APA Sample Paper: Commonly Asked Questions About APA Style

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The format and structure are key aspects of any style paper. For APA, the paper needs to be typed in Times New Roman 12 point font and double-spaced, aligned to the left with single indentations for new paragraphs. The structured sections for an average APA paper, depending on the assignment and purpose, are as follows: Title Page, Abstract, Introduction, Method, Results, Discussion, and References. Longer papers may also have one or more Appendix sections. These are discussed in greater detail in *APA Sample Paper: Commonly Addressed Questions on Structure of APA Style Papers*. For additional information and questions, good sources would be the most current edition of the APA *Publication Manual* (2012) or the Purdue *OWL* website.

While writing the APA paper, something critical to keep in mind is citation, both in-text and in the reference section. Example citations for common sources, such as books, online articles, and scholarly journals, are located in the References section at the end of this paper. List the sources used in alphabetical order with a hanging indent. Only capitalize the first letter of the first word and proper nouns in article and book titles. There are online resources that can automatically generate citations; however, these are not always accurate, so it is usually best to do it manually. Citations can seem tedious and complicated at first, but with practice and by learning to follow the formulas, it all becomes less intimidating.

In-text citations are used throughout the text of the paper. They are used any time a source’s information is applied, whether paraphrased or directly quoted. Conveniently, in-text citations tend to be simple, often located at the end of the sentence in parentheses (Author’s last name, year). An example of this would be “Dogs that received the belly rub treatment three times daily were shown to have higher levels of contentment” (Bark, 2016, p. 43). Note that the
period goes at the very end of it all, outside of the quote and parentheses. If the citation came from a book, add the page numbers (Author last name, year, pp.) If there are two authors, use the ampersand symbol (Bark & Woofer, 2015, p. 56). For three authors, use comma and then ampersand (Woofer, Rover & Tail, 2016), and in subsequent references, use the first author then et al. (Woofer et al., 2016). In cases where there are six or more authors, cite only the first author’s name followed by et al. (Rover et al., 2016). Alternatively, introduce the authors within the sentence and then cite the year: Bark and Woofer (2016) conducted a study to investigate the effects of eating kibble versus eating grain free dog food. In some instances, there may be no author. If this is the case, then just use the first few words of the reference entry, usually the title of the article (“Dog Treats”, 2016). In the case of directly quoting material, include the specific page number within the citation (Biscuit & Flea, 2016, pp. 66-67).

If directly quoting material and the quoted word count exceeds 40, it will need to be placed in a block quotation. Begin the quote on a new line, still double spaced. For word processors like Word and Google Docs, hit Tab twice, then backspace the indent to set the block quote. State the quote, then give the citation after the final punctuation mark. (Last name, year, pp.)

Another commonly encountered mechanics issue with APA is the dilemma whether to use numerals to denote numbers. The rule of thumb with APA is that numbers less than 10 should be spelled out, such as two or nine, but there are exceptions. Numerals are used to represent units of measurement and mathematical functions, such as 5 mg or 45%. Time, dates, age, scores, and points are also expressed by numerals, like 8:15 pm, 6 years old, 2 hours. If the number is at the beginning of the sentence, spell it out. Fifteen dogs went outside, while 12 stayed in. Graphs and charts are numbered as figures such as Figure 2 or Figure 6.
At the end of this paper, a sample References section is provided to give a visual aid for structuring the citations. References should be listed in alphabetical order by author’s last name, or if there is no author, by the title of the source. If there is more than one author with the same last name, order those sources chronologically by year. Use a hanging indent. This can be created in Word by highlighting the reference, going to Paragraph Settings, then changing the indent to hanging. In Google Docs, it can be a little more tedious. Go to the end of the first line, then hit Enter and Tab.

Please note that this sample paper, while addressing the main issues concerning APA style, is not an all-encompassing article. You can also utilize the UTC APA paper template from the WCC’s website. Keep in mind that it is always a good idea to double-check formatting before submitting and to refer to any specific formatting guidelines your instructor has provided. For further, more specific APA help, consult the APA *Publication Manual* (2012) or visit the *Purdue OWL* website.
References

Author last name, Initials. (Year). Title of article. *Title of Periodical, volume*(issue), page range.

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