Writing in APA Style: The Basics

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Land Acknowledgement

We respectfully acknowledge the University of Arizona is on the land and territories of Indigenous peoples. Today, Arizona is home to 22 federally recognized tribes, with Tucson being home to the O'odham and the Yaqui. Committed to diversity and inclusion, the University strives to build sustainable relationships with sovereign Native Nations and Indigenous communities through education offerings, partnerships, and community service.

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Writing in APA Style: Citation Practices and Formatting Conventions

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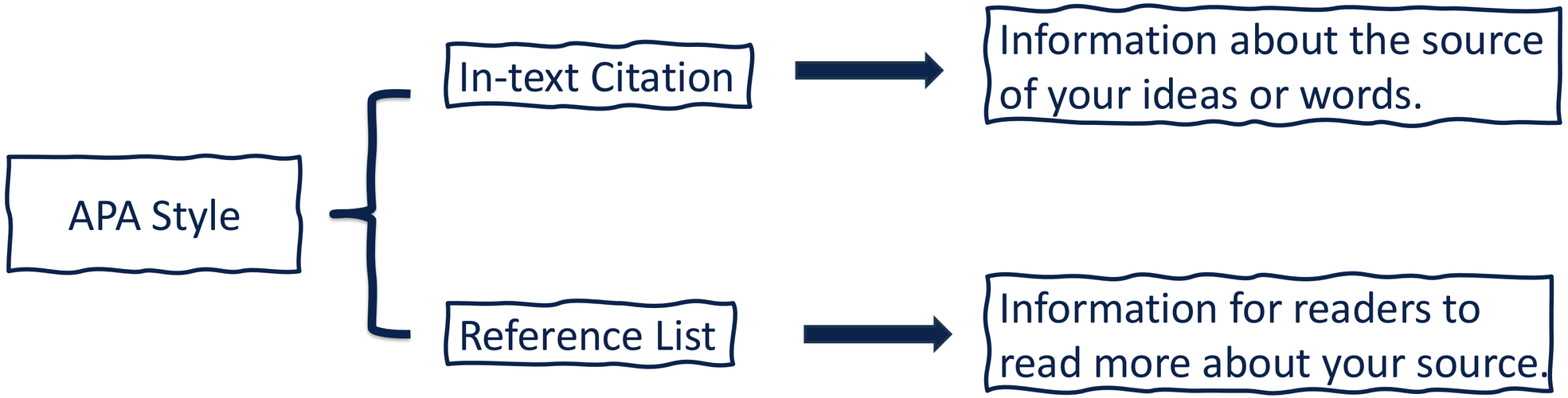
Discover Yourself

- ❑ Do you know the full name of APA?
- ❑ What do you know about the APA documentation style in writing?

Familiarizing Yourself with APA Style: The Basics

- APA represents the American Psychological Association. With its seventh edition, the APA documentation style introduces writers, whether junior or established, to "a set of guidelines for clear and precise scholarly communication" (American Psychological Association [APA], 2020, p. xvii).

- Under the APA documentation style, authors could achieve effective scholarly communication, as the APA style could assist authors in showcasing their ideas **clearly, concisely, and orderly** (APA, 2020).



American Psychological Association. (2020). *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.). https://doi.org/10.1037/0000165-000

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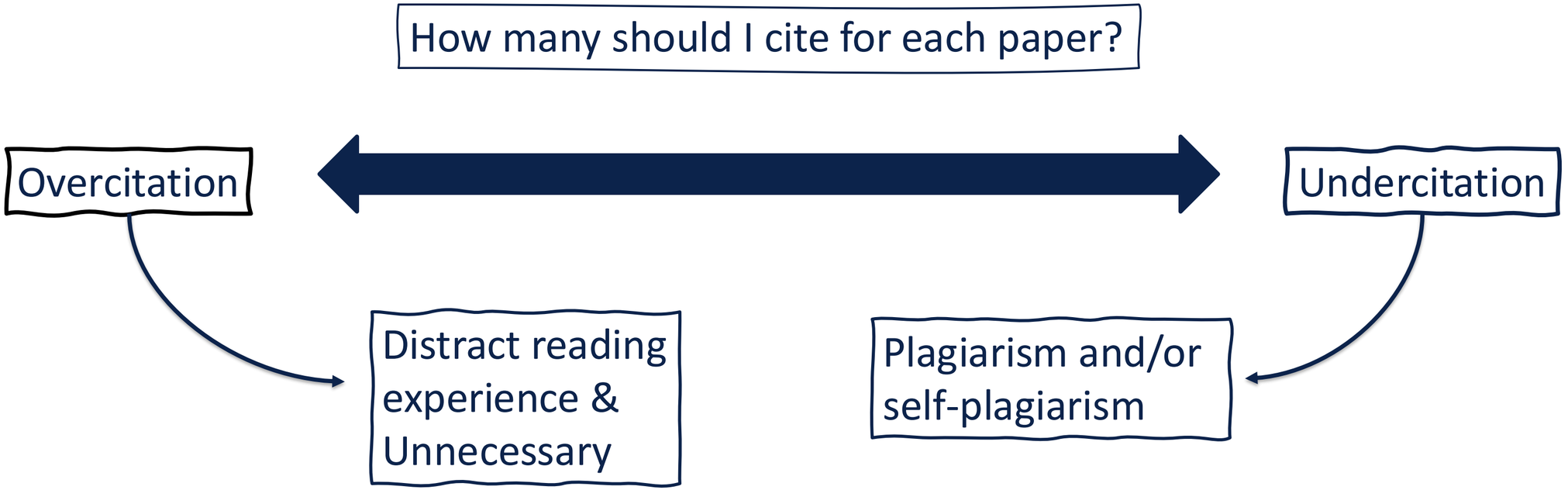
General Guidelines for Citation

Referencing sources (or citations) can showcase your understanding of the field, present important background information, key definitions, and critical data, show your respect for other people's intellectual work, add credibility/authority to your arguments (esp. expert opinions), and offer clues for readers to explore more of your cited works (APA, 2020; Lunsford, 2021).



- American Psychological Association. (2020). *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.). https://doi.org/10.1037/0000165-000
- Lunsford, A. A. (2021). *The St. Martin's Handbook* (9th ed.). Bedford/St. Martins.

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General Guidelines for Citation (cont'd)

Referencing sources (or citations) can showcase your understanding of the field, present important background information, key definitions, and critical data, show your respect for other people's intellectual work, add credibility/authority to your arguments (esp. expert opinions), and offer clues for readers to explore more of your cited works (APA, 2020; Lunsford, 2021).

How many should I cite for each paper?

Overcitation ⟷ Undercitation

Golden Rule: You should cite only things relevant to your writing. In other words, "Cite **only works that you have read** and **ideas that you have incorporated into your writing**" (APA, 2020, p. 253).

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- Lunsford, A. A. (2021). *The St. Martin's Handbook* (9th ed.). Bedford/St. Martins.

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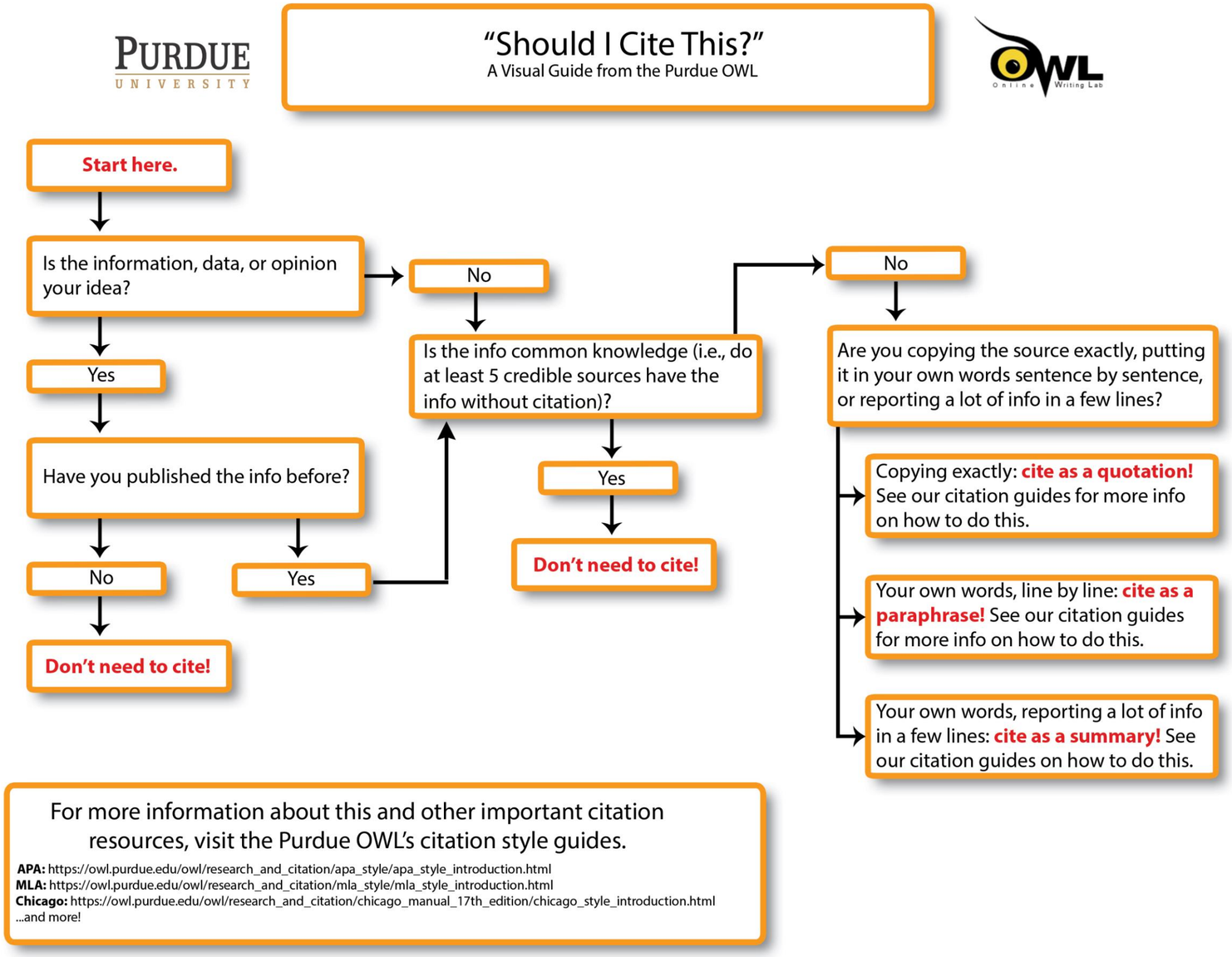
Should I Cite This?



(Source: https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/avoiding_plagiarism/should_i_cite_this_poster.html)

You can also consult the suggestions regarding when to (not) reference shared in Lecture 2.

If unsure, it can never hurt to provide a citation.

APA Citation System: Author-Date

In general, the APA documentation style follows **an author-date citation system**, where "a brief in-text citation directs readers to a full reference list entry" (APA, 2020, p. 257). **Specifically, each in-text citation must have a corresponding reference entry in the reference list and vice versa**. A basic APA-style reference normally includes the following four parts (Lunsford, 2021):

In-text Citation

- ❑ the author's (last) **name**
- ❑ the **publication date** of the work

Reference list

- ❑ the **title** of the work
- ❑ the **source** of the work

- American Psychological Association. (2020). *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.). https://doi.org/10.1037/0000165-000
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Example: Finding Reference Information

URL

Website Name

Source: Where can I retrieve this work?

Title: What is this work called?

Author: Who is responsible for this work?

Date: When was this work published?

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APA Citation System: Example #1

Reference List Entry:

Finegan, E. (2005). *Correct American: State of American*. PBS: Do You Speak American? https://www.pbs.org/speak/speech/correct/prescriptivism/

Author. (Date). Title of the work. Source of the Work.

Put the author's **last name** and publication date in parentheses. This type of citation is NOT part of a sentence.

In-text Citations:

A. (Finegan, 2005) **Parenthetical** Citation

B. Finegan (2005) **Narrative** Citation

Put the author's **last name** in the text, followed by the publication date in parentheses. This type of citation is part of a sentence.

If you quote from a source, you must **add the page number**.

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APA In-text Citation Basics: Paraphrase or Summary

N.B. *We will share more details about paraphrasing and summarizing in Unit 2 Global Englishes.*

Paraphrasing refers to using your own words to restate others' ideas, and it "allows you to **fit material to the context of your paper and writing style**" (APA, 2020, p. 270)

When you are paraphrasing or summarizing from the source, you should provide **the author's last name and the publication date** for the in-text citations.

Example #A: (Paltridge, 2006)
Example #B: Paltridge (2006) argued that …

What if there are two authors? Three authors or more?

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APA In-text Citation Basics: Paraphrase or Summary (cont'd)

Two authors: Include both authors. Use 'and' in narrative citations and '&' in parenthetical citations.

Example #C: (Liu & Yu, 2021)
Example #D: Liu and Yu (2021) have studied that …

Three or more authors: Include **the first author** only and add 'et al.' after the first author's last name.

Scenario: You want to cite an article written by Zhang, Wu, and Liu (2023).

Example #E: (Zhang et al., 2023)
Example #F: Zhang et al. (2023) claimed that …

APA In-text Citation Basics: Direct Quotation—Short Quotation

Direct quotation refers to using others' words in your work **without change**.

When you are quoting from a source, you should always provide **the author's last name, the publication date, and the page number**. Use the abbreviation 'p.' for a single page and "pp." for multiple pages.

Example #G: "XXX" (Liu, 2023, p. 1).
Example #H: Liu (2023) stated that "XXX"(pp. 2–3).

You should use direct quotations in your writing "when reproducing an exact definition, when an author has said something or succinctly, or when you want to respond to exact wording (e.g., something someone said)" (APA, 2020, p. 270)

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APA In-text Citation Basics: Direct Quotation—Short Quotation (cont'd)

When you are quoting from a source, you should always provide **the author's last name, the publication date, and the page number**. Use the abbreviation 'p.' for a single page and "pp." for multiple pages.

Example #G: "XXX" (Liu, 2023, p. 1).
Example #H: Liu (2023) stated that "XXX"(pp. 2–3).

You should follow the same rules mentioned in the "paraphrase or summary" section for two authors and three or more authors.

What if the quotation has 40 words or more?

APA In-text Citation Basics: Direct Quotation—Block Quotation

If a quote contains 40 words or more, name it a block quotation. In this case, no quotation marks are required. Instead, you should **"start a block quotation on a new line and indent the whole block 0.5 in (i.e., 1.27 cm) from the left margin" (APA, 2020, p. 272)**.

Example #I:

American Psychological Association (2020) suggests that we should follow the following procedures to handle block quotations:

> Double-space the entire block quotation; do not add extra space before or after it. Either (a) cite the source in parentheses after the quotation's final punctuation or (b) cite the author and year in the narrative before the quotation and place only the page number in parentheses after the quotation's final punctuation. Do not add a period after the closing parenthesis in either case. (p. 272)

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Citing Sources in APA Style: A Six-step Instructions (Adapted from APA, 2020)

Step #1: READ the work you want to cite.

Step #2: Note an **IDEA** you want to use in your paper.

Step #3: Write a **SENTENCE** about that idea in your own language.

Step #4: Prepare a **REFERENCE LIST ENTRY** for the work.

Step #5: Add the corresponding **IN-TEXT CITATION** to the sentence.

Step #6: REPEAT the above procedures as needed for more works and ideas.

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APA Reference List Basics: Reference vs. Bibliography

In academic writing, we often see two words (i.e., Reference and Bibliography) at the end of a paper. What are the differences?

Reference: A reference list only includes information or works that specifically "support the ideas, claims, and concepts in a paper" (APA, 2020, p. 281).

Bibliography: A bibliography can include "works for background or further reading and may include descriptive notes" (APA, 2020, p. 281).

Pop Quiz: What are the four basic elements of a reference?

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APA Reference List Basics: Punctuation Considerations

Tip #1: Always **add a period after each reference element**. However, no period is required after a DOI or URL.

Tip #2: Use **commas between parts of the same reference elements**. However, parentheses should be used between the journal volume and issue numbers.

Tip #3: **Do not italicize** punctuation between reference elements. Add space between the initials.

Example #J:

Liu, A. J. (2023). Review of *The inner world of gatekeeping in scholarly publication*. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, *60*, Article 101005. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jslw.2023.101005

Understanding English Punctuation Marks

Punctuation Mark	English Expression
.	Full stop/period
,	Comma
;	Semicolon
:	Colon
-	Hyphen
!	Exclamation mark
?	Question mark
“”	Double quotation marks
‘’	Single quotation marks
()	Paratheses/round brackets
/	Slash
[]	Brackets
‘	Apostrophe
…	Ellipsis

Punctuation Mark	English Expression
{}	Braces
—	Dash
*	Asterisk
#	Pound
@	at
&	Ampersand
~	Tilde

Housekeeping Tip: Do not use Chinese punctuation in your English writing pieces.

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APA Reference List Basics: Common Reference Examples

Example #K: Journal Article

- Chen, C., & Liu, A. J. (2022). Understanding partnerships in teacher and student feedback literacy: Shared responsibility. *Innovations in Education and Teaching International*, *64*(1), 31–44. https://doi.org/10.1080/14703297.2022.2153722

Example #L: Book

- Ferris, D. R. (2014). *Language power: Tutorials for writers*. Bedford/St. Martin's.

Example #M: Book Chapter

- Tardy, C. M. (2023). Developing "good writing" through emerging academic genres: Considerations for graduate education. In R. Kohls & C. P. Casanave (Eds.), *Perspectives on good writing in applied linguistics and TESOL* (pp. 30–42). University of Michigan Press.

You should follow the sentence case capitalization rather than the title case one throughout your reference entries.

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Capitalization

Housekeeping Rule: APA style follows **a "down" style**; that is, you should lowercase your words unless special situations happen (APA, 2020).

Title case: Major words (i.e., nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, pronouns, and all words of four letters or more) should be capitalized.

Sentence case: Most words are lowercased. Only capitalize the first word of the title/ heading/ subtitle/ proper nouns. Also, capitalize the first word after a colon, em dash, or end punctuation in a heading.

Special Situation: You should always capitalize nouns followed by numerals or letters (e.g., Chapter 8, Figure 1, Appendix B). Exception: page and paragraph.

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APA Style: Formatting Conventions

Formatting showcases your attitudes toward the writing piece and presents the first impression of your work to audiences.

- ❑ A well-formatted paper tells your readers that you are organized, conscious of details, and serious about your work.
- ❑ A free-format piece hinders your readers, to some extent, from reading and evaluating the writing piece, which later may influence your scores or writing products in an unexpected manner.

In our ENGL106 courses, what will happen if you fail to follow the formatting requirements stated in the course syllabus (pp. 6–7)?

Note: Partial content of this slide is adapted from my previous FYP workshop at UIC.

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APA Style: Formatting Conventions (cont'd)

Page Number: Top right corner. Start from the title page. Use the automatic page-numbering function in your word processor.

Font: Consistently use the same font throughout your writing pieces. Recommended font for this class: 12-point Times New Roman.

Line Spacing: Double-space the entire paper.

Margins: 1-in (i.e., 2.54 cm) margins on all sides of the page.

Paragraph Alignment: Left-justified.

Paragraph Indentation: Indent the first line of every paragraph 0.5 in (i.e., 1.27 cm). Or no indentation, but add a blank line between paragraphs.

After class, please check the Student Paper Setup Guide on D2L to familiarize yourself with the formatting setup within Word.

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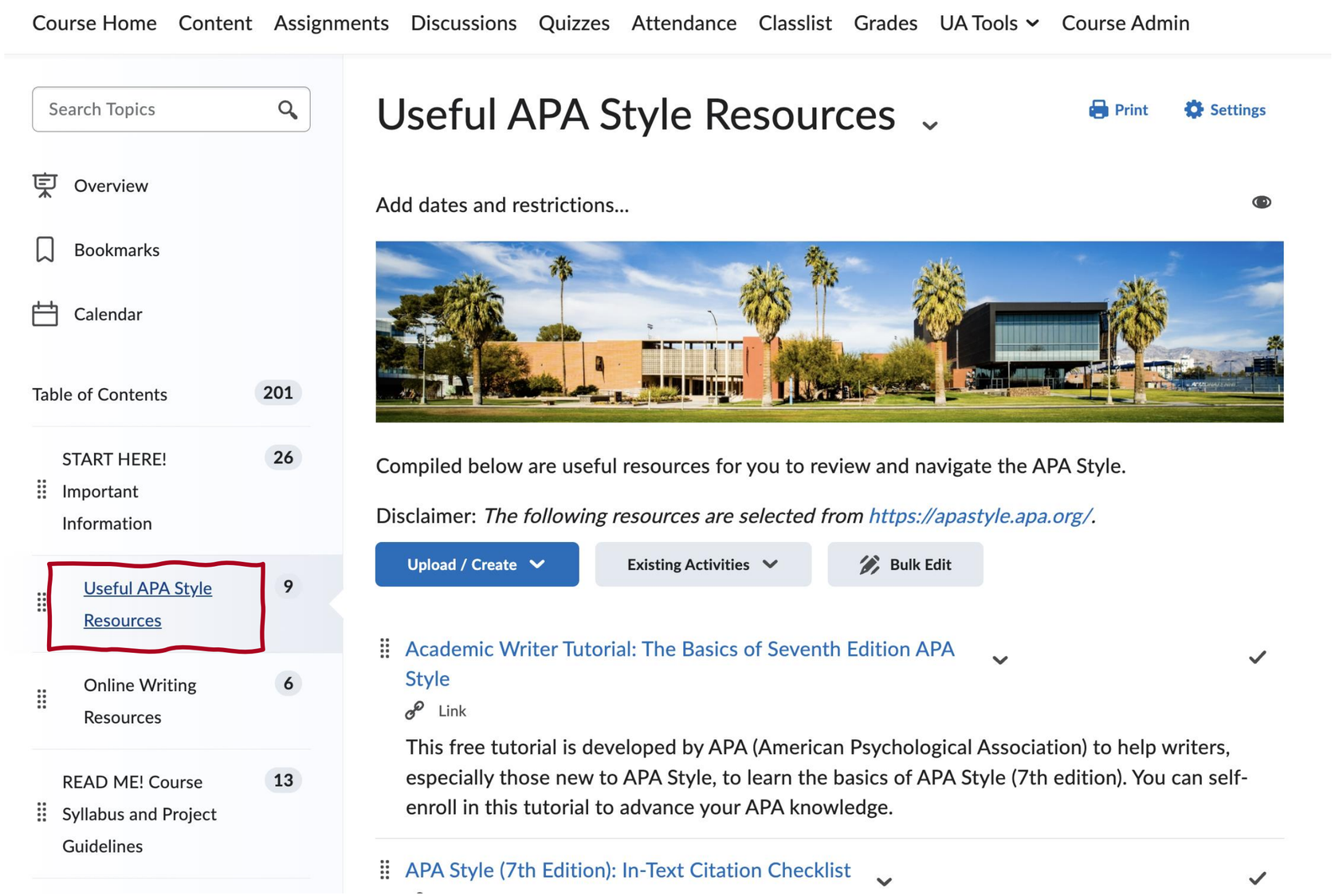
Independent Learning: Useful APA Style Resources Module on D2L



Please consult the Useful APA Style Resources Module, especially the Academic Writer Tutorial, whenever you have questions about APA Style.

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Further Resources

Purdue Online Writing Lab — APA Formatting and Style Guide (7th Edition):
https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/index.html

Need more APA Style Help?
https://apastyle.apa.org

[Encouraged free course]
Academic writer tutorial: Basics of seventh edition APA style

APA Citation Generator:
https://www.citationmachine.net/apa

Practice: APA Style Knowledge Quiz and Referencing Activity

- ❑ **Work in a group of 3 to 4 students.**
- ❑ Finish the APA Style Knowledge Quiz and Referencing Activity Worksheet.
- ❑ Exchange your answers with the neighbor groups.

Writing in APA Style: Mechanics of Style

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Mechanics of Style

American Psychological Association (2020) defines style as “guidelines for ensuring **clear, consistent** communication and presentation in written works” (p. 153). To some extent, style often overlaps with good writing practices.

Topics to be covered in this section

- ❑ Spelling
- ❑ Capitalization
- ❑ Italics
- ❑ Abbreviation
- ❑ Numbers
- ❑ Punctuation Power

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Spelling

- Spelling in APA style should follow the Merriam-Webster Dictionary (https://www.merriam-webster.com) or the APA Dictionary of Psychology (https://dictionary.apa.org).

  - **Example #A**: Appendix — Appendices; Criterion — Criteria; Datum — Data

Common technology words in APA Style papers (APA, 2020, p. 162)

Wi-Fi	internet	home page	emoji
email	webpage	login page	database

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Title case: Major words (i.e., nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, pronouns, and all words of four letters or more) should be capitalized.

Sentence case: Most words are lowercased. Only capitalize the first word of the title/ heading/ subtitle/ proper nouns. Also, capitalize the first word after a colon, em dash, or end punctuation in a heading.

Special Situation: You should always capitalize nouns followed by numerals or letters (e.g., Chapter 8, Figure 1, Appendix B). Exception: page and paragraph.

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Italics

In your writing, you could use *italics* for the following:

- ❑ key terms or phrases with an accompanying definition
  - ❑ **Example #B**: *Speech community* represents a group of people who share some norms for language use.
- ❑ titles of books, reports, webpages, and journal articles
- ❑ letters in statistical symbols or algebraic variables
  - ❑ **Example #C**: $a/b = c/d$
- ❑ volume number in reference lists
- ❑ the first use of a word or phrase from another language
  - ❑ **Example #D**: English is the *de facto* official language of Macau.

Abbreviations

Abbreviations are the shortened form of words or phrases.

- ❑ **Example #E**: English as an Additional Language (EAL)

General Rules for Using Abbreviations in APA Style Papers (APA, 2020)

- ❑ Make sure your readers can understand your abbreviation (i.e., always provide the full name first).
- ❑ Use abbreviations to save word counts and avoid unnecessary repetitions.
- ❑ Use the abbreviations at least three times in a paper. If not, please spell out the full name.

Common Latin abbreviations in APA Style: *e.g.,* (for example,); *i.e.,* (that is,); *et al.,* (and others,); *, etc.* (, and so forth).

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Numbers

Generally speaking, you should **use numerals to express numbers 10 and above** and **words to express numbers below 10** (APA, 2020).

You should also use numerals for the following:

- ❑ numbers represent time, dates, ages, scores and points on a scale.
  - ❑ **Example #F**: 5 days; about 8 months; 1 hr 30 min.
- ❑ numbers that immediately precede a unit of measurement
  - ❑ **Example #G**: 5 kg; 12 min; 0.5 cm
- ❑ numbers that denote a specific place in a numbered series and parts of books and tables/figures.
  - ❑ **Example #H**: Table 2; Chapter 1
- ❑ numbers that represent statistical or mathematical functions.
  - ❑ **Example #I**: 3 times as many; more than 5%

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Punctuation Power

- Punctuation is powerful in influencing your writing style, flow, and even impression. Using punctuation in a correct manner doesn't save your life but can at least help you avoid unnecessary and serious consequences (Ferris, 2014).

- Let's eat Andy.
- Let's eat, Andy.

- Punctuation also helps you (as a reader) to understand where to take a break, end the sentence, or take another way (APA, 2020).

- American Psychological Association. (2020). *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.). https://doi.org/10.1037/0000165-000
- Ferris, D. R. (2014). *Language Power: Tutorials for Writers*. Bedford/St. Martins.

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Understanding English Punctuation Marks

Punctuation Mark	English Expression
.	Full stop/period
,	Comma
;	Semicolon
:	Colon
-	Hyphen
!	Exclamation mark
?	Question mark
“”	Double quotation marks
‘’	Single quotation marks
()	Paratheses/round brackets
/	Slash
[]	Brackets
‘	Apostrophe
…	Ellipsis

Punctuation Mark	English Expression
{}	Braces
—	Dash
*	Asterisk
#	Pound
@	at
&	Ampersand
~	Tilde

Housekeeping Tip: Do not use Chinese punctuation in your English writing pieces.

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Mind Your Boundary: Space Matters

Good morning,writers.Please find the grading criteria for your 2nd Text Rewrite Draft above.Please note that I will evaluate your Explanation part unless your Text Rewrite draft is on the right track.That is,you should no longer submit an academic writing piece for the Text Rewrite part.If you still do so,I will directly send the Explanation draft back to you and ask you to revise the Text Rewrite draft first.

Good morning, writers. Please find the grading criteria for your 2nd Text Rewrite Draft above. Please note that I will evaluate your Explanation part unless your Text Rewrite draft is on the right track. That is, you should no longer submit an academic writing piece for the Text Rewrite part. If you still do so, I will directly send the Explanation draft back to you and ask you to revise the Text Rewrite draft first.

How do you feel?
Which one do you prefer?

(*Note:* This excerpt is from my personal WeChat communication with students.)

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Mind Your Boundary: Space Matters (cont'd)

You should **add a space** after the following:

- ❑ end punctuation marks of a sentence
- ❑ commas, colons, and semicolons
- ❑ different elements of a reference entry
- ❑ periods following initials in names (A. J. Liu)

Do not add a space after the following:

- ❑ after internal periods in abbreviations (e.g., U.S., i.e.)
- ❑ around colons in rations (1:4)

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Period: “.”

You should **add a period** in the following cases:

- ❑ to end a complete sentence
- ❑ with initials in names (A. J. Liu)
- ❑ in Latin abbreviations (e.g., i.e.)
- ❑ in reference abbreviations (7th ed., Vol. 2)
- ❑ in era designations (B.C.E., C.E.)
- ❑ different elements of a reference entry

Do not **add a period** in the following cases:

- ❑ in abbreviations of state, province, or territory names (AZ; Tucson)
- ❑ in capital letter abbreviations and acronyms (APA, IQ)
- ❑ in abbreviations for academic degrees (BSc, MSc, PhD)
- ❑ DOIs or URLs in the reference lists

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Comma: “,”

You should **add a comma** in the following cases:

- between elements in a series of three or more items, including before the final item
  - *apple, banana, and pineapple*
  - **apple, banana and pineapple*
- to separate two independent clauses joined by a conjunction
  - *We introduced the concept of register in Lecture 5, and different examples were provided.*
- to set off the year in parenthetical in-text citations
  - (Paltridge, 2006)
- to separate groups of three digits in most numbers of 1,000 or more

*(Note: * stands for inappropriate writing practice.)*

Do not **add a comma** in the following cases:

- between the two parts of a compound predicate
  - *Andy introduced the rubric and highlighted the important considerations of Project 1 in today’s lecture.*
  - **Andy introduced the rubric, and highlighted the important considerations of Project 1 in today’s lecture.*
- to separate parts of measurement (1 hr 30 s)

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Semicolon: “;”

You should **use a semicolon** in the following cases:

- to separate two independent clauses that are not joined by a conjunction
  - *We introduced the concept of register in Lecture 5; different examples were provided.*
- to separate two independent clauses joined by a conjunctive adverb (e.g., however, therefore)
  - *You have done a great job in Project 1; however, you should reconsider the following points for further improvement.*
- to separate items in a group that already contain commas
  - *The color groups were red, yellow, and blue; orange, green, and purple; or black, gray, and brown.*
- to separate multiple parenthetical citations
  - (Paltridge, 2006; Finegan, 2005)

Note[1]: This sentence is selected from page 156 of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.)

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Colon: “:”

You should **use a colon** in the following cases:

- ❑ between a grammatically complete introductory clause and a final phrase or clause that illustrates, extends, or amplifies the preceding thought.
  - ❑ *Finegan (2005) mainly discussed four main ideas: linguistic variation, prescriptivism, descriptivism, and language correctness*.
- ❑ in rations and proportions (1:8)

Do not **use a colon** in the following:

- ❑ after an introduction that is not an independent clause or complete sentence
  - ❑ *The main ideas of Finegan (2005) included linguistic variation, prescriptivism, descriptivism, and language correctness.*

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Dash: “—” & “–”

Em Dash (“—”)

- You can use an *em dash* to set off an element added to amplify or digress from the main clause.
  - *Although you have uploaded the correct version to D2L—after four days when it was due—I decided to use the original mark as the final grade for your performance in this assignment item.*

- You should use em dashes in appropriate contexts and do not overuse them.
  - Mac: Option + Shift + Dash
  - Windows: Alt + 0151

En dash (“–”)

- You use an *en dash* between words of equal weight in a compound adjective or to indicate a numerical range (e.g., a page or date range).
  - Beijing–Shanghai flights
  - Author–Date citation
  - pp. 4–7
  - 2023–2030

- Do not mix the hyphen (“-”) with the en dash (“–”).
  - Mac: Option + Dash
  - Windows: Alt + 0150

Do not add a space before or after an em/en dash.

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Quotation Marks: “ ”

You should **use double quotation marks** in the following cases:

- ❑ to refer to a letter, word, phrase, or sentence as a linguistic example or itself
  - ❑ *You should use the third-person pronoun “they” rather than “he/she” in your writing*.
- ❑ to quote a sentence from sources, research participants, or others.
  - ❑ *Paltridge (2006) defined speech communities as “XXX” (p. X).*
  - ❑ *My student complained, “Andy, you gave us too much homework.”*
- ❑ to introduce a word as an ironic comment, as slang, or as an invented or coined expression.
  - ❑ *You have done a “great” job.*

Do not **use double quotation marks** in the following:

- ❑ to highlight a key term or phrase with definitions; instead, use italics.
- ❑ to hedge or downplay meaning
  - ❑ *Andy provided detailed feedback on the first Text Rewrite Draft.*
  - ❑ *Andy provided “detailed” feedback on the first Text Rewrite Draft.*

Housekeeping Tip: You should use complete quotation marks in your writing. Place only commas and periods inside closing quotation marks; others should be put outside.

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Further Resources on Punctuation

The Punctuation Guide
https://www.thepunctuationguide.com/index.html

Purdue Online Writing Lab: Punctuations
https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/punctuation/index.html

See you next Tuesday!

N8801, 9:50 AM – 12:10 PM

Questions: ajliu@arizona.edu

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