

“In a Nutshell”: APA Formatting and Style Guide



General APA Guidelines

Your essay should be typed and double-spaced, with one-inch margins on the right and left. Your font should be Times New Roman, size 12.

You will include a **header** and **page number** on every page of your essay.

Your essay should include these major sections: the **Title Page**, **Abstract** (maybe), **Main Body**, and **References** page.

Title Page

The title page should include the Title, your Name, and the Institution (Everglades University). These should be centered in the page, about halfway down.

Abstract

(Sometimes used, sometimes not if you are writing a brief paper). Begin a new page. Type “Abstract” and center it on the first line of your new page. Below that, left-adjust your text again to return to normal typing. Then type in your Abstract. Your abstract is basically a one-paragraph summary of your entire paper. Imagine you only have 30 seconds to tell a complete stranger everything your paper is about (including any conclusions you made). This should only be between 150 and 250 words.

Main Body

Now you’re ready to type the actual content of your paper. Start with an Introduction paragraph that introduces the themes and ideas you’re going to cover. (You may want to actually write the Abstract, Introduction and Conclusion paragraphs at **the end** of your writing process, though – it is easier to summarize your Main Body after you’ve written it all).

Indent your paragraphs half-an-inch at the start of each one by hitting the Tab key (the paragraph below is an example):

[See reverse]

In-Text Citations

A point about APA that you must pay attention to is **In-Text Citations**. In-text citations are parenthetical notes throughout your Main Body, which tell your reader exactly where you got the fact or idea you used in that sentence or paragraph. So, for example, if I mention the fact that the U.S. President is elected every four years, I wouldn't have to provide a citation for that because it's common knowledge. But if I discover a particular fact – say, that only a certain percentage of U.S. citizens vote in presidential elections – and I discovered that from one of my sources (book, article, website, etc.), then I would provide an in-text citation at the end of that sentence, like this: (Author Last Name, Year). If I'm directly quoting this author's words, I'd put the quoted sentence in quotation marks, and then also provide at the end of the sentence: (Author Last Name, Year, Page or Paragraph #). Below are two (made-up) examples:

Ex. 1: Usually, only around half of U.S. citizens vote in presidential elections, and even fewer vote in local and state elections (Brown, 2008).

Ex. 2: "Only 50-60% of U.S. citizens vote in presidential elections, and the percentage that vote in local and state elections usually hovers between 10% and 20%" (Brown, 2008, p. 36 or para. 3).

If there's no author name provided, just put in quotations the title of the work instead of that: ("Elections in the U.S.," 2008, p. 36). If it's a long title, you can shorten it to only a few words there. If there's no date provided, put "n.d.", which stands for "no date," like this: (Brown, n.d., p. 36).

You don't need a citation for every sentence, but in general keep in mind the rule that your reader needs to know where you've learned your facts and ideas from.

Sometimes students ask, "What if all the info in a certain paragraph comes from a certain author's work -- it would be pointless to give a citation after every sentence, right?" In that case, you can say at the beginning of the paragraph that you are about to quote a bunch of facts or ideas from an author. For example:

Brown (2008) writes of the following facts/ideas: (continue rest of paragraph...)

NOTE: Your **in-text citations** are different from your full **references**, which go on your References page at the end. Think of your in-text citations as arrows pointing the way to the more detailed references that are found on your References page.

References

On your final page – the References page -- you are going to list the full bibliographic information for each of your sources. Follow the formats below as an example (with **hanging indents**):

Book:

[See reverse]

Author Last Name, Author First Initial(s). (Year). *Title of book in italics*. City and State where published: Publisher.

Example:

Brown, J. (2008). *Exploring voting statistics*. Atlanta, GA: Taylor & Francis.

Example of chapter or literary work from textbook:

Poe, E. A. (2005). The Tell-tale Heart. In J. Turner (Ed.), *American Literature Textbook* (pp. 304-317). Atlanta, GA: Taylor Publishing.

Journal Article:

Author Last Name, Author First Initial(s). (Year). Title of article. *Title of Journal in Italics*, Vol. # (Issue #), Page range. Retrieved from database.

Example:

Smith, K. (2009). How many citizens vote in U.S. elections? *Political Science Monthly*, 4(11), 254-259. Retrieved from the InfoTrac database.

Website:

Author Last Name, Author First Initial(s). (Year). Title of web page. Retrieved from this web link.

Example:

Williams, J. (2005). Examining voter behavior in Western states. Retrieved from www.reliablewebsite.gov

List these individual references alphabetically on your References page – they'll be listed by the first letter that appears in the reference (so by "W" if the reference begins with "Williams.")

NOTE: There will at times be variations on these basic formats. Sometimes you won't have an author – or you may have a “corporate author” (where basically an institution or group wrote something). Sometimes you'll have more than one author. Sometimes you won't have a date. Sometimes you'll be unsure whether what you found on a database is a journal or magazine article. For these instances and others, we recommend that you consult the APA guides found at the library.

So that is a basic, step-by-step guide to what your APA paper will look like. We have left out more specific rules in the interest of streamlining this handout so that it only covers the essentials. Now you are ready to learn more about those specifics.

[See reverse]