

ABOUT THE APA PUBLICATION MANUAL

The *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (APA) describes and provides examples of the method that the American Psychological Association has established for writing research papers and documenting sources cited in the text.

Also included in the manual with guidelines for documenting research resources are discussions of stylistic concerns such as organizing essays, expressing ideas, avoiding biased language, and using correct grammar.

The APA manual was written specifically for formatting articles for publication. **Students who are writing for a class should always defer to their instructors' guidelines when those preferences differ from the manual.**

APA style is commonly used not only in psychology, but also in education, sociology, nursing, and other sciences.

Chapter 6 of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* ("Reference List") is especially useful as a guideline for citing bibliographic information. This section begins on page 180 and provides extensive examples of reference list entries for periodicals, books, and miscellaneous references.

The parenthetical numbers included in this manual refer to the corresponding sections of the APA handbook.

Major changes from the 5th edition:

- Don't abbreviate the word "chapter".
- Provide the DOI (Digital Object Identifier), if one has been assigned to the content.
- Formatting of headings.

For further reference:

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

American Psychological Association. (2001). *APA style homepage*. Retrieved October 9, 2001 from <http://www.apastyle.org>

**APA MINI-MANUAL
CONTENTS**

Documenting Sources.....4
 In-text citations.....4
 Block quotations.....6

Reference List.....6
 Dates of publication.....6
 Order of the reference list.....6
 Multiple works by the same author.....7
 Multiple authors.....7
 No author listed.....7
 Abbreviations.....8

Sample Reference List Entries.....9

Books.....9
 Book with a single author.....9
 Book with two or more authors.....9
 Edited book.....9
 Book with a group or corporate author.....9
 Article, essay, or chapter in a book.....9
 An edition.....10
 Translation.....10

Periodicals.....10
 Magazine article.....10
 Article in a journal with continuous pagination.....10
 Article in a journal with separate pagination.....10
 Newspaper article.....10

Reviews.....11
 Book review.....11
 Movie review.....11

Audiovisual Media.....11
 Motion picture.....11
 Music recording.....12

Personal Communication.....12

Electronic Media.....	13
Internet article based on a print source.....	13
Internet article based on a print source but changed from the original.....	14
Electronic correspondence.....	15
Multipage document from a private organization.....	15
Chapter or section of Internet document.....	15
Message posted to a newsgroup.....	15
Message posted to an archived electronic mailing list.....	16
Electronic version of daily newspaper article available by search.....	16
Specialized Documentation Cases.....	16
Music Recording.....	16
ERIC.....	17
Government Printing Office (GPO) reports.....	17
Unpublished paper presented at a meeting.....	17
Sample Alphabetized Reference List.....	17
Typing in APA Format.....	20
Margins.....	20
Typeface.....	20
Line spacing.....	20
Punctuation spacing.....	20
Running head & page numbers.....	20
Paragraph indentation.....	20
Parts of the Manuscript.....	21
Title page.....	21
Abstract.....	21
Order of manuscript.....	21
Text.....	21
Headings.....	22
References.....	22
Sample Pages.....	23

DOCUMENTING SOURCES

Documenting sources in APA format involves two elements: references within the text of the paper and a list of bibliographic information called a “reference list” that follows the essay. Citations within the text usually have corresponding entries on the reference list.

Information included in a paper that comes from a source must be documented to indicate its origin. This information may be paraphrased, summarized, or quoted.

To paraphrase means to put the information into your own words, without copying the vocabulary or sentence structure of the original passage.

To summarize means to “boil down” the information into your own words. A whole chapter, article, or book might be summarized in a few sentences.

To quote means to use the writer’s exact words. A quotation is indicated by placing quotation marks (“”) around an author’s words or phrases.

IN-TEXT CITATIONS (3.94-3.103)

In APA format, reference citations appear in the text of the paper. These in-text citations document your research and enable your readers to locate sources in the reference list.

To cite a paraphrased or summarized source in text, give the author’s last name and year of publication in parentheses. **If a direct quote is used**, include a page number in addition to the author’s last name and year of publication.

Citations in-text

Source 1 (4 examples)

Fulwiler (1992) proposed new methods of revision.

Revision was discussed . . . (Fulwiler, 1992).

In 1992, Fulwiler discussed . . .

In a 1992 discussion of revision methods (Fulwiler) described

Source 2 (2 examples)

In a 1987 article, Sanborn suggests that students should acquire the skills to make syntax “part of the inner voice” they use to write (p. 62).

"The syntax needs to become part of the inner voice that mediates in writing," Sanborn claims (1987, p. 62).

Source 3 (2 examples)

as Davis and Shadle (2000) argued

as has been argued (Davis & Shadle, 2000)

To cite a specific part of a source, indicate the page, chapter, figure, table, or equation as well as the author and year. Always give page numbers for quotations, abbreviating the word page. If citing a chapter, do not abbreviate the word chapter.

(Maki & Schilling, 1987, p. 37)

(Elbow, 1981, Chapter 9)

Citations for primary Internet sources (3.39)

Some Internet sources have paragraph numbers rather than page numbers. In this case, to cite a specific portion of the document, use the paragraph number in text:

(Sanders, 2000, ¶ 5) or (Sanders, 2000, para. 5)

Some Internet sources may have neither paragraph nor page numbers. In these cases, identify the part of the document being used by listing the heading or section and paragraph number in which the cited text appears.

(Sanders, 2001, Introduction, ¶ 4)

Citations for quotes within a source (4.16 B 22)

Donne writes, "'Ask not for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee'", (as cited in Bernstein, 1965, p. 23).

Bernstein quotes Donne's most famous line, "'Ask not for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee'" (1965, p. 23).

Although Donne is being quoted, the source in which the writer found the quote was a book by Bernstein. The citation on the reference page would look like this:

Bernstein, T. M. (1965). *The careful writer: A modern*

guide to English usage. New York: Atheneum.

Block quotations: (6.03)

Display a quotation of 40 or more words in a freestanding block, and omit the quotation marks at the beginning and end. Indent block quotations five spaces from the left margin and double-space. To start a new paragraph within a block quotation, indent an additional five spaces from the new margin. The parenthetical citation for a block quotation goes after the final punctuation mark, as follows:

Display a quotation of 40 or more words in a freestanding block of typewritten lines, and omit the quotation marks. Start such a *block quotation* on a new line, and indent the block about 1/2 inch (1.3 cm. or five spaces) from the left margin (in the same position as the new paragraph).

If there are additional paragraphs within the quotation, indent the first line of each and additional ½ inch. The entire quotation should be double-spaced.

(American Psychological Association, 2001, p. 117)

REFERENCE LIST (6.22-6.32)

References cited in your paper should usually appear on the reference list. Arrange the list alphabetically by authors' last names.

Dates of publication (6.28)

For **monthly publications**, include the year and month (2000, May)

For **daily and weekly publications**, include the year, month, and day (2000, May 27)

If **no date** is available, use the abbreviation (n.d.)

Order of the reference list (6.25)

The reference list is alphabetized by the first letter(s) of the author's last name. If **two authors have the same surname**, they are listed on the reference page alphabetized by the first initial of the author's name:

Marshall, C. K. (2001). Writing...

Marshall, W. M. (1999). Making...

If there are **multiple works by the same author**, place them in order of publication date, starting with the earliest.

Smith, R. (1994). New discoveries...

Smith, R. (1997). Acclimating...

If there are works by the same author published in the same year, order them alphabetically by title. A lowercase letter is then added to the date to distinguish between the two sources:

Smith, R. (2000a). Double-blind...

Smith, R. (2000b). Report on...

If a source has **multiple authors**, (6.12) When a work has two authors, cite both names every time the reference occurs in text. When a work has three, four, or five authors, cite all authors the first time the reference occurs; in subsequent citations, include only the surname of the first author followed by et al. and the year if it is the first citation of the reference within a paragraph.

Kisangau, Lyaruu, Hosea, and Joseph (2007) found [Use as first citation in text.]

Kisangau et al. (2007) found [Use as subsequent first citation per paragraph thereafter.]

Kisangau et al. found [Omit year from subsequent citations after first non-parenthetical citation within a paragraph. Include the year in subsequent citations if first citation within a paragraph is parenthetical. See section 6.11.]

Precede the final name in a multiple-author citation in running text by the word *and*. In parenthetical material, in tables and captions, and in the reference list, join the names by an ampersand (&):

As Kurtines and Szapocznil (2003) demonstrated

As has been shown (Kurtines & Szapocznil, 2003)

When a work has six or more authors, cite only the surname of the first author followed by et al. and the year for the first and subsequent citations. (See section 6.27.)

If a work has **no author listed**, cite in text the first few words of the reference list entry (usually the title) and the year. Use double quotation marks around the title of an article, a chapter, or a web page and italicize the title of a periodical, a book, a brochure, or a report:

On free care ("Study Finds," 2007)
 The book *College Bound Seniors* (2008)

When a work's author is designated as "Anonymous," cite in text the word *Anonymous* followed by a comma and the date:

(Anonymous, 1998)

Abbreviations (4.22, table 4.4)

Names of states and territories in the reference list should be indicated with the official U.S. Postal Service abbreviations (OH for Ohio, for example). It is acceptable to use the following abbreviations in the reference list:

ed.	edition
Rev. ed.	revised edition
2nd ed.	second edition
Ed. (Eds.)	Editor (Editors)
Trans.	Translator(s)
n.d.	no date
p. (pp.)	page (pages)
Vol.	Volume (as in Vol. 4)
Vols.	volumes (as in 4 vols.)
No.	Number
Pt.	Part
Tech. Rep.	Technical Report
Suppl.	Supplement

When listing the city of publication for a book, include the abbreviation for the state of publication or the name of the country for internationally published works.

However, you do not need to include the state if the name of the press includes the state name (like Ohio University Press) or if the city (or country) is one of the following, which are known for publishing: Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, New York, Philadelphia, and San Francisco; and Amsterdam, Jerusalem, London, Milan, Moscow, Paris, Rome, Stockholm, and Tokyo.

EXAMPLES OF REFERENCE LIST ENTRIES

BOOKS (7.02)

A book with a single author:

Montague, M. (1990). *Computers, cognition, and instruction*.
Albany: State University of New York Press.

A book with two or more authors:

Oliu, W. E., Brusaw, C. T., & Alred, G. J. (1984). *Writing that works: How to write effectively on the job* (3rd ed.).
New York: St. Martin's Press.

An edited book: (22, 23, 27)

Cavitch, D. (Ed.). (1980). *Life studies: A thematic reader*.
New York: St. Martin's Press.

A book with a group or corporate author: (31)

American Psychological Association. (2001). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (5th ed.).
Washington, DC: Author.

* When the publisher is the same as the author, insert the word "Author" at the end instead of repeating the information.

An article, essay, or chapter in an edited book: (24-26)

Gould, S. J. (1995). Counters and cable cars. In R. Atwan
(Ed.), *The best American essays* (pp. 374-383). Boston:
Houghton Mifflin.

An edition: (28, 30)

Williams, J. M. (1985). *Style: Ten lessons in clarity & grace* (2nd ed.). Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman.

An English translation of a book: (21, 26)

Lukacs, G. (1962). *The historical novel* (H. and S. Mitchell, Trans.). London: Merlin.

* If the original publication date is different than the date of publication of the translation, add the following to the end of the citation: (original work published [year of publication]). Include both dates in text citations: (Lukacs 1962/1978).

PERIODICALS (7.01)

A monthly magazine article: (7, 8)

Carroll, J. (1996, April). An American requiem. *The Atlantic Monthly*, 277, 76-88.

Include the month, day, and year in entries for daily and weekly publications.

An article in a journal with continuous pagination:

Fulwiler, T. (1996). Provocative revision. *The Writing Center Journal*, 12, 190-204.

An article in a journal paginated by issue: (3)

Sanborn, J. (1997). Obstacles and opportunities: Sentence combining with advanced ESL. *Journal of Basic Writing*, 6(2), 60-77.

A daily newspaper article: (10, 11)

Jackson, M. (1997, June 10). Dow flirts with 7500: Tech shares strong. *The Washington Post*, p. C2.

*If no author is named, move the article title to the author's place. In text, use a shortened version of the title in quotation marks in place of the author's name: ("Dow flirts with 7500," 1997). Indicate multiple pages as follows: pp. B1, B7-8.

REVIEWS (7.06)

A book review: (45)

Nicotra, J. (2001, September). [Review of the book *Spurious coin: A history of science management, and technical writing*]. *College Composition and Communication*, 53, 164-167.

Davis, F. (2000, December 4). Blue heaven [Review of the book "Kind of blue": The making of the Miles Davis masterpiece]. *New Yorker*, 76, 96-100.

A movie review: (46)

Lane, A. (2000, November 27). Body of writing [Review of the motion picture *Quills*]. *New Yorker*, 76, 181-183.

Audiovisual Media (7.07)

A motion picture:

Barron, D. (Producer), & Branagh, K. (Director). (1996). *Hamlet*. [Motion picture]. United States: Castle Rock Entertainment.

The country listed is the primary place of production and release for the film. Note that the entry is not ended with a period.

If a motion picture is of limited circulation, the distributor's name and address should be included in parentheses at the end of the reference entry.

A music recording: (52)

Writer's name. (Copyright year). Title of song [Recorded by artist if different from writer]. On *Title of album* [Medium of recording] Location: Label. (Recording date if different from copyright date)

Stevens, S. (1980). Singing on the corner [Recorded by T. Adams]. On *Power of Song* [CD] New York: Good Time Records. (2000).

The in-text citation for a music recording should include the side (of a cassette or record) and the band or track number:

"Singing on the corner" (Stevens, 1980, track 4)

Personal communications and personal interviews:

Personal communications are not included in a reference list because they are not generally available to most readers. Personal communication may include such items as personal interviews, telephone conversations, letters or memos, and electronic correspondence (e-mail, nonarchived newsgroup and bulletin board postings, etc.). Cite these sources in the text of the paper only. Include the writer's name and the date:

(S. Jones, personal communication, January 8, 1997)

Information included in the text need not appear in parentheses:

S. Jones (personal communication, January 8, 1997) notes . . .

Internet Message Boards, Electronic Mailing Lists, and Other Online Communities (7.11)

The most recent edition of the *Publication Manual* simplifies the guidelines for citing electronic sources. Updates on citing electronic sources will be posted on APA's web site (<http://www.apastyle.org/elecref.html>).

The APA manual asks writers to observe two guidelines when citing World Wide Web sources:

1. "Direct readers as closely as possible to the information being cited—whenever possible, reference specific documents rather than home or menu pages."
2. "Provide addresses that work."

At the very least, citations for Internet sources should include

- document title or description
- date of either date of publication or update or the date of retrieval
- a Web address or uniform resource locator (URL)

URLs must be correct for readers to locate materials from the Web, so the easiest way to ensure accuracy of the URL is to copy it from the browser and paste it into your document.

Because many URLs are long, they might run over the end of a line. Do not hyphenate URLs; instead, break them either before a period or after a slash:

```
http://cnfn.cnn.com/2001/10/04/travelcenter/  
airlines_fares/
```

```
http://cnfn.cnn  
.com/2001/10/04/travelcenter/airlines_fares/
```

Electronic Media

Internet article based on a print source:

Provide the DOI, if one has been assigned to the content. The DOI is usually found on the first page of the article. When a DOI is used, no further retrieval information is needed to identify or locate the content. If no DOI has been assigned, provide the home page URL of the journal or of the book or report publisher.

In general, it is not necessary to include database information. Some archival documents (e.g., discontinued journals, monographs, dissertations, or papers not formally published) can only be found in electronic databases such as ERIC or JSTOR. In this case, give the home or entry page URL for the online archive.

Journal article with 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
```

Journal article without DOI:

Sillick, T. J., & Schutte, N.S. (2006). Emotional intelligence and self-esteem mediate between perceived early parental love and adult happiness. *E-Journal of Applied Psychology*, 2(2), 38-48. Retrieved from <http://ojs.lib.swin.edu.au/index.php/ejap>

Internet article based on a print source but with additions or changes to the original; Internet-only journal articles:

If the electronic version of an article has been updated or changed, if the format of the article is different than the print version, or if the electronic version does not have page numbers, use this format, which includes the retrieval date and the URL.

Note that when the reference entry ends with the URL, no period is included at the end of the entry (unless it is part of the URL).

This is also the format used for **Internet-only journal articles**. If there are no page numbers, replace the page numbers with an article number, if one is available.

Author(s). (Date of publication). Title of article. *Journal Title, Volume number*, page numbers. Retrieved [date] from URL

Detweiler, J. B., Bedell, B. T., Salovey, P., Pronin, E., & Rothman, A. J. (1999, March). Message framing and sunscreen use: Gain-framed messages motivate beach-goers. *Health Psychology*, 18, 189-196. Retrieved July 24, 2000, from <http://www.apa.org/journals/hea/hea182189.html>

Electronic correspondence:

E-mail messages and conversations via nonarchived bulletin boards and electronic discussion groups are cited in the text as personal communication. Generally, they are not included in the reference list, but they are cited in the text of the paper.

Multipage document created by private organization:

Name of organization. (Date of publication, if available). *Title of document*. Retrieved [date] from URL

Womanline. (n.d.). *Welcome to Womanline*. Retrieved October 5, 2001, from <http://www.womanlinedayton.org/index.phtml>

Chapter or section of an Internet document:

Name of organization. (Date of publication, if available). Title of chapter or section. In *Title of document* (chapter or section identifier if available). Retrieved [date] from URL

Wright State University. (1998, September). Equal educational and employment opportunity policies and affirmative action plan. In *The administrative policies and procedures manual of Wright State University* (Policy number 4001). Retrieved January 25, 2002, from <http://www.wright.edu/wrightway/4001.html>

Message posted to a newsgroup: (7.11, 74)

Author's name or screen name. (Date of posting). Subject line of the message [Any identifying information such as message number]. Message posted to [address of newsgroup]

Weiss, A. (2001, October 6). Architectural name [Msg. 2].

Message posted to news.alt.architecture

Message posted to an archived electronic mailing list: (7.11, 75)

Author's name. (Date of posting). Subject line of email message

[Any identifying information such as message number].

Message posted to [name of list] electronic mailing list,

archived at [URL for archived version of message]

Swyt, W. (1999, November 3). Tips on working with ESL students

[Electronic mailing list message]. Retrieved from

<http://www.ttu.edu/wcenter/9911/msg00063.html>

Electronic version of daily newspaper article available by search: (7.01, 11)

Broad, W.J. (2001, October 9). U.S. acts to make vaccines and

drugs against smallpox. *New York Times*. Retrieved October

10, 2001, from <http://www.nytimes.com>

SPECIALIZED DOCUMENTATION CASES

Music Recording: (7.07)

Writer, A. (Copyright year). Title of song [Recorded by B.B.

Artist if different from writer]. On *title of album* [Medium

of recording: CD, record, cassette, etc.] Location: Label.

(Date of recording if different from song copyright date)

- List the primary contributors in the author position and use parentheses to identify their contribution.
- For an episode from a television or radio series, use the same format as for a chapter in a book, but list the script writer and director in the author position and the producer in the editor position.

ERIC (Educational Resources Information Center) Reports:

Gottfredson, L. S. (1980). *How valid are occupational reinforcer pattern scores?* (Report No. CSOS-R-292). Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, Center for Social Organization of Schools. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED182465)

Government Printing Office (GPO) Reports with a government institute as a group author:

National Institute of Mental Health. (1982). *Television and behavior: Ten years of scientific progress and implications for the eighties* (DHHS Publication No. 40M 22-1995). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Unpublished conference papers:

Mayberry, J. (2002, April). *A new tradition: The non-traditional student in the university writing center*. Paper presented at the International Writing Center Association Conference, Savannah, GA.

SAMPLE ALPHABETIZED REFERENCE LIST

American Psychiatric Association. (1994). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (4th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

Barron, D. (Producer) & Branagh, K. (Director). (1996). *Hamlet* [Motion picture]. United States: Castle Rock Entertainment

- Beason, L. (2001, September). Ethos and error: How business people react to errors [Electronic version]. *College Composition and Communication*, 53, 33-64.
- Becker, L. J., & Seligman, C. (1981). Welcome to the energy crisis. *Journal of Social Issues*, 37(2), 1-7.
- Bernstein, T. M. (1965). *The careful writer: A modern guide to English usage*. New York: Atheneum.
- Block, C. E., Plummer, R. H., & Richardson, R. C., Jr. (1965). *The two-year college: A social synthesis*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Blume, E. (1996, May 15). Hormone replacement grows; some experts worried. *Journal of the National Cancer Institute*, 88, 637-639. Retrieved October 8, 2001, from SIRS Knowledge Source database.
- Broad, W. J. (2001, October 9). U.S. acts to make vaccines and drugs against smallpox. *New York Times*. Retrieved October 10, 2001, from <http://www.nytimes.com>
- Carroll, J. (1996, April). An American requiem. *The Atlantic Monthly*, 277, 76-88.
- Clark, K. B. (Speaker). (1976). *Problems of freedom and behavior modification* (Cassette Recording No. 7612). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Davis, F. (2000, December 4). Blue heaven [Review of the book "Kind of blue": The making of the Miles Davis masterpiece].

The New Yorker, 76, 96-100.

Detweiler, J. B., Bedell, B. T., Salovey, P., Pronin, E., & Rothman, A. J. (1999, March). Message framing and sunscreen use: Gain-framed messages motivate beach-goers. *Health Psychology*, 18, 189-196. Retrieved July 24, 2000, from <http://www.apa.org/journals/hea/hea182189.html>

Hartley, J. T. (1980). Contemporary issues and new directions in adult development of learning and memory. In L. W. Poon (Ed.), *Aging in the 1980's: Psychological issues* (pp. 239-252). Columbus: Ohio State University Press.

Letheridge, S., & Cannon, C. R. (Eds.). (1980). *Bilingual education: Teaching English as a second language*. New York: Praeger.

Shafer, G. (1997, September). School reform and the high school proficiency test. *English Journal*, 86, 39-41. Retrieved July 27, 2000, from Periodical Abstracts database.

Study finds free care used more. (1982, April 10). *Columbus Dispatch*, pp. 1, 25.

Weiss, A. (2001, October 6). Architectural name [Msg. 2]. Message posted to news.alt.architecture

Womanline. (n.d.). *Welcome to Womanline*. Retrieved October 5, 2001 from <http://www.womanlinedayton.org/index.phtml>

TYPING IN THE APA FORMAT

Margins:

Leave at least one inch on all sides. Left-justify the document, leaving the right margin ragged.

Typeface:

Use a serif typeface such as 12-point Times New Roman or Courier New.

Line Spacing:

Double-space the entire paper including quotations, reference list, author identification notes, content footnotes, figure captions, and all parts of tables.

Punctuation Spacing:

Space once

- after commas, colons, and semicolons.
- after punctuation at the ends of sentences.
- after periods that separate parts of a reference citation.
- after periods following initials in a name.

No spaces are needed after internal periods in abbreviations:

U.S.

p.m.

e.g.

Running Head and Page Numbers:

A running head is a shortened version of the title and serves as identification in case pages are separated. The running head should be no more than 50 characters long and should be flush left in all uppercase letters. Page numbers should be flush right. On the first page of the document, the short title should be preceded by the words Running head and a colon (e.g., Running head: SHORT TITLE). Each subsequent manuscript page, except figure pages, should also carry the header and the page number.

APPLICATION RESULTS

21

Paragraph Indentation:

Indent the first line of each paragraph five to seven spaces. The remaining text of the essay should be left-justified, except for abstracts; block quotations; titles and headings; and table titles, notes and figure captions.

PARTS OF THE MANUSCRIPT (8.03)

Although the following components of a paper are specified by the *APA Publication Manual*, if your instructor asks for different information to be included or omitted in work submitted for a course, follow his/her example.

Title Page:

In the header, type *Running head:* followed by the first four or five words of the title, not to exceed fifty characters, as the running head. The running head should be flush left. The page number (1) should be flush right. Finally, center the full title, followed by your name and university affiliation in the upper half of the page. Double-space between lines if the title is longer than one line. (See sample pages.)

Abstract:

The abstract summarizes the contents of the article in 120 words or fewer.

Begin the abstract on a new page, with the page header and the number **2** typed in the upper right corner of the page. Type the word **Abstract** in uppercase and lowercase letters, centered, at the top of the page.

Type the abstract itself as a single, left-justified paragraph with no indentations.

Order of Manuscript:

- Title page
- Abstract
- Text
- References
- Appendix(es)
- Footnotes
- Tables
- Figure captions
- Figures

Text:

Begin the text on page **3**. There should be two spaces between the page header and the title. Center the title, double-space, and then type the text flush left. The sections of the text follow each other without additional spacing in between.

Headings:

The heading style recommended by APA consists of five possible formatting arrangements, according to the number of levels of subordination.

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

References

Begin the reference list on a new page with the word “References” centered at the top of the page. Double space all reference entries.

APA specifies using hanging indents for the reference page, so the first line of a reference entry is flush-left and each subsequent line of the entry is indented.

Tutoring in Composition Classrooms:

Helping Students Help Themselves

Rachel K. Smith

Wright State University

Abstract

In a first-year composition classroom, a writing center tutor might facilitate peer editing in a group, provide individualized feedback, clarify an assignment, assist with technology, and other tasks as the sponsoring instructor requests. As current research by Smith, Wesson, Steele, and others suggests, using writing center tutors in the classroom appears to have a positive impact on student learning and retention.

Tutoring in Composition Classrooms:

Helping Students Help Themselves

The role of the tutor in the writing center setting is complex and varied. When that tutor is moved out of the context of the writing center and into a first-year composition classroom, the dynamics of the tutoring situation change, bringing even more variation to an already multifaceted role.

In the article, “The Writing Center Meets the Classroom,” Nimble (1989) describes some of the changes observed as a result of the tutor’s new setting:

The classroom forces tutors into a balancing act. Coming into a composition classroom, tutors may need to guard their hard-fought peer status.

If they are friendly with the instructor, for example, they might be considered a “teacher’s pet” who happens to help with writing. On the other hand, tutors also need to be sure not to take sides with their peer colleagues, the students, against the instructor at whose request they are present. (p. 42)

Thus, tutors must be more diplomatic in the classroom setting than they are under normal conditions in the writing center.

However, these potential problem areas should not preclude the inclusion of tutors in the classroom setting. “High instructor satisfaction is reported with such programs,” (Wellington, 1992, p. 22), as is increased student learning (Smith, Wesson, Magnum, Magnum, & Colt, 1996).

In Wellington’s 1992 survey, instructor satisfaction was measured by examining the teaching portfolios and reflective journals kept by many of the instructors and by collecting

statistics on instructors who invite tutors into their classes in subsequent quarters. Studies (Smith et al., 1996) reflected increased student learning is reflected in students' course grades, their evaluations of the course, and their performance on exit portfolios in those courses require them to pass.

One student from Alma Mater University indicated that compiling her exit portfolio helped her to realize how much assistance the writing center tutor had provided to her during her business writing course (Nimble, 1989). Such positive feedback helps to nurture fledgling programs.

However, recent research (Weston & Weston, 1997) indicates that the program has caused problems for faculty, students, and administrators.

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