APA STYLE 7th edition

Student Paper Checklist (Beginner's Version)

Use this checklist to help you write a beginner-friendly student paper in seventh edition APA Style, consisting of a title page, text, and reference list. If your paper has more elements, such as tables and figures, use the *Publication Manual* checklist or the *Concise Guide* checklist. Links in this checklist lead to free resources on the APA Style website. For questions about specific assignment guidelines, check with your instructor.

General Format

- ☐ Use the same font and font size throughout your paper. Any legible and accessible font is acceptable, including the default font of your word-processing program (e.g., 11- or 12-point Calibri, Arial, or Times New Roman).
- ☐ Double-space the entire paper, including the references. Do not add extra lines before or after headings or between paragraphs of text.
- ☐ Set margins to 1 in. on all sides, which is usually the default.
- ☐ Insert page numbers in the top right of every page (including the title page, which is page 1) using the automatic page-numbering function of your word-processing program.
- ☐ Place pages in the order of title page, text, and references. Start the text on a new page after the title page. Start references on a new page after the text.

Title Page

- ☐ **Title:** Write the title in the upper half of the title page (three or four lines from the top margin), centered and in bold. Ensure it captures the main point of your work. Capitalize the title in title case (Most Words Capitalized). Add a blank line after the title and before your name.
- ☐ **Author:** Write your full name, centered on its own line, after the blank line and title.
- ☐ **Affiliation:** Provide the department of your course and the name of your school, centered on their own line after your name (e.g., Department of Psychology, Williams College).
- ☐ **Course:** Provide the name and number of the course, centered on its own line after the affiliation. Match the format given on course materials.
- ☐ **Instructor:** Provide the instructor's name, centered on a new line after the course information.
- ☐ **Due Date:** Include the month, day, and year in the date format used in your country (e.g., September 20, 2023), centered on a new line after the instructor name. Spell out the month and write the full year.
- ☐ Compare your title page against a sample student title page to check your work.

Text Format

- ☐ Repeat the paper title on the first line of the first page of text (page 2), centered and in bold.
- ☐ Begin the text immediately after the repeated title. Use left-justified paragraphs, with the first line of every paragraph indented.
- ☐ Use headings to divide the text into sections as needed. Short student papers may not require any headings. Do not use the heading "Introduction"; just start the paper.

Writing Style and Grammar

- [ ] Eliminate wordiness, redundancy, evasiveness, and circumlocution (i.e., writing in circles).
- [ ] Vary sentence length. Break up paragraphs longer than one double-spaced page into shorter paragraphs.
- [ ] Use transitions to smoothly connect sentences, paragraphs, and ideas.
- [ ] Use a professional tone and professional language. Do not use jargon, contractions, colloquialisms, or creative literary devices.
- [ ] Use verb tenses consistently across sentences and paragraphs. Describe past research in the past or present perfect tense (e.g., "Researchers found" or "Researchers have found," not "Researchers find").
- [ ] Use the active voice as much as possible to make your writing more direct. The passive voice is allowed when you need to focus on the recipient of an action, but don't overdo it.
- [ ] Ensure verbs agree in number with their subjects.
- [ ] Use first-person pronouns to describe your work and personal reactions. Use "I" for a solo paper; use "we" for a group paper.
- [ ] Use the singular "they" to refer to a hypothetical person or when gender is unknown; otherwise, use a person's self-identified pronouns.

Bias-Free and Inclusive Language

- [ ] Check your work for bias. Avoid perpetuating prejudicial beliefs or demeaning attitudes. Describe all people with dignity and respect using the language they use to call themselves.
- [ ] Read the Brief Guide to Bias-Free and Inclusive Language for preliminary suggestions regarding the discussion of age, disability, gender, race and ethnicity, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status.

Punctuation

- [ ] Avoid overloading sentences with punctuation marks. Split too-long sentences into multiple shorter sentences.
- [ ] Use one space after a period or other punctuation mark at the end of a sentence.
- [ ] Use a serial comma before the final item in a list of three or more items (e.g., "bananas, apples, and oranges" not "bananas, apples and oranges").

Spelling, Capitalization, Abbreviations, and Numbers

- [ ] Use the spellings shown in the *APA Dictionary of Psychology* for psychological terms and in the *Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary* for other words. Also follow APA's preferred spellings of technology words.
- [ ] Write most words with prefixes and suffixes without a hyphen (e.g., "nonjudgmental" not "non-judgmental").
- [ ] Capitalize proper nouns, including names of racial and ethnic groups (e.g., "Black" and "White" not "black" and "white").
- [ ] Do not capitalize names of diseases, disorders, therapies, treatments, theories, concepts, hypotheses, principles, models, and statistical procedures, unless personal names appear within these terms (e.g., depression, diabetes, Alzheimer's disease).
- [ ] Use abbreviations sparingly. Define most abbreviations, such as abbreviations for group authors, on first use (e.g., "WHO" for "World Health Organization").
- [ ] Use words to express numbers zero through nine and numbers that begin a sentence.
- [ ] Use numerals to express numbers 10 and above as well as all percentages (e.g., 95%), measurements (e.g., 3 cm), ages (e.g., 5 years old), and time (e.g., 4 months).

In-Text Citations

- [ ] Cite only works you read and ideas you incorporated into your paper.
- [ ] Include all sources cited in the text in the reference list (exception: cite personal communications in the text only).
- [ ] Match the spelling of author names and the publication year in the in-text citations to the corresponding reference list entries.
- [ ] Paraphrase sources in your own words whenever possible.
- [ ] Avoid plagiarism by citing the words and ideas of others. However, do not repeat the same citation in every sentence when the source and topic do not change; this is overcitation.
- [ ] Write author–date citations using either the narrative or parenthetical citation format:
  - Parenthetical format: (Beatty, 2023)
  - Narrative format: Beatty (2023) stated...
- [ ] Format author names according to how many authors the work has:
  - One author: (Kim, 2023) or Kim (2023).
  - Two authors: (Guirrez & Castillo, 2020) or Guirrez and Castillo (2020). Use an ampersand in the parenthetical format; use "and" in the narrative format.
  - Three or more authors: (Zheng et al., 2023) or Zheng et al. (2023).
- [ ] When citing multiple works in parentheses, place the citations in alphabetical order and separate them with semicolons: (Davis, 2023; Joo et al., 2017; Swann & Gould, 2021).
- [ ] When multiple parenthetical citations have the same author(s), order the years chronologically and separate them with commas: (Coutlee, 2019, 2020).
- [ ] Limit the use of direct quotations. It is better to paraphrase.
- [ ] For quotation citations, include the author, year, and page number or other location information (e.g., section name, time stamp from a video).
- [ ] Use the short quotation format for quotation of less than 40 words. Ensure the citation appears before the period that ends the sentence:
  - Sentence "quotation" (Author, year, p. X).
  - Author (year) stated "quotation" (p. X).
- [ ] Use the block quotation format for quotations of 40 words or more.

References

- [ ] Start the reference list on a new page after the text.
- [ ] Write the label "References" at the top of the page, centered and in bold.
- [ ] Double-space all references, both within and between entries, and apply a hanging indent (first line flush left, subsequent lines indented by 0.5 in.). Use the paragraph-formatting function of word-processing program to achieve the hanging indent.
- [ ] Ensure all reference entries have a corresponding in-text citation. If they do not, add citations or delete references.
- [ ] Follow the reference examples for the type of work being cited, such as a journal article, book, or webpage. Adapt reference format if there is missing information.
- [ ] Capitalize reference titles in sentence case (e.g., *A tale of two cities* not *A Tale of Two Cities*).
- [ ] Put references in alphabetical order.
- [ ] Double-check the format of authors, dates, titles, sources, DOIs, and URLs in references, by following the Creating an APA Style Reference List Guide.

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More information on APA Style can be found in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.) and the *Concise Guide to APA Style* (7th ed.).

CITE THIS HANDOUT:

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