APA Formatting and Documentation Guidelines: NEIT’s Standard for Writing a College Paper

Prepared for: Graduate Students

Prepared by: APA Ad Hoc Committee

Updated Spring 2021
The APA guidelines in this packet are taken from the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.). Follow these guidelines when you research your topic and write your paper. **If your instructor asks you to follow different formatting rules, please follow the instructor’s guidelines.**

**Formatting Rules**

The following requirements apply to your entire paper:

1. Double-spaced
2. One-inch margins for the top, bottom, left, and right of each page
3. One-half inch indent at the beginning of each paragraph
4. Left alignment
5. 12-point Times New Roman, Calibri, or Arial font
6. A running head and a page number in upper right corner of each page, starting with the title page

**Formatting Your Title Page**

All information on the title page should be centered horizontally on the page, 3-4 lines down from the top margin, and double-spaced.

**Contents of Your Title Page:**

1. Page number, upper right corner
2. The full title of your paper in bold, followed by a blank, double-spaced line
3. Your name
4. College name

**Formatting Your Running Head**

1. Double-click the header area of the document to open it OR click on the Insert tab, click Header, and then click Blank.
2. Type the title of your paper (shortened if longer than 50 characters) in ALL CAPS followed by a space.
3. On the Header & Footer Tools Design tab, in the Header & Footer group, click Page Number, then Current Position, and then Plain Number. Place your cursor before the page number and hit the Tab key until the page number is against the right margin.

Below is a sample title page in APA style

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NURSING LEADERSHIP & PATIENT OUTCOMES  1

The Relationship Between Nursing Leadership and Patient Outcomes

Samuel Smith

New England Institute of Technology
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How to Create the Levels of Headings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Format</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>Centered, Bold, Title Case Heading</strong>&lt;br&gt;Text begins as a new paragraph.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><strong>Flush Left, Bold, Title Case Heading</strong>&lt;br&gt;Text begins as a new paragraph.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td><strong>Flush Left, Bold Italic, Title Case Heading</strong>&lt;br&gt;Text begins as a new paragraph.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td><strong>Indented, Bold, Title Case Heading, Ending With a Period.</strong>&lt;br&gt;Text begins on the same line and continues as a regular paragraph.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td><strong>Indented, Bold Italic, Title Case Heading, Ending With a Period.</strong>&lt;br&gt;Text begins on the same line and continues as a regular paragraph.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Title case means major words are capitalized
(American Psychological Association, 2020)

**How to Create the Abstract**

The abstract is a “comprehensive summary of the contents of the paper” and is “limited to no more than 250 words” (American Psychological Association, 2020, p. 38). The abstract is on its own page after the title page and is double-spaced without an indentation.

**Plagiarism**

Appropriate documentation protects you from being accused of plagiarism and the penalties that may result. The verb “plagiarize” is defined by Webster’s Dictionary as “to steal the words, ideas, etc. of another and use them as one’s own,” and plagiarism is defined as “literary theft” (“Plagiarize,” n.d.). Passing off someone else’s work as your own is a form of cheating, and cheating has consequences. If the exact wording of a research source is copied directly and is not documented, it is usually obvious to an instructor. Your own writing style will deviate noticeably from the style of the writer whose words you have copied. For the full definition of plagiarism and information on the consequences of it, see NEIT’s Academic Honesty Policy in your Student Handbook or on the student homepage at [http://students.neit.edu/](http://students.neit.edu/).

**Documenting**

Whenever you use the words or ideas of others, whether from a book, article, video, YouTube, picture, and so forth, you need to give the author(s) credit and provide the reader with the exact information he/she will need to locate and access each of your sources. All sources must be cited, even if you are paraphrasing (rewording) the information.

This is known as documenting your sources and helps you to avoid plagiarism. Per the rules of APA documentation, this is accomplished in two ways: by citing your sources within the body of your paper and by creating a reference page, both of which you are to include in your paper. *Do not include sources on your reference page that you did not cite in your paper.*
Note: Having to go back to even one of your sources to retrieve this information can be both time-consuming and frustrating, so it’s best to collect it while you are doing your research. If you even think that you might want to use the source, copy the information.

Paraphrasing

1. Give the author credit and indicate the year of the publication where the information was found.
2. Use the past tense when referring to a source.
3. Use different ways of citing so that your flow of thought is clear and that the citations do not interfere with what you are trying to say.

Examples Citing Paraphrasing

1. According to Pombo et al. (2018), using digital technology to solve problems may help change the way we receive or use public services and take care of health. [This citation is called “narrative.”]
2. Using digital technology to solve problems may help change the way we receive or use public services and take care of health (Pombo et al., 2018). [This citation is called “parenthetical.”]

Tip: When creating an in-text citation for three or more authors, use the last name of the first author and then “et al.”

Direct Quotations

1. The use of quotations should be limited to profound information that cannot be paraphrased. Only one to two quotes are recommended per paper. Keep in mind that this is your paper, and your reader should hear your voice in the paper.
2. Use quotation marks.
3. Place some punctuation, such as commas and periods, inside the quotation marks unless the in-text citation follows the quotation.
4. An in-text citation should be placed in parentheses outside the quotation marks. The period should follow the parentheses.

Examples Citing Quotations

1. According to Pombo et al. (2018), “Disruption is the new normal and the digital transformation can spur innovation growth across many activities, transform public services, and improve well-being as information, knowledge and data become widely available” (p. 4).
2. While some think that computers have destroyed personal connections, some believe that “the digital transformation can spur innovation growth across many activities, transform public services, and improve well-being as information, knowledge and data become widely available” (Pombo et al., 2018, p. 4).
Tip: When quoting, you need to include the page number or the paragraph number if using an electronic source in the citation.

Block Quotations

If a quotation contains 40 or more words, it is indented half an inch from the left margin and double-spaced, in a freestanding block of text without quotation marks. Punctuation precedes the parentheses.

Example Block Quotations (with and without introducing the author):

Jones's (1998) study found the following:

Students often had difficulty using APA style, especially when it was their first time citing sources. This difficulty could be attributed to the fact that many students failed to purchase a style manual or to ask their teacher for help. (p. 199)

One study found the following:

Students often had difficulty using APA style, especially when it was their first time citing sources. This difficulty could be attributed to the fact that many students failed to purchase a style manual or to ask their teacher for help. (Jones, 1998, p. 199)

Preparing a Reference Page

- Begin on a new page, separate from the body of your paper.
- This page is placed at the end of your paper.
- The title “References” (without quotation marks) should be capitalized and centered one inch from the top of the page in upper- and lowercase letters, bolded.
- Include all the retrievable sources that you quoted or referred to in your in-text documentation. “Retrievable” in this case means that someone reading your paper could find a copy of the source using the information you provide in the list.
- Use an author’s last name and first and middle initials. No professional credentials are necessary.
- If there is no named author, list the entry alphabetically by the first significant word of the title (i.e., after words like “a,” “an,” and “the”).
- All items (references) are to be arranged in alphabetical order by the last name of the primary author.
- The reference page is double-spaced.
- Titles of books, periodicals, web pages/articles, films, videos, TV shows, and video games are italicized.
• Capitalize the first word in a title, the first word in a subtitle (if there is one), and all proper nouns. Example: Opinion: The mysteries of Christopher Columbus.

• There should be one space after all forms of punctuation.

• Use a hanging indent: the first line of each entry should be placed against the left-hand margin and all other lines of the entry should be indented by five spaces (half an inch). Tip: To insert a hanging indent automatically, select all your reference entries and click “Ctrl + T.” “Command + T” on a Mac.

Tip: To alphabetize your reference page more quickly, select all your reference entries, click the AZ↓ icon on the toolbar, and choose “Sort by: Paragraphs,” “Text,” and “Ascending.”

Tip: Use a page break to separate the body of your paper from your reference page.

• Place your cursor after your last sentence.

• Choose the Insert Tab.

• Choose Page Break.

Below Are Sample Entries for a Reference Page:

Author 1  Author 2  Year of Publication  Title


Company that published it

Author 1  Author 2  Author 3  Year  Article  Title


When you are in a database, take advantage of the cite tool at the right of the screen. Click on “Cite” and choose “APA style.” After copying and pasting to your reference page, double-check the citation. For example, you may need to make small changes to capitalization. If the article does not have a DOI, then click on the permalink for the URL.
Examples for Creating a Reference Page Using APA Format

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Source</th>
<th>Reference Entry</th>
<th>Text Citation</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

*While entries in this packet are single-spaced, please make sure to double-space your entries on the reference page.*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Source</th>
<th>Reference Entry</th>
<th>Text Citation</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Google Book</td>
<td>Pombo, C., Gupta, R., &amp; Stankovic, M. (2018). <em>Social services for digital citizens: Opportunities for Latin America and the Caribbean.</em> Inter-American Development Bank. <a href="https://books.google.com/books?id=kOGDwAQAQBAJ&amp;printsec=frontcover&amp;dq=latin+american&amp;hl=en&amp;newbks=1&amp;newbks_redir=0&amp;sa=X&amp;ved=2ahUKEwj45ty_iazmAhWkneAKHZRtDqsQ6AEwAHoECAAQAQ#v=onepage&amp;q&amp;f=false">https://books.google.com/books?id=kOGDwAQAQBAJ&amp;printsec=frontcover&amp;dq=latin+american&amp;hl=en&amp;newbks=1&amp;newbks_redir=0&amp;sa=X&amp;ved=2ahUKEwj45ty_iazmAhWkneAKHZRtDqsQ6AEwAHoECAAQAQ#v=onepage&amp;q&amp;f=false</a></td>
<td>(Pombo et al., 2018)</td>
<td>When creating an in-text citation for three or more authors, use the last name of the first author and then “et al.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of Source</td>
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<td>Comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal interview</td>
<td><em><strong>Since readers cannot retrieve the information, a personal interview is not included in the reference page.</strong></em></td>
<td>(R. Smith, personal communication, January 12, 2020) R. Smith (personal communication, January 12, 2020)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For more information, please consult the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 7th edition*, 2019 (available for use in the NEIT Writing Center and the NEIT library). To purchase the APA manual or to access other tips: https://apastyle.apa.org/.

You may also seek helpful and free assistance from your instructor, the Writing Center tutors, and the Library reference staff. All are experienced users and educators of APA style.

**References**
