with the header “References,” and provides an alphabetized (by the last names of the first authors) list of references for all of the works cited in your paper. Note that this is not a bibliography—only reference sources that you cited in text. Unlike the examples, your references should be double spaced. Examples of the main types of references:

- a. Journal article, one author:

Mellers, B. A. (2000). Choice and the relative pleasure of consequences: Implications for practice. *Psychological Bulletin, 126*, 910-924.

(note that the first line is flush left and that other lines for that reference are indented, that only the first letter of the first word in the title and after a colon is capitalized in the article title, that the first letter of all words in the journal title are capitalized, and that the journal title and volume number are italicized).

- b. Journal article, multiple authors:

Mellers, B. A., Zollens, P., & Bare, T. B. (2000). Choice and the relative pleasure of consequences: Implications for practice. *Psychological Bulletin, 126*, 910-924.

- c. Books:

Mellers, B. A., Zollens, P., & Bare, T. B. (2000). *Choice and the relative pleasure of consequences: Implications for practice*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

(note that the book title is italicized, that only the first letter of the first word in the title and after a colon is capitalized in the book title, and that city, state abbreviation, and publisher are listed).

- d. Chapter in a book:

Mellers, B. A., Zollens, P., & Bare, T. B. (2000). Choice and the relative pleasure of consequences: Implications for practice. In B. C. Jazzman (Ed.), *Cognition: Conceptual and practical issues* (pp. 51-84). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

(note that the title of the book, not the chapter, is italicized and that the page numbers of the chapter are listed).

- e. Internet source: for the purposes of our class, use this generic format for work retrieved from the internet

Author, A. A., & Author, B. B. (Date of publication). *Title of document*. Retrieved from <http://Web address>

Greater New Milford Health Community (n.d.). *Who has time for a family meal? You do!* Retrieved from <http://www.familymealtime.org>.

(note that n.d. is used when the work is not dated; if it is dated, provide the year).

Other APA Writing Conventions

- Use past tense verbs appropriately and extensively (e.g., in lit review, an author of an article stated, not states, an opinion; in the Methods, you implemented, not implement, the intervention; in the Results and Discussion, you report what occurred, not what occurs).
- Use active, not passive, voice.
 - Active: I selected Billy to participate in the study.
 - Passive: Billy was selected to participate in the study.
- Use the first person. In the past, many of us were taught to refer to ourselves as “the author” or “this researcher.” Now, just say “I.”
- Sentences are precise and clear. Many of us were taught that the longer and more “flowery” our writing the better. Scientific/technical writing is just the opposite.
- Writing should “flow”—each paragraph and section should be connected with the one preceding it.
- Use **person-first language**.
 - Person-first: student with a disability
 - Not person-first: Disabled person
- Use pronouns sparingly and make sure it is clear to whom/what the pronoun refers.
- Use non-sexist language (e.g., humans, not mankind; if students work hard they will succeed, not if a student works hard, he will succeed).