

## Basics of APA Style Tutorial

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In this tutorial you will learn how to apply some basic rules of APA Style.

For in-depth guidance on style and for comprehensive information on publishing in the social and behavioral sciences, we urge you to buy the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, Sixth Edition*.

Where various elements of APA Style are described, chapter and section numbers are given to tell you where more details can be found in the *Publication Manual*.

[Begin the tutorial](#)



### Introduction

APA Style was developed by social and behavioral scientists to standardize scientific writing.

APA Style is used for

- term papers,
- research reports,
- empirical studies,
- literature reviews,
- theoretical articles,
- methodological articles, and
- case studies.



## Manuscript Structure

APA research papers are divided into sections. The main sections are

- [Title page](#) (2.01–2.03)
- [Abstract](#) (2.04)
- [Introduction](#) (2.05)
- [Method](#) (2.06)
- [Results](#) (2.07)
- [Discussion](#) (2.08)
- [References](#) (2.11)
- [Appendices](#) (2.13)

Click on any of the research paper sections above to view a sample.





### Manuscript Format

Formatting your paper in APA Style means paying attention to mechanical details such as typeface, line spacing, margins, and page headers.

For an example of APA formatting, [view the sample papers](#) in the Resources section above.



**Figure 2.1.** Sample One-Experiment Paper (The numbers refer to numbered sections in the *Publication Manual*.)



Paper adapted from "Effects of Age on Detection of Emotional Information," by C. M. Leclerc and E. A. Kensinger, 2008, *Psychology and Aging*, 23, pp. 209-215. Copyright 2008 by the American Psychological Association.

## Manuscript Format

When preparing your manuscript for submission, format it as follows (8.03):

- Use a serif typeface, such as Times New Roman, for the text of your manuscript. Use a sans serif typeface, such as Arial, for figure labels.
- Double-space the entire manuscript. Double-space between lines of body text and titles, headings, and block quotations. Double-space the reference list and figure captions.
- Indent the first line of every paragraph one-half inch.
- Align the text to the left-hand margin, leaving a “ragged” right margin.

Serif typeface

Sans serif typeface

Heading

The manuscript is double-spaced for readability. There is no need for extra spaces between headings and body text. Indent the first line of every paragraph.

Next Heading

Align the text to the left margin, leaving a ragged right margin.  
Now I will introduce a block quotation.

For a block quotation, indent the entire paragraph one half inch. Double space between body text and the block quotation as well as between lines in the block quotation. Use the same size typeface for the block quotation as you use for the rest of the paper. Don't forget to cite the source of your quotation. (Source, year, page number)

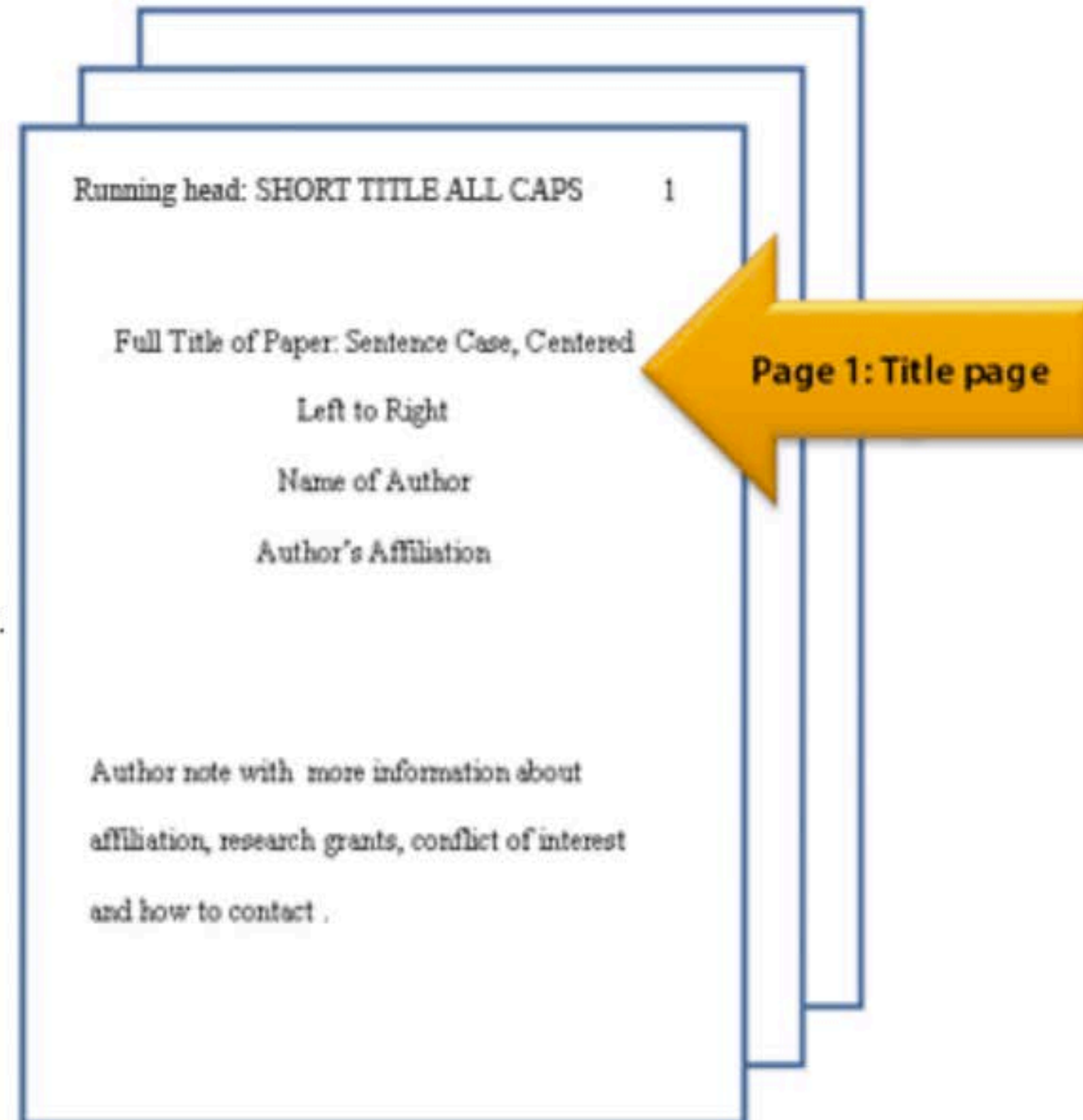


### Manuscript Format

When you submit your manuscript, number the pages consecutively starting with page 1 (8.03).

Put the pages in the following order:

- Page 1, Title page
- Page 2, Abstract
- Page 3, Beginning of text
- References begin on a new page after the last page of text.
- Each table begins on a new page after the References.
- Each figure begins on a new page after the Tables. Include the figure caption on the same page as the figure.
- Each appendix begins on a new page.



## Headings

Headings help readers find key points of your paper and track the development of your thoughts.

APA Style uses five levels of headings (3.02–3.03).

The table below shows how each type of heading is formatted.

**Table 3.1 Format for Five Levels of Heading in APA Journals**

<b>Level of heading</b>	<b>Format</b>
1	<b>Centered, Boldface, Uppercase and Lowercase Heading<sup>a</sup></b>
2	<b>Flush Left, Boldface, Uppercase and Lowercase Heading</b>
3	<b>Indented, boldface, lowercase paragraph heading ending with a period.<sup>b</sup></b>
4	<b><i>Indented, boldface, italicized, lowercase paragraph heading ending with a period.</i></b>
5	<b><i>Indented, italicized, lowercase paragraph heading ending with a period.</i></b>

<sup>a</sup> This type of capitalization is also referred to as *title case*. <sup>b</sup> In a *lowercase paragraph heading*, the first letter of the first word is uppercase and the remaining words are lowercase.



## Headings

Use heading levels consecutively (3.02–3.03).

For example, if your paper has three heading levels, use Levels 1, 2, and 3, as shown in the graphic.

for the arousing items than shown by the young adults (resulting in an interaction between age and arousal).

**Participants**

Younger adults (14 women, 10 men,  $M_{age} = 19.5$  years, age range: 18–22 years) were recruited with fliers posted on the Boston College campus. Older adults (15 women, 9 men,  $M_{age} = 70.1$  years, age range: 60–74 years) were recruited through the Harvard Cooperative on Aging

**Method**

**Valence and arousal ratings.** Valence and arousal were judged on 7-point scales (1 = negative valence or low arousal and 7 = positive valence or high arousal). Negative objects received mean valence ratings of 2.5 or lower, neutral objects received mean valence ratings of 3.5 to 4.5, and positive objects received mean valence ratings of 5.5 or higher. High arousal

This example shows Level 1, Level 2, and Level 3 headings.

Figure 2.3. Sample Meta-Analysis (continued)

THE SLEEPER EFFECT IN PERSUASION 3

was satisfactory (Owen, 1964). We resolved disagreements by discussion and consultation with colleagues. Characteristics of the individual studies included in this review are presented in Table 1. The studies often contained several independent datasets such as different messages and different experiments. The characteristics that distinguish different datasets within a report appear on the second column of the table.

**Dependent Measures and Computation of Effect Size**

We calculated effect sizes for (a) persuasion and (b) recall-recognition of the message content. Calculations were based on the data described in the primary reports as well as available responses of the authors in requests for further information... (section continued).

**Analysis of Effect Sizes**

There are two effects... (section continued)

To benefit from the data... (section continued)

The data analysis... (section continued)

**Sample of Headings and Descriptive Statistics**

Table 2... (section continued)

**Overview of the Average Sleeper Effect**

A thorough and... (section continued)

place over time... (section continued)

In light of these requirements, we first examined whether discounting can lead to a decrease in agreement with the communication (discounting effect). Next... (section continued)

**Testing for a nonperpetuating sleeper effect.** To determine whether or not a delayed increase in persuasion represents an absolute sleeper effect, one needs to rule out a nonperpetuating sleeper effect, which takes place when a message initially backfires but later loses this reverse effect (see panel A of Figure 1)... (section continued)

**Average sleeper effect.** To derive statistics corresponding to average changes in persuasion from the immediate to the delay of posttest appear in Table 4, organized by the different conditions we considered (i.e., acceptance-ear, discounting-ear, no message control, and message-only control). In Table 4, positive effect sizes indicate increases in persuasion over time, negative effect sizes indicate decay in persuasion, and zero effects denote stability in persuasion. Confidence intervals that do not include zero indicate significant changes over time. The first row of Table 4 shows that recipients of acceptance-ear agreed with the message less as time went by (fixed-effects,  $d = -0.21$ ; random-effects,  $d = -0.23$ ). In contrast to the decay in persuasion for recipients of acceptance-ear, there was a slight increase in persuasion for recipients of discounting-ear over time ( $d = 0.06$ ). It is important to note that change in discounting-ear conditions significantly differed from change in acceptance-ear conditions, (fixed-effects,  $t = -0.20$ ,  $SE = 0.04$ ), ( $M(1) = 58.15$ ,  $p < .0001$ ); (random-effects,  $t = 105.82$ ,  $p < .0001$ ... (section continued)

**Summary and variability of the overall effect.** The overall analyses identified a relative sleeper effect in persuasion, but no absolute sleeper effect. The latter was not surprising, because the sleeper effect was expected to emerge under specific conditions... (section continued)

Use at least two subheadings in a section, 3.02



## Headings

Use heading levels consecutively (3.02–3.03).

For example, if your paper has three heading levels, use Levels 1, 2, and 3, as shown in the graphic.

for the arousing items than shown by the young adults (resulting in an interaction between age and arousal).

**Participants**

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**Method**

**Valence and arousal ratings.** Valence and arousal were judged on 7-point scales (1 = negative valence or low arousal and 7 = positive valence or high arousal). Negative objects received mean valence ratings of 2.5 or lower, neutral objects received mean valence ratings of 3.5 to 4.5, and positive objects received mean valence ratings of 5.5 or higher. High arousal

This example shows Level 1, Level 2, and Level 3 headings.

Figure 2.3. Sample Meta-Analysis (continued)

THE SLEEPER EFFECT IN PERSUASION 3

was satisfactory (Orwin, 1994). We resolved disagreements by discussion and consultation with colleagues. Characteristics of the individual studies included in this review are presented in Table 1. The studies often contained several independent datasets such as different messages and different experiments. The characteristics that distinguish different datasets within a report appear on the second column of the table.

**Dependent Measures and Computation of Effect Size**

We calculated effect sizes for (a) persuasion and (b) recall-recognition of the message content. Calculations were based on the data described in the primary reports as well as available responses of the authors to requests of further information. . . . (section continued)

**Analysis of Effect Sizes**

There are two effects. . . . (section continued)

To benefit from the meta-analysis, we conducted analyses using

The data analysis

estimation of overall effect sizes

Sample of studies and

Descriptive characteristics

Table 2. . . . (section continued)

Overview of the Analysis

A thorough and

condition differences

THE SLEEPER EFFECT IN PERSUASION 4

(place over time. . . . (section continued)

In light of these requirements, we first examined whether discounting cues led to a decrease in agreement with the communication (discounting effect). Next, . . . (section continued)

**Testing out a compensating booster effect.** To determine whether or not a delayed increase in persuasion represents an absolute sleeper effect, experiments to rule out a compensating booster effect, which takes place when a message initially backfires but later loses this reverse effect (see part A of Figure 1). . . . (section continued)

**Average sleeper effect.** To derive statistics corresponding to average changes in persuasion from the immediate to the delayed period appear in Table 4, organized by the different conditions we considered (i.e., acceptance-cue, discounting-cue, no message control, and message-only control). In Table 4, positive effect sizes indicate increases in persuasion over time, negative effect sizes indicate decay in persuasion, and zero effects denote stability in persuasion. Confidence intervals that do not include zero indicate significant changes over time. The first row of Table 4 shows that recipients of acceptance cues agreed with the message less as time went by (fixed effects,  $d_s = -0.21$ ; random effects,  $d_s = -0.23$ ). In contrast to the decay in persuasion for recipients of acceptance cues, there was a slight increase in persuasion for recipients of discounting cues over time ( $d_s = 0.08$ ). It is important to note that change in discounting-cue conditions significantly differed from change in acceptance-cue conditions, (fixed effects,  $F = -0.20, SE = 0.04$ ),  $Q(1) = 36.15, p < .0001$ ;  $Q(12) = 103.82, p < .0001$ . . . . (section continued)

**Summary and variability of the overall effect.** The overall analysis identified a relative sleeper effect in persuasion, but no absolute sleeper effect. The latter was not surprising, because the sleeper effect was expected to emerge under specific conditions. . . . (section continued)

Use at least two subheadings in a section, 3.02



### Reducing Bias in Language

APA is committed to objectivity in scientific reporting as well as the fair treatment of individuals and groups. Long-standing cultural practice can exert a powerful influence over even the most conscientious author. Familiarize yourself with the following general guidelines to write about groups with accuracy and sensitivity (Chapter 3):

Language

Guideline 1: Describe at the appropriate level of specificity.

- Guideline 2: Be sensitive to labels.
- Guideline 3: Acknowledge participation.





### Reducing Bias in Language

**Describe at the appropriate level of specificity.**

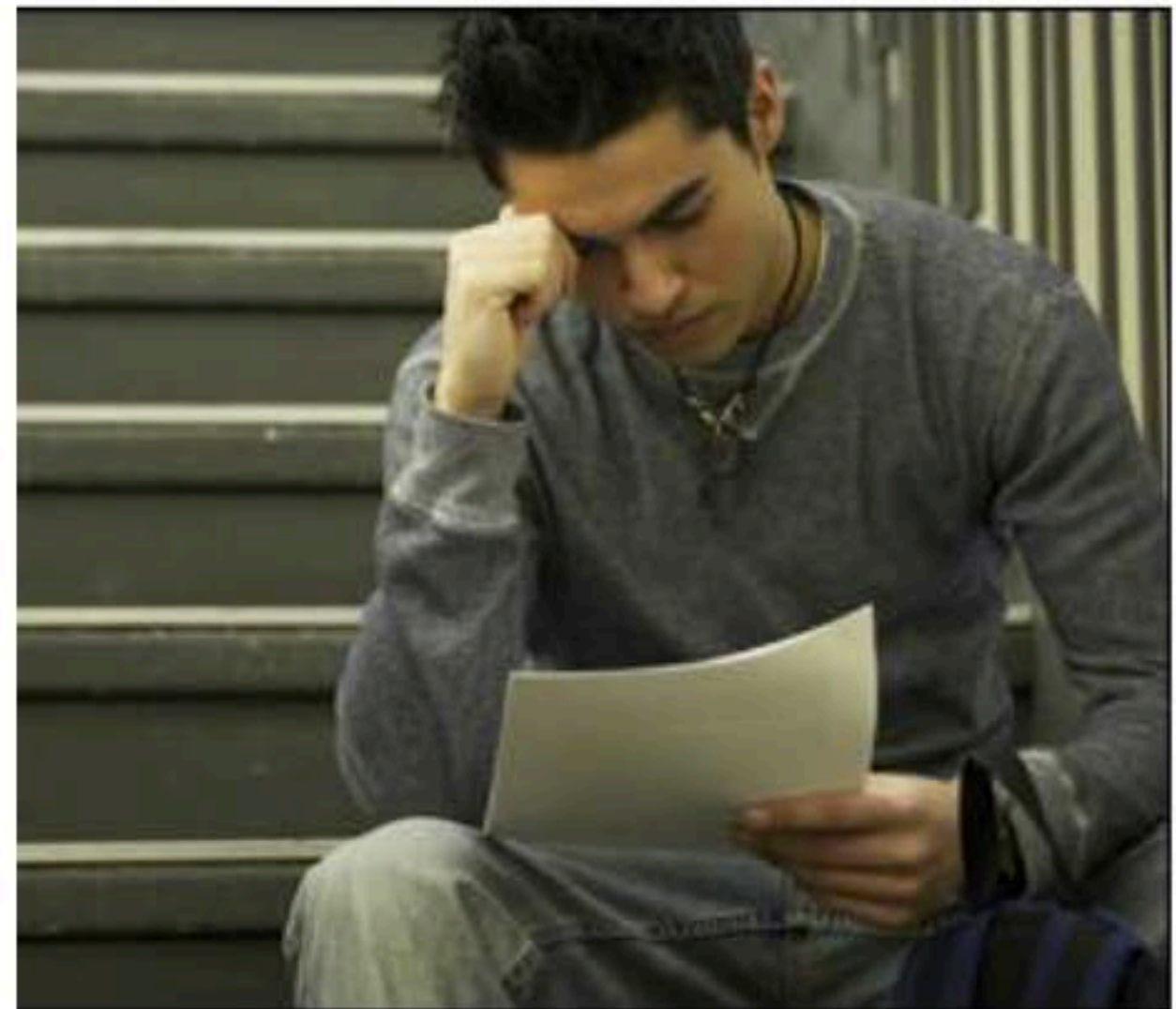
For example, if your paper mentions at-risk children, be specific about the risks:

- Not specific: *at-risk children*
- Specific: *children at risk for early school dropout*

If your paper discusses age groups, use a specific age range:

- Not specific: *over 18 years of age*
- Specific: *18- to 35-year-olds*

Part of writing without bias is recognizing that differences should be mentioned only when relevant. Marital status, sexual orientation, racial and ethnic identity or the fact that a person has a disability should not be mentioned gratuitously.





## Reducing Bias in Language

### Be sensitive to labels.

Call people what they prefer to be called, keeping in mind that these preferences can change over time.

For example, if your paper discusses Native Americans, you should determine how they would like to be described. Many Native American groups prefer their name to be in their native language, for instance, Dine rather than Navajo.

If your paper is about people with autism, you might use phrases such as the following:

Language

- Persons diagnosed with autism may have a restricted repertoire of activities relative to their age.
- Most of the children in the autism group did not respond when asked their name.





## Reducing Bias in Language

### Acknowledge participation.

When you write about the roles of individuals in an experiment, use language that portrays them as active participants, rather than passive recipients of the experiment.

For example, choose phrases such as the following:

- The students completed the survey *instead of*  
The survey was administered to the students.
- The children viewed objects on the screen *instead of*  
The children were shown several on-screen objects.
- We collected data from the participants *instead of*  
The participants were run.

**in Language** about the people in your study in a way that acknowledges their participation but is also consistent with the traditions of the field in which you are working. Thus, although descriptive terms such as *college students*, *children*, or *respondents* provide precise information about the individuals taking part in a research project, the more general terms *participants* and *subjects* are also in common usage.

### Citing References in Text

Cite the work of those individuals whose ideas, theories, or findings have directly influenced your work, even if you are paraphrasing or describing someone else's idea (Chapter 6).

To avoid plagiarism, take careful notes as you research to keep track of all sources and collect the information you need to cite them properly.

The following screens illustrate how to format citations in text.





### Citing References in Text

APA Style uses the author–date citation system. This system allows readers to find the sources cited in text in the reference list, where each source is listed alphabetically (Chapter 6).

To insert a citation in text, include the author's surname and year of publication. For a direct quotation, include the page number or specific location of the phrase or sentences in the original work.

Here are some examples of how to use the author–date citation when paraphrasing.

Kessler (2003) found that among epidemiological samples...

Early onset results in a more persistent and severe course (Kessler, 2003).

In 2003, Kessler's study of epidemiological samples showed that...

## Citing References in Text

The following chart shows how to format in-text citations (6.11–6.15)

**Table 6.1 Basic Citation Styles**

Type of citation	First citation in text	Subsequent citations in text	Parenthetical format, first citation in text	Parenthetical format, subsequent citations in text
One work by one author	Walker (2007)	Walker (2007)	(Walker, 2007)	(Walker, 2007)
One work by two authors	Walker and Allen (2004)	Walker and Allen (2004)	(Walker & Allen, 2004)	(Walker & Allen, 2004)
One work by three authors	Bradley, Ramirez, and Soo (1999)	Bradley et al. (1999)	(Bradley, Ramirez, & Soo, 1999)	(Bradley et al., 1999)
One work by four authors	Bradley, Ramirez, Soo, and Walsh (2006)	Bradley et al. (2006)	(Bradley, Ramirez, Soo, & Walsh, 2006)	(Bradley et al., 2006)
One work by five authors	Walker, Allen, Bradley, Ramirez, and Soo (2008)	Walker et al. (2008)	(Walker, Allen, Bradley, Ramirez, & Soo, 2008)	(Walker et al., 2008)
One work by six or more authors	Wasserstein et al. (2005)	Wasserstein et al. (2005)	(Wasserstein et al., 2005)	(Wasserstein et al., 2005)
Groups (readily identified through abbreviation) as authors	National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH, 2003)	NIMH (2003)	(National Institute of Mental Health [NIMH], 2003)	(NIMH, 2003)
Groups (no abbreviation) as authors	University of Pittsburgh (2005)	University of Pittsburgh (2005)	(University of Pittsburgh, 2005)	(University of Pittsburgh, 2005)



## Citing References in Text

When you need to cite two or more works together, arrange the in-text citations alphabetically in the same order in which they appear in the reference list (6.16).

Here are some examples of citations that include more than one work in the same parentheses:

```
Training materials are available (Department of Veterans Affairs, 2001, 2003)  
Past research (Gogel, 1990, 2006, in press)
```

```
Several studies (Derryberry & Reed, 2005a, 2005b, in press-a; Rothbart,  
2003a, 2003b)
```

Language

```
Several studies (Miller, 1999; Shafranske & Mahoney, 1998)
```

## The Reference List

The purpose of a reference list is to help readers find the sources you used. Therefore, the reference list should be as accurate and complete as possible (6.22–6.25).

All citations should be listed in the reference list, with the exception of personal communications and classical works.

Put references in order by the author's surname, or first author's surname if there is more than one author.

Use the hanging indent paragraph style. Double-space the entire reference list.

[View specific reference examples.](#)

### References

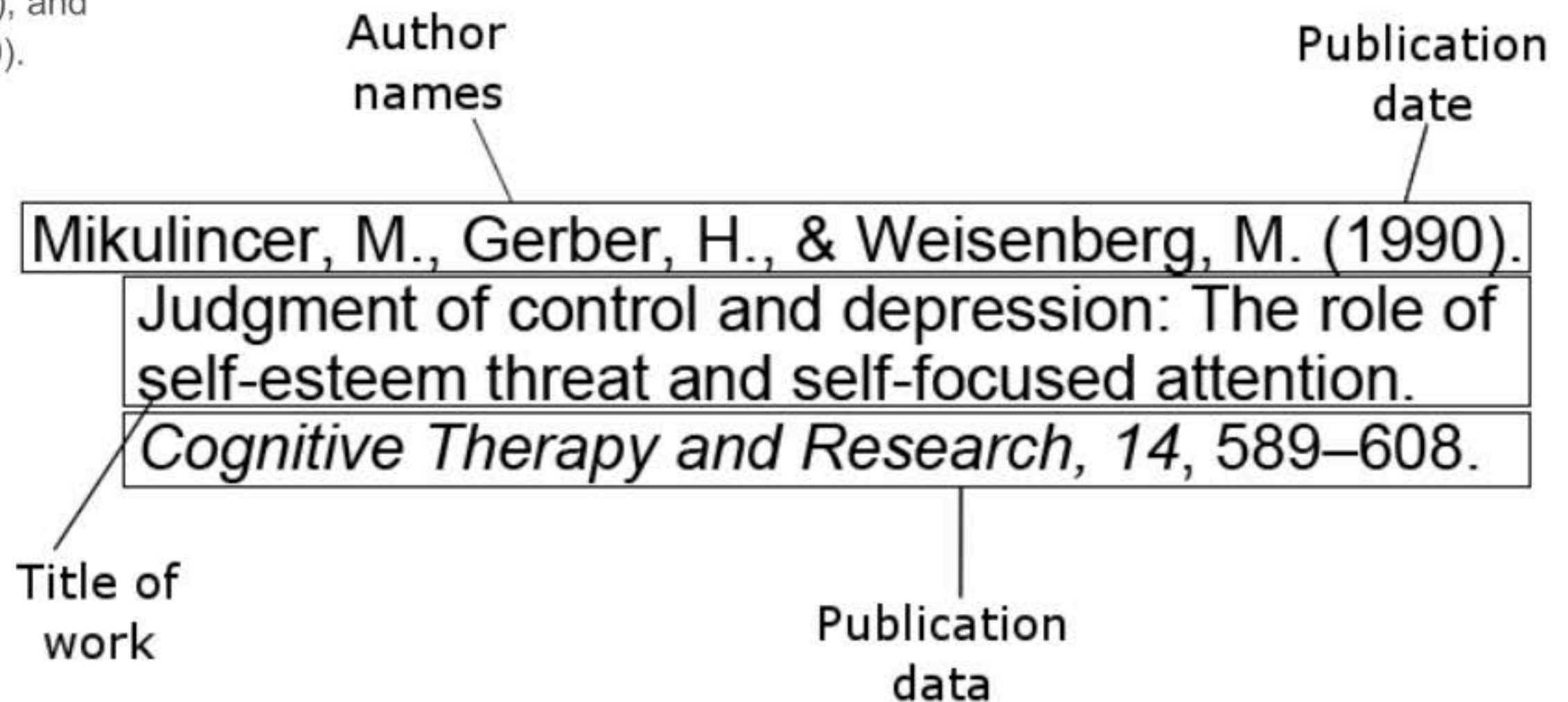
- Anderson, A. K. (2007). Affective influences on the attentional dynamics supporting awareness. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, *134*, 258–281. doi:10.1037/0096-3445.134.2.258
- Anderson, A. K., Christoff, K., De Foux, D., De Rosa, E., & Geisler, J. D. E. (2003). Neural correlates of the automatic processing of threat facial signals. *Journal of Neuroscience*, *23*, 5627–5633.
- Amosy, J. L., & Dolan, R. J. (2002). Modulation of spatial attention by fear-conditioned stimuli: An event-related fMRI study. *Neuropsychologia*, *40*, 817–826. doi:10.1016/S0028-3932(02)00175-6
- Beck, A. T., Epstein, N., Brown, G., & Steer, R. A. (1988). An inventory for measuring clinical anxiety: Psychometric properties. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, *56*, 893–897. doi:10.1037/0022-006X.56.6.893
- Calvo, M. G., & Lang, P. J. (2004). Gaze patterns when looking at emotional pictures: Motivationally biased attention. *Motivation and Emotion*, *28*, 221–243. doi:10.1023/B:JANCOEM.0000040153.26156.ad
- Carrón, L., Hinojosa, J. A., Martín-Luevas, M., Macaló, F., & Tapia, M. (2004). Automatic attention to emotional stimuli: Neural correlates. *Human Brain Mapping*, *22*, 290–299. doi:10.1002/hbm.20037



### The Reference List

References contain the following components:

- author name or names (6.27),
- publication date (6.28),
- title of the work (6.29), and
- publication data (6.30).



## The Reference List

Follow these general guidelines when you are citing a source you found on the web or in an electronic database (6.31–6.32).

- Make sure the version you are citing is the most recent one.
- Include journal volume number and inclusive page numbers if this information is available.
- Type or use the copy–paste function of your word processor to capture, the article DOI and place it at the end of the reference.
- If there is no DOI, cite the home page URL.

### What's a DOI?

A digital object identifier (DOI) is a permanent digital identifier given to an object. Its most common application is identifying electronic documents.

The International DOI Foundation (IDF) defines *DOI name* as “a digital identifier for any object of intellectual property.”



## The Reference List

Writers can include many kinds of material in their reference lists, such as dissertations, podcasts, book reviews, and archival material (Chapter 7).

For scholarly articles, the kinds of references most commonly included are

- journal articles,
- entire issue of a journal,
- chapter in an edited book,
- entire book, and
- conference proceedings.

## The Reference List

Here are instructions for formatting references to journal articles (7.01):

- Type the article title in sentence case and the journal title in title case.
- Italicize the journal title and volume number.
- Include the issue number in parentheses if the journal is paginated by issue.
- Type the DOI in the format shown in the first example. Do not put a period at the end of the DOI.

### DOI

```
Herbst-Damm, K. L., & Kulik, J. A. (2005). Volunteer support, marital status, and the survival times of terminally ill patients. Health Psychology, 24, 225-229.  
doi:10.1037/0278-6133.24.2.225
```

### NO DOI

```
Light, M. A., & Light, I. H. (2008). The geographic expansion of Mexican immigration in the United States and its implications for local law enforcement. Law Enforcement Executive Forum Journal, 8(1), 73-82.
```

### URL

```
Wheeler, D. P., & Bragin, M. (2007). Bringing it all back home: Social work and the challenge of returning veterans. Health and Social Work, 32, 297-300. Retrieved from http://www.naswpressonline.org
```



## The Reference List

Here are instructions for formatting a reference to an entire issue of a journal (7.01):

- To cite an entire issue of a journal, give the editors of the issue and the title of the issue.
- If the issue has no editors, move the issue title to the author position and alphabetize the reference entry by the first significant word in the title.
- These instructions are also applicable to formatting a reference to a special section.

Example with editors:

```
Greenfield, P., & Yan, Z. (Eds.). (2006). Children, adolescents, and the Internet [Special section]. Developmental Psychology, 42, 391-394. doi:10.1037/0012-1649.42.3.391
```

## The Reference List

Here are instructions for formatting a reference to a chapter in an edited book (7.02):

- After the chapter title type *In*, the editor's name, the abbreviation *Ed.* in parentheses, and then the title of the book.
- Give the page numbers in parentheses after the book title.

```
Haybron, D. M. (2008). Philosophy and the science of subjective well-being. In M. Eid & R. J. Larsen (Eds.), The science of subjective well-being (pp. 17-43). New York, NY: Guilford Press.
```



## The Reference List

Here are instructions for formatting a reference to an entire book (7.02):

- Type the title of the book in sentence case. Capitalize the first word following a colon or end punctuation in the title.
- If you cited an electronic book, give information about the format in square brackets after the title.
- For electronic books, give the DOI or URL in place of publisher location and name.

The third example shows how to format the name of a corporate author that is the same as the publisher name.

**Print Book:** Shotton, M. A. (1989). *Computer addiction? A study of computer dependency*. London, England: Taylor & Francis.

**Electronic Book (With DOI):** Schiraldi, G. R. (2001). *The post-traumatic stress disorder sourcebook: A guide to healing, recovery, and growth* [Adobe Digital Editions version]. doi:10.1036/10071393722

**Corporate Author:** American Psychological Association. (2010). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.



## The Reference List

Here are instructions for formatting a reference to a conference proceeding (7.04):

- To cite proceedings that are published regularly, use the same format as for a periodical.
- To cite proceedings that are published in book form, use the same format as for a chapter in an edited book.

**Published Regularly:** Herculano-Houzel, S., Collins, C. E., Wong, P., Kaas, J. H., & Lent, R. (2008). The basic nonuniformity of the cerebral cortex. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 105, 12593-12598. doi:10.1073/pnas.0805417105

**Published in Book Form:** Katz, I., Gabayan, K., & Aghajan, H. (2007). A multi-touch surface using multiple cameras. In J. Blanc-Talon, W. Philips, D. Popescu, & P. Scheunders (Eds.), *Lecture Notes in Computer Science: Vol. 4678. Advanced Concepts for Intelligent Vision Systems* (pp. 97-108). Berlin, Germany: Springer-Verlag.  
doi:10.1007/978-3-540-74607-2\_9



## Resources

The following materials are referenced throughout this tutorial:

- [sample papers](#)
- [sample appendix](#)
- [sample references](#)

Other materials can be accessed on the [APA Style website](#).