Effective Citing and Formatting in an APA Paper

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Note: The cover page is the first page of the document. It offers a full, descriptive title (preferably no more than 12 words), centered in the upper middle of the page, followed by the author’s name and any other required information. All paragraphs, except the Abstract, are indented ½ inch. The font one uses should be readable. **The most common is Times New Roman and the standard size font is 12 points.**

The text on the right-hand side is not justified. The entire paper, including the Reference page is double spaced.

At the top of every page in the document, a “Running head” must be provided as a header, justified left. It is a shortened version of the start of the title (no more than 50 characters) with all letters capitalized; in order to make the “Running head” coherent, you may slightly modify the title words in that you may use the beginning of the title, but you may not summarize the title or use the end of the title. If you cannot use the full title, it is advisable to front-load information so that your shortened title makes sense and gives your readers a gist of what your paper will focus on. To insert the “Running head” in a Microsoft Word document, you will find the “Header and Footer” function under the “Insert” tab. Only the title page has the words “Running head,” so once you are in the “Header and Footer” function, check the box “Different First Page,” then insert the page number and text (HINT: INSERT PAGE NUMBER FIRST; if you do not, all text in the Running head will be erased). You will need to copy and paste this text (text and page number) on the second page of your header, removing the words “Running head.” After that, your pages should be number sequentially with the information you need, so no need to add this to any other pages.

Not all professors will require a cover page. Many professors will also have specific expectations for how a cover page in their class should look—defer to them! The model here is generally consistent with the APA publication manual, though strictly speaking the manual only calls for a title, the author’s name, and the author’s institution (e.g., Aurora University) centered in the upper middle of the page, rather than including course code, professor’s name, and date. Those additional elements are included here because many professors expect to see this information on a cover page. The manual also calls for an “Author Note,” which is not applicable to most student papers, and thus it is not modeled here.
Abstract

The ethical crisis of cross-cultural counseling and therapy results from the use of mental health assumptions, assessments, and interventions that were developed in one cultural context but implemented in a totally different one. The present article sought to (a) determine if ethical guidelines sensitive to cross-cultural counseling and therapy are needed, (b) discuss guidelines for research that have direct implications for cross-cultural counselors and therapists, and (c) identify questions of ethics that come out of reading through American Psychological Association guidelines that pertain to serving a multicultural population. Questions for discussion are identified but solutions are not offered. The authors encourage increased discussion and cooperation that will result in the development of ethical guidelines for cross-cultural counselors and therapists.

Above is an example of an actual abstract from an article by Pedersen and Marsella (1982).

As the 6th edition of the APA Publication Manual indicates, an abstract in an APA style paper is meant to be a “brief, comprehensive summary of the contents” of an article or essay (American Psychological Association [APA], 2010, p. 25). An abstract is meant to be read independently of the essay. Just as someone might read an abstract in order to choose whether or not to read a journal article, so your abstract exists to give a reader an overview of the high points of your entire essay. Thus, the abstract is not an introduction paragraph. It should allow a reader to have a clear sense of key elements, such as the topic, problem, goals, thesis, approach, and findings offered within your paper. The abstract explains what is the issue or problem being addressed and makes clear what the paper has demonstrated (not what it will demonstrate), so you should use present or past tense in reporting the paper’s contents.

The abstract has no indent. It has the title “Abstract.” It is double-spaced. The 6th edition of the manual leaves the length of the abstract up to different journals / contexts, recommending the word count should remain between 150 and 250 words at most. One example in the manual on page 41 lists at the end of the abstract an additional line, indented, that reads: “Keywords: aging, attention, information processing, emotion, visual search.” In other words, it may be appropriate for you to select the most important terms or topics from your paper and place them at the end of the abstract, but the manual does not require you to do so.

Note on spacing after punctuation: in Chapter 4 of the manual, authors are instructed to place one space after most punctuation marks, but two spaces after a period at the end of a sentence. Unfortunately, the manual itself only provides sample papers and examples with one space after sentence-ending periods (indeed, the manual itself is written with only one space!). So, this is one issue where you will have to rely on the preferences of your professor. This handout continues to use a single space.
Place Title of the Paper Here Even Though You Have a Cover Page

The instructions and sample paragraphs on these pages are formatted as a paper should appear. The first paragraph of the paper should begin here; the title serves as the first heading, so there is no need to write the word “Introduction” as a heading. This paragraph should introduce the topic and should suggest what questions need to be asked and what problems need to be addressed. For most student papers, the introduction should also provide a clear thesis statement, one that makes a clear claim that the rest of the paper will go on to demonstrate. If you are writing more of a summary paper, then this thesis statement focuses on the idea or theme that holds the essay together. If you are presenting your own research, then this section should relate to what was researched, what result was expected, and what was discovered.

For many APA style papers, the introduction will be followed by either a Method section or a Literature Review section, but in many student papers what follows is a background section. Below are some sample paragraphs that might be found in a Literature Review section or later sections of a paper. The paragraphs are unrelated and have been tinkered with to highlight various citation usages.

Please note, that in terms of formatting, the entire paper is double-spaced with one inch margins all the way around. There should be no extra spaces between paragraphs.

**Heading for a Major Section Is in Bold and Centered**

Major headings aid readers (and writers) with the organization of a paper. It is important to note that each paragraph in a paper should not include a separate heading as this makes a paper very choppy. Save Headings for a Major Section for a major topic of a paper. If one will be using different Headings Within a Major Section, this section here should act as an introduction to the entire topic.
As noted above in the Headings for a Major Section, one should reserve Headings Within a Major Section for subtopics, not for singular paragraphs. Again one does not want to chop a paper up with headings, but rather use headings as a way to aid in organization. The rest of the sample demonstrates how to cite sources within the text.

Autism is a condition that many agree is physiological, but also is range or symptoms. According to Karmer (1978), autism is a "neurological dysfunction of the brain which commences before the age of thirty months" (p. 34). He studied 11 cases, all of which showed a specific type of childhood psychosis that was different from other childhood disorders, although each was similar to childhood schizophrenia. The psychoses each displayed distinct, though related, symptoms (Martin, 1997). Ruter (1978) has suggested these symptoms can be grouped into four criteria: "onset within 30 months of birth, poor social development, late language development, and a preference for regular, stereotyped activity" (Conclusion section, para. 8).

However, an unusual variation in this classic pattern of autism has been discovered in the last 30 years. Known as late-onset autism, the condition appears in children who develop normally for the first 12 to 18 months of life before regressing in their speech, behavior, and social skills. This change usually occurs right after they have been given the MMR, or measles vaccination ("Vaccination," n.d.).

As the studies by Johnson (1982) and Everson (1995) have shown, it is not only children who are malnourished who suffer lasting health problems, but also those who become junk food addicts. Moreover, Gates has claimed:
Cavities, poor muscle development, low energy, and obesity are just some of the serious problems. A recent survey found that an astonishingly high percentage of obese adults (74%) consumed junk food *on a daily basis as children* [emphasis added]. And while we might not be ready to call this child abuse, it's time to implement a more far-reaching educational effort aimed at parents. (as cited in Davidson, 1999, p. 18)

Thus, later health problems seem to correlate with eating habits in childhood. One needs to keep discussing the quote. If one uses a long quote, one’s discussion should also go into depth and detail discussing what that quote says for you and how it is significant, given your topic.

**Subheadings look like this.** In the late 20th century, when social work was formally inaugurated as a profession, there was much more concern about the morality of the client than about the morality or ethics of the profession or its practitioners (Leiby, 1978; Lubove, 1965; Reamer, 1995a). The earliest practitioners focused on organized relief and responding to the curse of pauperism. Often this preoccupation took the form of paternalistic efforts to bolster poor people's morality and the rectitude of those who had succumbed to "shiftless" or “wayward” habits (Boxmore, 1997, p. 15).

On page seven a reference list is shown. Note the hanging indent of each new reference entry. Note also that all items are alphabetized by the last name of the primary (whomever is listed first) author or first major word of the entry. Finally, note that everything is double spaced. An actual reference list would have at least 1-inch margins. The reference list comes at the end of the paper, so the pagination continues (i.e., the Reference page begins on page 6 of the paper).

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1 Please note that this citation also demonstrates what the APA manual calls a “secondary source.” What a secondary source where the author(s) quotes an original source. Typically, one should read the original quote and use that citation, however if the original source is not long available, then one uses the citation information for the secondary source and that is the citation is shown on the Reference page. These should be used sparingly.
References


