

**Hamilton College
Communication Department**

APA (6th edition) Quick Guide¹

This guide covers the core elements of APA style; it is *not* comprehensive. Not all variations of citation and reference types are included, but the most common elements have been. Additionally, not all elements of the manuscript format will be required for every assignment. It is your responsibility to refer to your APA manual and course syllabi for the specifics. You can also find more information at www.apastyle.org. As a general rule, however, you can expect the following guidelines to apply to written work in Communication.

Manuscript Parts and Format

PREPARING THE MANUSCRIPT:

Typeface: **Times New Roman, 12-pt. size.**

Spacing: **double-space** between *all* lines. *Never* use single-spacing except in tables and figures, and *only* use quadruple-spacing in special circumstances (e.g. before and after displaying equations).

Insert **two spaces after punctuation that ends a sentence**. Otherwise, insert one space after punctuation marks, including after periods in reference citations.

Leave uniform **margins of at least 1 in.** around the page. Use the **flush-left** paragraph style, with **ragged right** margins. Do *not* use the hyphenation function to break words at the end of a line.

The **running head** is an abbreviated title of 50 characters or less. Type it flush left in all uppercase letters on the first line of the title page. The **page numbers** also appear in the header, flush right, beginning on the title page. For example,

Running head: COMPLIANCE-GAINING STRATEGIES

1

appears on the first line of the title page. Note that the running head and page number are *not* on the same line of text—page numbers are *always* placed in the header. The running head itself then appears flush left in the header of all subsequent pages.

Therefore, your page headers might look like:

COMPLIANCE-GAINING STRATEGIES

2

¹ This guide was written by Professor Cheryl Casey and is adapted from: American Psychological Association. (2010). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

Indent the first line of every paragraph and every footnote (note some exceptions, e.g. the abstract and block quotations). The default ½ in. setting for indents is fine. Please remember that a **paragraph is more than a single sentence, but not longer than one manuscript page.**

Order of pages: title page, abstract, text, references, footnotes, tables, figures, appendices (note you may not have need for the latter four).

TITLE PAGE:

The title page is identified as page 1 of your manuscript. The **title** should be direct yet fully explanatory. Type it in uppercase and lowercase letters, centered, and in the upper half of the page.

The **byline**, or author's name, should be in the format of first name, middle initial(s), and last name. Place the author's name on the next line under the title. Follow on the next line with the author's **institutional affiliation**; if there is no affiliation, list the city and state of residence. Example:

Compliance-gaining Strategies of Coaches

Lou Holtz

University of Notre Dame

ABSTRACT:

Page 2 of your manuscript gives the article abstract. The **abstract** is a brief summary of the paper, reporting the purpose and content. It should range between 150-250 words, in a single double-spaced paragraph without indentation. Type the label Abstract on the first line of the page, centered.

BODY:

The body of your manuscript begins on page 3. Since it is obvious that the first page(s) of your paper constitute the introduction, *do not use the heading of* Introduction. Your text should begin with the title of the paper, centered on the first line of the page and typed as you did on the title page.

HEADINGS:

Headings help you to **organize your content** and establish the hierarchical relationships of the topics you discuss. Topics of equal importance have the same level of heading. Within any given section, **use at least two subsection headings, or use none**. There are five possible levels of section headings (please see pp. 62-63 for details):

Centered, Boldface, Uppercase and Lowercase Heading

Flush Left, Boldface, Uppercase and Lowercase Heading

Indented, boldface, lowercase paragraph heading ending with a period. Then begin typing your text immediately following the heading. For this level and the following two levels, the heading begins the paragraph itself.

Indented, boldface, italicized, lowercase paragraph heading ending with a period.

Then begin typing your text immediately following the heading.

Indented, italicized, lowercase paragraph heading ending with a period. Then begin typing your text immediately following the heading.

REFERENCES:

The **reference list** begins on a new page after your paper concludes. As with the abstract, center the label *References* on the first line of the page. All **entries are double-spaced** and use **hanging indents**.

FOOTNOTES:

Footnotes are *not* used to cite sources; rather, they provide additional content that might be just enough of a digression to make it distracting in the text. Footnote numbers should be **superscripted in Arabic numerals**, and placed after punctuation marks (exception is the dash). Subsequent references to the same footnote are indicated by a parenthetical citation, for example (see Footnote 1).

The footnotes themselves may be placed *either*: 1. at the bottom of the page on which it is discussed; or 2. in consecutive order on a separate page after the references.

Please see pp. 41-59 in your manual for images of sample manuscript pages.

Clear and Grammatical Writing

The presentation of your work is important. Your credibility as a scholar rests at least in part on your ability to present a structured, consistent, and carefully prepared manuscript. Both the physical appearance (format as described in the preceding section) and the substance of the manuscript are crucial. Mechanical flaws can obscure your ideas. Keep the following in mind:

Make sure you **write what you mean**. One way to eliminate ambiguity is to **include referents with pronouns** (e.g. *this* paper, *these* results, *that* study). Use **personal**

pronouns (“I” or “we” for multiple authors). A pronoun must refer clearly to its antecedent and must agree with the antecedent in number and gender.

Spell check. It is the *least* you can do. However, remember that it is also not a substitute for accurate proofreading.

Use the **active voice**. Active voice means that the subject of the sentence performs the action expressed in the verb. The passive voice is on the list of things to avoid; however, an exception to this preference is when you need to emphasize a focus on the recipient of the action (verb) rather than the actor.

Active voice: The student is writing a paper.

Passive voice: The paper is being written by the student.

Generally, use the **past tense** (describing another researcher’s work, reporting your results) and **present perfect tense** (describing an ongoing action beginning in the past). Choose carefully.

Past tense: Postman (1982) argued that television is blurring the traditional distinction between childhood and adulthood.

Present perfect tense: For many years, researchers have found that television impacts the behavior of children.

Make sure that your **verb agrees in number** with the subject.

Avoid:

Colloquial expressions

Jargon

Editorial “we”

Attributing human characteristics to non-human or inanimate sources

Third person

Passive voice

Misplaced and dangling modifiers

- To avoid misplaced modifiers, place an adjective or adverb as close as possible to the word it modifies
- Dangling modifiers, which have no referent in a sentence, often result from the use of the passive voice.

Quotation marks:

- Use **double quotation marks** around direct quotes that are *not* block quotes, and around article and chapter titles mentioned in the text.
- Use double quotation marks around quoted material within block quotes
- Use **single quotation marks** around quoted material within a quote already set off by double quotation marks
- **Do not enclose block quotes** in any quotation marks
- Periods and commas are placed *inside* the quotation marks

Know the difference between a **hyphen** and an **em dash**.

- Compound words use hyphens; do not use a space before or after the hyphen, for example: sister-in-law.
- An em dash sets off a clause or other element that digresses from the main clause; it is longer than a hyphen. Do not use a space before or after the em dash, for example: “This month’s snow—from lake effect and other storm patterns—totaled nearly two feet.” (Note: if your keyboard does not have an em dash, use two hyphens.)

Capitalize:

- First word in a complete sentence
- First word after a colon if it begins another complete sentence
- Major words in titles within your text (exception is in reference list—see below).
- Proper nouns
- Names of factors, variables, conditions in an experiment

Citing Sources in Your Text

WHEN TO CITE:

You must credit the work of those individuals whose ideas, theories, definitions, terminology, or research have directly influenced your own work. **Citation implies you have personally read the cited work.**

You must also provide documentation for all facts and figures that are not common knowledge.

Accurately record the direct quotes and the spelling of authors’ names. If the source is incorrect in spelling, punctuation, etc, insert [*sic*]—italicized and bracketed—immediately after the error in the quotation.

Direct quotes:

- Reproduce material word for word
- Enclose in quotation marks if quotation is fewer than 40 words.
- If quotation is more than 40 words, use a block quote
- Cite the source immediately after the quotation, even if mid-sentence
- **Always provide a page or paragraph number**
- Do not leave out citations within material that you are quoting; these citations need not be included in your own reference list.

When **paraphrasing**, you also need to cite; include a page or paragraph number when paraphrasing about something specific within the work.

HOW TO CITE:

In-text references are cited with an author-date-page (the latter if applicable) citation system. **Any source cited in text must be listed in your references, and all entries in your reference list must be cited in text.**

- *Exception:* references to classical works, and references to personal communications are not included in the reference list.

Here are some examples of parenthetical citations. Please note the differences amongst these instances. **See pp. 174-179 for specific explanations, additional instances, and more examples.**

One work by one author:

Siler (1996) discussed several strategies for working more productively.

Metamorphing is a process that encourages constant reevaluation of connections among things (Siler, 1996).

One work by multiple authors: (note: always cite both names)

Bernstein and Woodward (1974) reported the incredible story that came to be known as the Watergate scandal.

The special Watergate prosecution force eventually gained guilty pleas from several key players in the scandal (Bernstein & Woodward, 1974).

Citing specific parts of a source:

According to Lemonick (2010), recent studies have suggested that “the old, Earth-destroying theory was generally accurate, but lacked some key details” (para. 3).

Although “three of every four Americans call themselves environmentalists” (Redford, 1991, p. 70), America continues to play a major role in contributing to environmental destruction.

In an effort to supply the energy required for satellites in space, “the U.S. space program, as previously mentioned, discovered that solar cells were the lightest and most compact source available” (Nicholson, 1991, pp. 165-166).

The Reference List

Remember:

- Include only those sources you actually used and cite in text
- Double space all entries
- Use a hanging indent
- You are responsible for including all necessary information accurately
- Alphabetize the entries by the surname of the first author

Each entry generally contains: **author, year of publication, title, and publishing data.** The point is that the source can be uniquely identified and located via search.

- *Author*: invert all authors' names, using surnames and initials—e.g. Author, A.A.
- *Editors*: indicate editors with the abbreviation Ed. or Eds. In a reference listing to a chapter in an edited work, do not invert book editors' names—e.g. In D. Henley & D. Marsh (Eds.)
- *Publication date*: in parentheses, followed by a comma. If a publication date can't be found, write n.d. in parentheses.
- *Title*: article and chapter titles are not italicized, and only the first word of the title, of the subtitle, and proper nouns are capitalized. Same for book titles, but they are italicized. Periodical titles are italicized, and all major words are capitalized.
- *Publication information*: give volume number in italics for periodicals; give the issue number in parentheses immediately following, not italicized (if available). For books, give the location—city and state or city and country if not US—followed by a colon and the name of the publisher.
 - Electronic sources require either URL or digital object identifier (DOI)

Here are some examples of reference entries you are most likely to encounter in your work. Remember that this list is not comprehensive. **Please see chapter 7 in your APA manual for the full list of examples and variations.**

Journal article with DOI:

Yousman, B. (2009). Inside Oz: Hyperviolence, race and class nightmares, and the engrossing spectacle of terror. *Communication & Critical/Cultural Studies*, 6(3), 265-284. doi: 10.1080/14791420903049728

Journal article without available DOI:

Fowler, C. (2009). Motives for sibling communication across the lifespan. *Communication Quarterly*, 57(1), 51-66. Retrieved from <http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/content~db=all~content=a908715985>

Hardy-Short, D. C. (1988). "Send me your huddled masses": Ethical considerations, communication, and the English first movement. *World Communication*, 17(2), 169-191.

Online newspaper or magazine article, available by search:

Lemonick, M. D. (2010, January 10). A new theory on why the sun never swallowed the Earth. *Time Magazine*. Retrieved from <http://www.time.com>

Book, print version:

Siler, T. (1996). *Think like a genius*. New York, NY: Bantam.

Bernstein, C. & Woodward, B. (1974). *All the president's men*. New York, NY: Warner Books.

Book chapter:

Redford, R. (1991). Taking it personally. In D. Henley & D. Marsh (Eds.), *Heaven is under our feet* (pp. 68-71). Stamford, CT: Longmeadow Press.

Conference proceedings published online, no DOI:

Blechman, R. (2005). The heart of the matter: An exploration of the persistence of core beliefs. *Proceedings of the Media Ecology Association*, 5, 1-16. Retrieved from www.media-ecology.org/publications/MEA_proceedings/v6

Paper presentation or poster session, not formally published:

Santini, S. (2009, October). Communicating non-physical compliments to children to lower high school drop-out rates. Paper presented at the meeting of the New York State Communication Association, Ellenville, NY.

Motion picture:

Lake, R. (Executive Producer) & Epstein, A. (Director). (2007). *The business of being born* [Motion picture]. USA: Barranca Productions.

Podcast:

Berman, D. (Executive Producer). (2010, January 9). *Wait, wait...don't tell me!* [Audio podcast]. Retrieved from <http://www.npr.org>

Blog post:

Nah, W. (2008, July 12). Finding meaning in your life [Web log post]. Retrieved from <http://communicatebetter.blogspot.com/2008/07/finding-meaning-in-your-life.html>

Some Notes on Ethics and Responsibility

As mentioned above, you are responsible for **submitting a clearly written, carefully proofread, and consistently formatted manuscript.**

You are also responsible for the **accuracy of your work.** Do not fabricate or falsify data, modify results, or omit troublesome observations.

It may also be the case that your work is relevant in more than one class. Duplication of work for more than one context is considered misrepresentation of data (or **self-plagiarism**), and is therefore unethical. You should not re-present work unless the following conditions apply:

- Amount of duplicated material is small relative to total length of text
- It is deemed necessary to re-present some material in light of new analysis or a new research approach
- The manuscript with the re-presented material clearly acknowledges what information was presented previously
- The original publication is clearly and accurately cited in text and the reference list

If you use first-hand observations and case studies to describe your research, **you must protect the personally identifiable information of your participants.** This protection sometimes walks a fine line, of course, because changing certain variables for confidentiality purposes might also change the “picture.” Subject privacy should **never** be sacrificed; if the study has to be sacrificed instead, so be it.

Finally, **plagiarism** occurs when researchers present the words and ideas of others as their own, whether intentionally or otherwise. **Place the exact words of another author in quotation marks.** You are also required to credit your source **each time you quote or paraphrase another author.**