APA Format & Citations

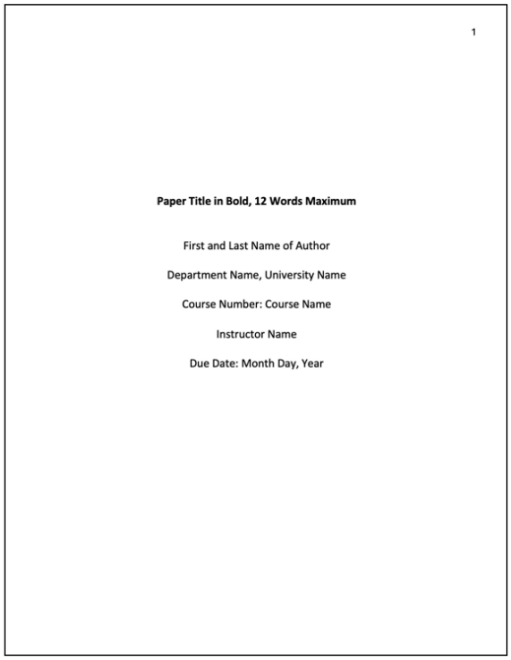
UVU WRITING CENTER

American Psychological Association (APA) style is used in various fields of study, including social sciences and medicine, which prioritize the use of recent sources. Like most citation systems, APA requires specific formatting and both in-text and full reference citations. In-text citations help readers distinguish between the writer's work and ideas from other sources. Corresponding reference citations help readers locate those sources. Properly citing sources helps writers establish credibility and avoid plagiarism. While this handout covers APA formatting and citations, writers should customize their work for their specific audience and assignment. Note that section numbers provided in this handout refer to the *APA Manual* (7th ed).

Format

General Format (2.16–2.25)

- **Page numbers** start on title page in the upper right corner
- **Font** use is legible and consistent (e.g., 11 pt Calibri or 12 pt Times New Roman).
- **Double-space** text. Do not add extra space between paragraphs or sections.
- **Margins** should be set to 1 inch.
- **Indent** the first new line of each new paragraph 0.5 in.


1

Paper Title in Bold, 12 Words Maximum

First and Last Name of Author

Department Name, University Name

Course Number: Course Name

Instructor Name

Due Date: Month Day, Year

Title Page (2.3–2.6)

The title should reflect the paper's main idea and should be in title case, bolded, centered, and positioned in the upper half of the page. Add a blank line, then write your name, department and university name, course, instructor, and due date (in *Month day*, *year* format), each on a new line. Double-space the entire page.

Abstract (2.9)

Although APA encourages writers to have an abstract, many professors do not require one. An abstract is a summary of the paper's contents, typically no more than 250 words. Abstracts are placed on their own page in paragraph format with no first line indentation. Abstracts are typically followed by a list of 3-5 keywords.

First Page of Text (2.11)

The first page of text includes the paper's title. The title is bolded and centered at the top of the page, and the main text follows.

Formatting Tables and Figures (7.1–7.36)

Tables and figures allow authors to present a large amount of information efficiently. APA gives the following guidelines for formatting tables and figures:

- Use tables and figures only if necessary.
- Include a number (bolded), title (italicized), and related note (italicized) for each table or figure.

- Label all elements (e.g., axes of graphs, columns in tables, etc.).
- Design the table to be understood independently of the paper's text.
- Double space table numbers, titles, and notes, while keeping in mind that the table's body text may be single, 1.5, or double-spaced.
- When referring to a table or figure, use its number and describe why you are referring to the table.

Example: The data confirms this finding, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for Swimming Distance in Meters by Dog Breed

Breed	*M*	*SD*	Range
Boykin Spaniel	41.3	8.6	28.1–65.3
Newfoundland	39.2	8.1	36.3–42.1
Standard Poodle	34.7	9.2	29.7–41.4

Note. All swimming occurred in a pool with breeds measured separately (*n*=25 per breed)

Headings and Subheadings (2.26–2.27)

Headings help organize the text for readers. The number of heading levels needed for a paper depends on its length and complexity. Most student papers use between one and three heading levels. Headings use the same font and font size as the body text and are formatted as shown below:

Level 1 Heading: Centered, Bolded, Title Case

The paragraph begins here as a new indented paragraph.

Level 2 Heading: Flush Left, Bolded, Title Case

The paragraph begins here as a new indented paragraph.

Level 3 Heading: Flush Left, Bolded, Italicized, Title Case

The paragraph begins here as a new indented paragraph.

Level 4 Heading: Indented, Bolded, Title Case, Ending with a Period. The paragraph begins immediately following the heading and continues on as regular body text.

Level 5 Heading: Indented, Bolded, Italicized, Title Case, Ending with a Period. The paragraph begins immediately following the heading and continues on as regular body text.

Citations

In-text Citations (8.10–8.36)

When summarizing, paraphrasing, or quoting words or ideas that are not your own, credit the original source or author(s) using **in-text citations**. In-text citations include the **last name(s)** of the **author(s)** and **year of publication**. Direct quotes are contained in quotation marks, and the accompanying in-text citation includes **a page number** with *p.* indicating the information comes from a single page, or *pp.* indicating sourced material covers multiple pages. When using sources, remember that APA discourages extensive quoting.

Example: "The sun is a star" (Moon, 2022, pp. 7–9).

Narrative vs Parenthetical Citations (8.11)

A **narrative citation** mentions the author within the sentence, so their name is excluded from the parentheses. In a **parenthetical citation**, the author is not mentioned in the sentence, so their name appears in the parentheses. End-of-sentence punctuation comes after the parentheses.

Narrative Example: Moon (2022) said, "The sky is blue" (p. 14).

Parenthetical Example: "The sun is a star" (Moon, 2022, pp. 7–9).

Number or Type of Author(s)	Narrative Citations	Parenthetical Citations
One Author	Moon (2022)	(Moon, 2022)
Two Authors	Baker and Lee (2018)	(Baker & Lee, 2018)
Three or More Authors	Jones et al. (2021)	(Jones et al., 2021)
Abbreviated Groups, First Citation	Veterans Affairs (VA, 2009)	(Veterans Affairs [VA], 2009)
Abbreviated Groups, Additional Citations	VA (2009)	(VA, 2009)
Non-Abbreviated Groups	Mayo Clinic (2020)	(Mayo Clinic, 2020)

Sources with Missing Information

Sources with No Author (8.14)

If a source does not have information about the author or the author is unknown, include the title in place of the missing author(s). Italicize the title if it is italicized on the reference page. Otherwise, put quotation marks around the title. Titles may be shortened to the first few words for the in-text citation.

Example: ("Light Pollution in Space," 2018)

Sources with No Date (8.10, 9.17)

If a source does not have a date, use *n.d.*, which is short for *no date*, in place of the date.

Example: (Lopez, n.d.)

Direct Quotes without Page Numbers (8.28)

When directly quoting a source without page numbers, provide another way to locate the quoted information (e.g., a section heading or a paragraph number). If the source doesn't provide a section heading or paragraph number, count the paragraphs manually.

Example: (Billings, 2018, para. 14)

Example: (Billings, 2018, "Symptoms" section)

Common In-Text Citation Concerns

Citing Multiple Works (8.12)

When citing multiple sources in the same section of a paper, list sources in alphabetical order, and separate them using semicolons. This format is commonly used when synthesizing sources.

Example: (Bozzelli, 2021; Gonzales, 2019; Pierce, 2020)

Personal Communications and Class Lectures (8.7-8.9)

APA suggests only providing an in-text citation for information shared in a class or received via personal communication (conversation, email, interview) since the communication cannot be accessed by others.

Example: (N. Feng, personal communication, September 24, 2022)

Block Quotes (8.27)

A direct quote of 40 words or more is formatted as a block quote. Block quotes do not use quotation marks and place final punctuation before the in-text citation. Block quotes are indented 0.5 inches from the left margin. APA recommends that writers use block quotes sparingly.

Example: Rausch et al. (2006) concluded the following:

> A mere 20 min of these group interventions was effective in reducing anxiety to normal levels . . . merely 10 min of the interventions allowed [the high-anxiety group] to recover from the stressor. Thus, brief interventions of meditation and progressive muscle relaxation may be effective for those with clinical levels of anxiety and for stress recovery when exposed to brief, transitory stressors. (p. 287)

Citing Secondary Sources (8.6)

When citing a source found within another source (secondary source), APA recommends finding and citing the original source. However, if the original source cannot be located, use the phrase "as cited in" in the in-text citation to indicate the material is referenced from the secondary source.

Example: (Sorber, 2002, as cited in Johnson et al., 2023).

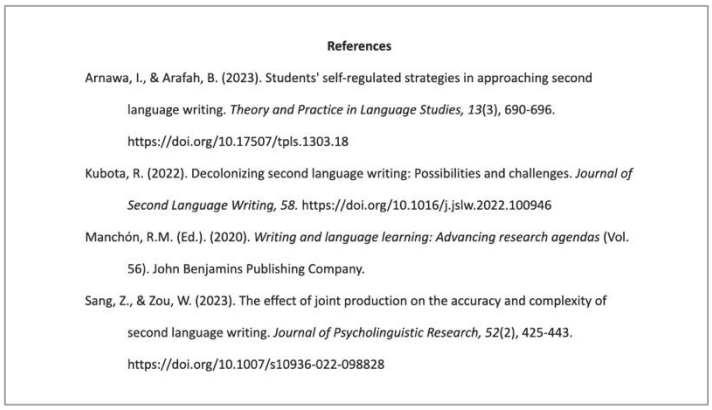
Reference Page Citations (9.7–9.43)

While in-text citations indicate what information is borrowed from a source, citations on the reference page provide readers with all the information needed to locate sources.

Reference List Format (9.43)

For a reference list, follow these guidelines:

- Start the reference list on a new page.
- Bold and center the word "References" at the top.
- Alphabetize reference citation entries.
- Double-space entries.
- Use a hanging indent for each entry.



References

Arnawa, I., & Arafah, B. (2023). Students' self-regulated strategies in approaching second language writing. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies, 13*(3), 690-696. https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.1303.18

Kubota, R. (2022). Decolonizing second language writing: Possibilities and challenges. *Journal of Second Language Writing, 58.* https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jslw.2022.100946

Manchón, R.M. (Ed.). (2020). *Writing and language learning: Advancing research agendas* (Vol. 56). John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Sang, Z., & Zou, W. (2023). The effect of joint production on the accuracy and complexity of second language writing. *Journal of Psycholinguistic Research, 52*(2), 425-443. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10936-022-098828

Reference Citation Elements

Author(s) (9.7–9.11)

Author information is formatted with each author's **last name listed** first, followed by a comma, the author's **first initial(s)**, and a period. Subsequent authors follow the same format with an ampersand (*&*) before the final author. Note that organizations or corporations can function as authors.

Example (one author): Baron, A. J.

Example (two authors): Baron, A. J., & Keller, B. N.

Example (three authors): Baron, A. J., Keller, B. N., & Cliff, K. S.

Example (21+ authors): List the first 19 authors' names, insert an ellipsis (. . .), omit the ampersand (&), and add the final author's name.

Dates (9.13–9.17)

Format dates in the following order: year, month day. Omit missing months and/or days. If the year is missing, use *n.d.* to indicate *no date.*

Example: (2019, May 1)

Titles (9.18–9.22)

When referring to sources that can stand alone (e.g., books, websites, films), italicize the title and capitalize in **sentence case** (only the first word and proper nouns are capitalized). Generally, for sources within a larger work (e.g., an article in a journal or newspaper), list the source title using sentence case, then capitalize and italicize the title of the larger source using **title case** (all words are capitalized, except 1–3 letter conjunctions, prepositions, and articles). If there is no title, describe the work in brackets. (Note that chapters in an edited book do not follow this pattern of capitalization.)

Example (book): *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association*

Example (journal article): The war on cities. *The New Yorker*

Periodicals (9.25)

When citing periodicals (e.g., journals, newspapers, etc.), italicize volume numbers, place issue numbers in parentheses directly after the volume without a space, and list the page range or article number last.

Example (journal article): *40*(1), 5–26.

Editors (9.28)

To cite editors of a collection, add their names after the first title. Start with the word "In," give the editor(s)' name(s), then a comma and the title of the work. Use "Ed." for one editor and "Eds." for multiple editors.

Example (edited collection): Culture and peer feedback. In K. Hyland & F. Hyland (Eds.), *Feedback in second language writing: Contexts and issues*

Editions or Volumes (9.28)

For editions or volumes of a book, add (# ed., Vol. #) in parentheses after the title.

Example (edited collection): *Explanation of social action* (2nd ed., Vol. 4)

Access Dates (9.16)

For frequently updated sources (e.g., social media or online maps), provide an access date. After the word *Retrieved*, add the date (Month Day, Year), a comma, the word *from*, and the URL or DOI.

Example: Retrieved October 11, 2021, from https://xxxxx

DOIs and URLS (9.34–9.36)

A **Uniform Resource Locators (URL)** is a website address that may change. A **Digital Object Identifier (DOI)** is a stable repository for sources. DOIs are preferred over URLs, and if text will be published or read online, links should be live, so readers can easily access the referenced source.

Example (DOI): https://doi.org/10.1080/10790195.2025.2489338

Reference Citation Examples

Audiovisual Work: Video, Film, Photo, etc. (10.12–10.14)

Author Last Name, Initials. (Role). (Year, Month Day). *Title of work* [Format]. Publisher. URL

Howard, R. (Director). (2001). *A beautiful mind* [Film]. Universal Pictures.

Book (10.2–10.3)

Author Last Name, Initials. (Year). *Book title* (edition, Volume). Publisher. DOI

Craib, I. (2015). *Modern social theory* (2nd ed.). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315656502

Chapter in an Edited Book (10.3)

Author Last Name, Initials. (Publication Year). Title of chapter. In Initials Last Name of Editor & Initials Last Name of Editor (Eds.), *Title of book* (edition, Volume, pp. pages of section). Publisher. DOI

Chaffee, D. (2012). Reflexive identities. In A. Elliot (Ed.), *Routledge handbook of identity studies* (pp. 100-111). Routledge, Taylor & Francis.

Content Generated by Artificial Intelligence (AI) (APA Style Blog, "Citing generative AI in APA Style: Part 1")

Note: APA encourages writers to cite any AI use within the writing process. See APA Style website.

AI Company Name. (year, month day). *Title of chat in italics* [Description, such as Generative AI chat]. Tool Name/Model. URL of the chat

OpenAI. (2026, Aug. 11). *Citing AI conversation in APA* [Generative AI chat]. ChatGPT. https://chatgpt.com/share/6a7b8fb7-9330-83e8-8372-06cee634545a

Interviews and Oral Histories in Archives (APA Style Blog, "Archival Documents and Collections")

Interviewee Last Name, Initials. (Year, Month Day). *Interview by Interviewer* [recording device]. Title, locational information within archive, Archive Name, city, country.

Abernathy, F. R. (1984, April 2). *Interview by Henry Papier* [Tape recording]. Memoirs from the Binary (Box SH1), Archives of the Southbend History, Bennington, VT, United States.

Journal Article (10.1)

Author Last Name, Initials., & Author Last Name, Initials. (Year). Title of article. *Title of Periodical*, *volume#*(issue#), pages. DOI

Lazebna, N. & Prykhodko, A. (2021). Digital discourse of English language acquisition. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, *17*(2), 971-982. https://doi.org/10.52462/jlls.67

Newspaper or Magazine Article (10.1)

Author Last Name, Initials. (Year, Month Day). Title of article. *Title of Newspaper or Magazine*, *volume#*(issue#), pages. URL

Timiraos, N. (2023, July 30). Why the drivers of lower inflation matter. *The Wall Street Journal*. https://www.wsj.com/articles/why-the-drivers-of-lower-inflation-matter-fe3f165d

Webpage on a Website (10.16)

Author Last Name, Initials. (Year, Month Day). *Webpage title*. Site Name. URL

National Institute of Mental Health. (2024, April). *Older adults and mental health.* National Institute of Health. https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/older-adults-and-mental-health