

An APA Style Template and Guide

Author's Name:

Institution Affiliation:

The Steps to follow in creating a cover page is made will be explained in the body part of this guide

### Abstract

The abstract should be on the second page of the research paper. On the very first line of this new page, write the word “Abstract” and then center it. Note that the heading should not be in bold, underlined, or italicized. The abstract should provide a precise, brief summary of the most important points of the research paper. Mainly, the abstract will contain a description of the research topic, the problem or question of interest, the methods used to collect and analyze data, findings, analysis, and conclusions. However, the abstract may include a brief discussion of the research limitations, implications, and a list of keywords. When you include keywords, start a new indented paragraph, type “Keywords” and italicize, insert a full colon, and then list the primary terms. Note that the abstract should appear in a single indented paragraph (0.5 inch margin) and should be between 150-200 words depending with the demands of the instructor. It is only included if requested by your instructor.

*Keywords:* Abstract, research topic, problem, methods, discussion, limitations, implications, keywords

## An APA Style Paper Template

### **Introduction**

The introduction comes in the third page of the research paper. A good introduction starts with an attention getter, which can be an interesting fact, a fascinating quote, or a provoking question. Next, an introduction should provide a background of the selected topic and statistics. This information should be cited according to APA referencing style (See detailed illustrations in the body of this guide). An author should be able to note any problematic trends as portrayed by the background and the factual information in order to come up with a problem statement, and explain the need for solving the issue. The last sentence of the introduction should be a thesis statement, which describes the judgment or opinion of the author in relation to the problem statement.

### **Body**

The main body of a research paper contains literature review, methods, results, and discussion. An author should not label the section “Body.” The heading has been used in this paper to show a transition from the introductory paragraph to the rest of the sections of the research paper.

### **Literature Review**

Literature review refers to an evaluative report of knowledge found in literature, which relates closely to the topic or problem being addressed by the author. The literature review should start with an introduction, which informs the reader about the nature of articles to be reviewed and the main topics or themes to be covered. A good literature review identifies an article, summarizes it,

and compares its findings and methodologies with other resources that address a similar topic. Besides, a literature review identifies the strengths and weaknesses of a particular scholarly article. The literature review should be cited duly. In an APA research paper, the literature review has the largest coverage, however, depending on the length of the paper. For example, in a ten page paper, the literature review should span 4 pages. The following is how a literature review should appear throughout;

### **Student's Knowledge of APA Heading Levels**

In his research, Jarrett (2016) investigated the problems that students usually face when trying to do an APA research paper. The researcher interviewed a sample of 12 university students. It was revealed that most students usually do not have a clear understanding of the various levels of headings. These findings were reflected in another study by Vrij and Van Higil (2016) in which a sample of 13 university students were interviewed to determine whether they were conversant with placing titles and subtitles according to the APA format. The researchers concluded that there is need to introduce a unit that helps the university learners to understand how to do APA research papers. However, the findings by Bonja (2015) negated the findings reported in the two studies above. Bonja, Bront, and Fancy (2015) used observations to determine whether students pursuing PhD. Degrees were adept in designing headings and placing them according to their respective levels. In contrast to Vrij and Van Higil (2016) and Jarrett's (2016) findings, Bonja, Bront, and Fancy (2015) discovered that the study participants understood clearly what one is required to do when a research paper has several

titles and subtitles. The discrepancy in these findings' results from the fact that Bonja, Bront, and Fancy (2015) used a different method (observation) and sample (PhD. Students) while Vrij and Van Higil (2016) and Jarrett (2016) used interviews and sampled university undergraduates. The level of knowledge held by PhD. Students in regard to the placement of titles and subtitles according to the APA style is higher in Ph.D than that of undergraduate students.

### **Methods**

In the methods section, how and from whom the researcher collected the data is documented. The section will primarily include a discussion of the sample, materials, and procedure.

#### **Sample**

This section should discuss the group targeted, including its demographics and location.

*Sample size.* In this section, the number of subjects, usually a representative of the larger group, is mentioned.

*Sampling.* In this section, the method that was used to sample the target population in order to arrive at the sample size is described. Please to different sampling methods.

#### **Materials**

This section describes the materials that were used to collect data from the sample size and these might include questionnaires among others. The section also describes the design of the materials.

#### **Procedure**

This section describes how the materials were administered to collect data from the sample, the type of data collected.

### **Data Analysis Method**

In this section, the method used to summarize and gain important inferences and insights from the data collected should be summarized.

### **Data analysis and Results**

In this section, the data collected using the methods described in the preceding section should be summarized and reported. It is important to use tables, graphs, and charts to display the data.

### **Discussion**

In this section, one is required to discuss the results according to how they support or disapproves his or her thesis statement. Also, in this section, an author is required to discuss any limitations of the articles examined and the next steps or issues that future researchers should focus on.

***NB: SHORT PAPERS DO NOT ALWAYS HAVE THE LITERATURE REVIEWS. THEY ARE COMMONLY USED IN DISSERTATIONS***

### **APA Citation and Formatting**

This section is not usually included in the body part of an APA research paper. It has been included in this guide to help the reader understand how the headers, cover page, level of headings, font, margins, and citations should appear.

**The cover page** of an APA research paper should contain the page header, a title that summarizes the main idea of the work, the author's name, and the institutional affiliation. **The header** contains a shortened version of the title and the page number. To insert a header, you should first go to the main menu bar of the MS Word and click on "Insert". Here you will find

the caption “Page Number.” On the drop down menu, select “Top of Page,” and then “Plain Number 3.” Once done, write a shortened title of your work in capital letters. Flush the title to the left and the page number on the right. The following is how the header should appear at this point:

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The next step is to double-click on the top of the page where the title of the work and the page number has been inserted. The header and footer tools should appear automatically on the main menu section. Note that the **header on the first page should always be different from that on the corresponding pages**. Therefore, check the “Different First Page” box on the header and footer tools. The header you inserted will disappear. This will prompt you to repeat the previous steps. However, this time, you will be required to insert the phrase “Running head” and a full colon just before the shortened title. Therefore, the header should look like;

Running head: STEP BY STEP GUIDE TO DOING AN APA RESEARCH PAPER

1

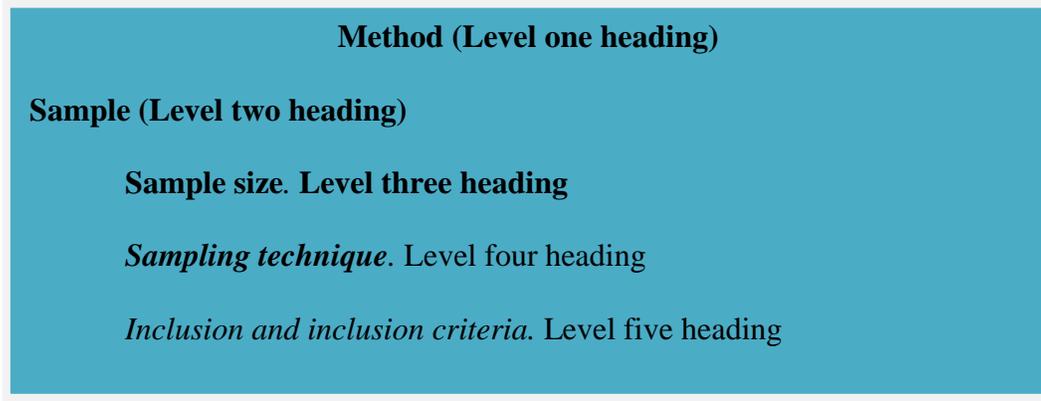
The next step is to **insert the long version of the title**, the name of the author, and the institutional affiliation. From the header, press enter until the cursor is about halfway of the cover page. Then type the title. Note that the title should not exceed 12 words in length. Additionally, the title should neither contain any abbreviations nor terms that does not serve any purpose. Besides, each main word should be capitalized. Below the title, type the name of the author, beginning with his/her first name, middle names’ initial, and the last name. It is not

appropriate to use titles such as Dr. Etc. Below the author's name, type in the institutional affiliation. Highlight these texts and then center. All text on the title page and the corresponding sheets should be double spaced. (Please, refer to the title page of this template).

The body of the work should be arranged in **paragraphs**. Each paragraph should start with a topic sentence that informs the reader about the main idea to be discussed. The next sentence(s) should contain **supporting evidence**. Supporting evidence should be drawn from credible sources, which should be cited according to APA style. The next is a **concluding sentence**, which summarizes the information that has been presented, links to the thesis statement, and provides a **transition to the next paragraph**. A good paragraph should contain at least four sentences. The **margins** of each paragraph should be **indented at 0.5 Inches**. Besides, **the font**, which depends on the demands of the instructor, should be 12 point. **The spacing** of a paragraph should be double spaced. However, some instructors prefer single or 1.5 line spacing. Regardless of the preference, there should be no spaces between paragraphs.

Throughout the research paper, an author is required to include multiple **headings** and **Subheadings** according to the underlying themes. In APA, there are several levels of headings. Foremost is the **Level One heading**, which should be applied in all the main titles. Level one heading should be boldface, centered, and main words capitalized. The second is the **Level Two heading**, which is applied to sub-titles under the main headings. A level two heading is aligned to the left, main words capitalized, and boldfaced. The **level three heading**, which is applied to sub-sections that fall under the level two titles. Level three headings should be indented, lowercase, and boldface with a period. The text of the body ought to commence after the period. Fourthly is the **Level four heading**, which is applied to sub-parts that are below the level three headings. In this case, level four heading should be used. This title should be indented, italicized,

boldface, and lowercase and with a period. The body text of the subsection should start after the period. Fifth is the **Level five heading**, which is used for sub-sections that appear below the Level four headings. This heading level should be indented, italicized, not boldface, and lowercase and with a period. Below is an illustration of this context.



**In-text** citations in the introduction and body parts of a research paper differ according to the **number of authors, quotes, and paraphrases**. There are two ways of citing authors in the text. The first approach involves enclosing **the surname of the author and the year of publication**, separated by a comma in brackets. Therefore, single author cited in the text will appear as; **(Carroll, 2016)**. Two authors cited in-text will appear as; **(Carroll & Beth, 2016)**. Three authors cited in-text will appear as; **(Slaughter, Peterson, & Gaston, 2015)**. Four authors cited in the text appear as; **(Yancey, Peritz, Carrol, & Maimon, 2015)**. However, if a source with four authors appears subsequently, it will be cited as; **(Yancey et al, 2015)**. When these citations appear this way, they have to be incorporated before a period and not on the topic or concluding sentences. Do not end a paragraph with a citation not unless all ideas therein are drawn from the same source. Note that when a writer decides to use this method, the **ampersand sign (&)** is used between the last two authors. The second way of citing sources in the text requires an author to include the surname of the author outside the brackets and then enclosing the year of

publication in the brackets, e.g., **Carroll (2016), Carroll and Beth (2016), Yancey, Peritz, Carrol, and Maimon (2015)** and subsequently **Yancey et al. (2015)** depending on the number of authors. Note that in this method, the conjunction “and” is used between the last two authors. The application of the two citation styles will be illustrated in the succeeding section.

Text can be **quoted or paraphrased**. When quotes are used, they should be placed in parenthesis. Regardless of the citation style used, an author should include the page number from which the quote was derived. However, paraphrasing requires an author to express the ideas from other sources using own words and then include a citation. The following is a quoted and paraphrased idea respectively.

#### **A Quote**

“Research has shown that one way eyewitnesses are influenced by misleading questions is through experimental knowledge” (Lewandowski, 2016, p. 45).

Or;

Lewandowski (2016, p. 45) stated that, “Research has shown that one way eyewitnesses are influenced by misleading questions is through experimental knowledge.”

#### **A Paraphrase**

Either;

The past knowledge has demonstrated that the experimenter’s knowledge is among the ways through which the eye witness’ accounts are manipulated by misleading questions (Lewandowski, 2016).

Or;

According to Lewandowski (2016), the past knowledge has demonstrated that the experimenter's knowledge is among the ways through which the eye witness' accounts are manipulated by misleading questions.

### **Conclusion and Recommendation**

This section should appear after the "Discussion part." In this section, you should restate the problem that the paper addressed. You could, as well, briefly state what was found after administering the methods. Additionally, you could provide recommendations, either for practice or research. However, the recommendations should follow the findings and discussion.

### References

Bonja, V. K., Bront, W., & Fancy, M. (2015). *PhD. Student's Aptness in Levels of Headings*.

*Communication Journal*, 102(7), 12-19. **(Journal article with 3 authors)**

Carroll, P. & Beth, V. (2016). APA Referencing Style. *New York Time*, 33, 19-20. **(Print**

**newspaper article with two authors).**

Carroll, P. (2016). *APA Referencing Style*. D. Matt (Ed.). Belmont, CA: Cengage Learning. **(An**

**edited book with one author)**

Jarrett, D. (2016). Student's Knowledge of APA Heading Levels. *Communication Journal*,

12(3), 22-27. **(A journal article with one author)**

Slaughter, N., Peterson, M., & Gaston, Q. (2015). APA Referencing Style. In Matt, D,

*Professional Writing* (p. 13-19). Belmont, CA: Cengage Learning. **(A chapter in a book**

**with three authors)**

Vrij, G. & Van Higel, B. (2016). *The Ability of University Students to Use Headings Properly*.

Belmont, CA: Cengage Learning. **(A book with two authors)**

Yancey et al (2015). *APA Referencing Style*. [Web log]. Retrieved from

<http://www.waikato.ac.nz/library/study/referencing/styles/apa> **(An article from a web**

**page with four or more authors).**

Yancey, S. (2015). *APA Referencing Style* [Motion Picture]. U.S.: Disneyland Productions. **(A**

**film or movie).**

The reference page lists all the sources that were cited in the paper and often appear on a new page. The reference list may contain articles in periodicals, books, websites, newspapers, governmental documents, working papers, and letters among others. The way each of these sources appears in the text and on the reference page will be explored in-depth. Once you have compiled the reference list, you should arrange them alphabetically. To do this, highlight the references, click on the paragraph menu and then on the caption with “A” and “Z.” The references will be arranged automatically. All references must have a hanging indentation (0.5” margin). To do this, highlight the references again, click on the arrow on the bottom right corner of the paragraph menu section and then select “Indentation.” On the “Special” drop down menu, select “Hanging.” The following is a documentation of how an author should reference different kinds of sources with a different number of authors ranging from 1 to more than four.

## **Books**

### **Basic book format**

Surname, Initials. (Year). *Italicized Title with main words italicized*. Location of the publisher (City and State (two letter postal abbreviation)): Publisher.

### **Single Author**

Dobrin, S. I. (2015). *Writing Situations*. London, UK: Pearson.

### **Two authors**

Yancey, K., & Peritz, J. (2015). *A Writer's Resource (comb-version) Student Edition*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Higher Education.

### **Three Authors**

Schwartz, B. M., Landrum, R. E., & Gurung, R. A. (2016). *An Easy Guide to APA style*. Washington, DC: Sage Publications.

**Four or more authors**

Yancey, K., et al. (2015). *A Writer's Resource (comb-version) Student Edition*. London, UK: McGraw-Hill Higher Education.

**Edited Book with an author**

Carrol, J. (2014). *APA Referencing Style*. D. Matt (Ed.). Belmont, CA: Cengage Learning.

**A translated book**

Carrol, J. (2014). *APA Referencing Style*. (D. Matt, Trans.). Belmont, CA: Cengage Learning. (Original work published 2006).

**Second and subsequent editions**

Carrol, J. (2014). *APA Referencing Style* (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.). Belmont, CA: Cengage Learning.

**Chapter in a book**

Carrol, J. (2014). *APA Referencing Style*. In Matt, D, *Professional Writing* (p. 13-19). Belmont, CA: Cengage Learning.

**Other Sources**

When referencing other sources, the format to use for single author, two authors, three authors, and four authors, etc. in the case of books is the same.

**Periodicals****Basic periodical format**

Author, Initials separated by periods and a space. (Year). The Title of the Article. *Italicized title of the periodical, italicized volume number*, (issue number), pages.

**Example**

Ha, L. (2015). Advancing the Common Core Knowledge in Journalism and Mass Communication. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 92(1), 5-11.

## Articles in a Newspaper

### Basic format

Surname, Initials separated by a period and a space. (Year, Month, Date). Title of the work.

*Italicized Name of Newspaper, Italicized issue number, pages.*

### Example

Matt, D. (2014, February, 26). Separated by Geography. *New York Time*, 33, 19-20.

## Online newspaper

### Basic Format

Surname, Initials separated by a period and a space. (Year, Month, Date). Title of the work.

*Italicized Name of Newspaper, Italicized issue number.* Retrieved from URL of the article

### Example

McKinley, J. (2016, August, 26). United in Love, But Living on Separate Coasts. *New York Time*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/28/fashion/weddings/united-in-love-but-living-on-separate-coasts.html>

## Website articles/blogs

### Basic Format

Surname, Initials. (Year, Month, Date). *Italicized title of the article* [Web log]. Retrieved from

URL

### Example

Perkins, R. (2016). *New Bournemouth Signing Lewis Cook Urges Eddie Howe to Remain Cherries Manager*. [Web log]. Retrieved from [www.90min.com/posts/3451192-new-bournemouth-signing-lewis-cook-urges-eddie-howe-to-remain-cherries-manager](http://www.90min.com/posts/3451192-new-bournemouth-signing-lewis-cook-urges-eddie-howe-to-remain-cherries-manager)

## Audio podcast

**Basic format**

Speaker surname and initials. (Year, month and date). Title. *Italicized producing agency*. Podcast retrieved from URL

**Example**

Quity, D. (2016, January 6). RPM Change Summary Podcast January 2016. *FEMA Podcast*. Podcast retrieved from <https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/audio/114675>

**Film****Basic format**

Producer/Director Surname and initials. (Year). *Title of the Movie*. [Motion Picture]. Country of Origin: Producing studio.

**Example**

Nichols, M. (Dir.). (2001). *Wit* [Motion Picture]. U.S.: Avenue Pictures Productions.

**Government Publication****Basic format**

Institute or agency. (Year). *Title of the work*. (Publication number). City and state of publication: the government publisher.

**Example**

FEMA. (2016). *Fiscal Year 2016 Countering Violent Extremism Grant Program* ((DHS Publication No. 3). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Press.

**Organizational Reports****Basic format**

Name of Organization. (Date). *Title*. City of Publication, Abbreviations: Author.

**Example**

American Nurses Association. (2013). *Professional Role Competence*. Maryland, MD: Bancy.

NB: The above references have been titled for guidance. You do not have to put the organization or number of authors. Just write them in alphabetical order; from A to Z.

### **Appendix**

Some research papers usually contain an appendix page. The purpose of the appendix is to allow the author to include detailed information, which would have distracted the main body of the paper if it was included. Some of the items that go into this page include questionnaires, and mathematical proofs among others. If there is at least one item, you have to ensure that each item has a distinct appendix. You should label Appendixes as Appendix A, Appendix B; Etc. Each appendix has to start on its own page and should have a title. Below is an example of the appendix. The appendixes comes after the references.

Appendix A

Questionnaire

**Part A**

Name.....

Age.....

Grade level.....

**Part B**

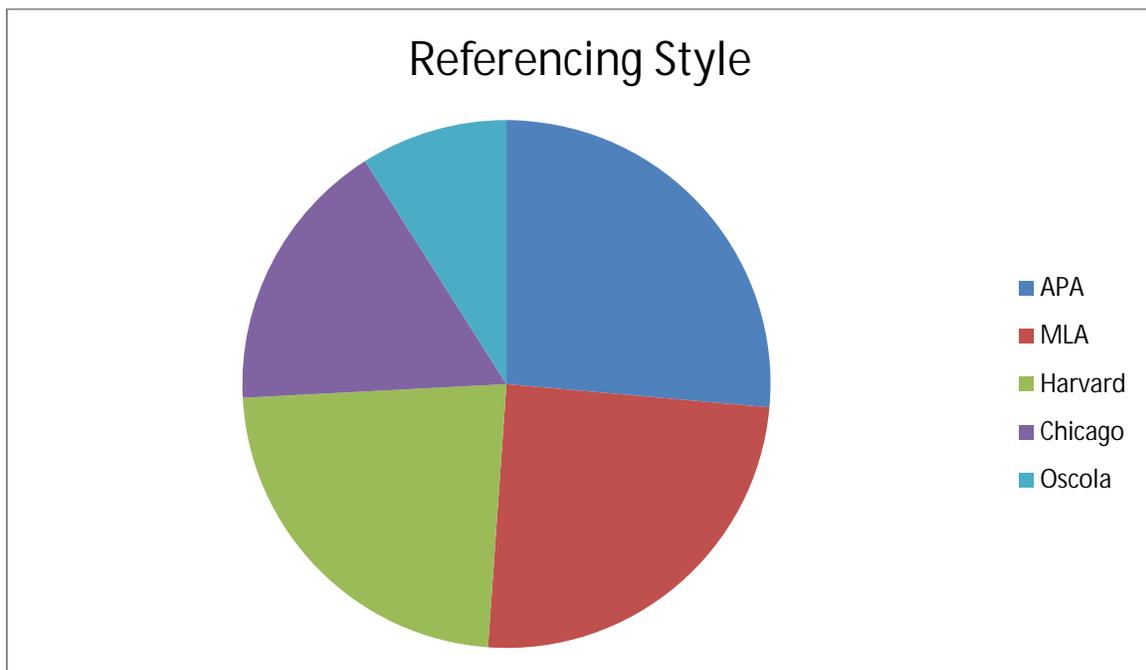
How many referencing and citation styles do you know? .....

Which are you most familiar with? .....

Is there any that you would like assistance? .....

## Appendix B

## Familiarity with the Various Referencing Styles



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