A Writer’s Companion to
AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION (APA)

REFERENCES


Intended Uses and Disclaimers: Please note that consultants do not provide copyediting services for citation styles. Instead, this worksheet is intended to help prompt writers to learn for themselves how to work with citations appropriately. This checklist provides you with some basic formatting rules, but once you apply these rules, you’ll also need to look up each type of source that you’re working with in an APA guide. Always check with your professor if you have questions.

STEP 1: Identifying Your Sources (Preparing to Work with the APA Publication Manual or OWL Purdue)

- **If you have come to the Center with a draft of your References page**, begin the Writing Center session by identifying (in notes in the margins of the References page) the types of sources listed in the document. Do this for each source. For example, note whether a source is a book, a collection of essays, a scholarly journal article, a newspaper article, a blog, a website, a government document, a YouTube video, etc.

- **If you have come to the Center without a References page** and you need to create one from scratch, begin by going through the paper with the consultant and creating a list of each type of source referenced.

STEP 2: References List (Basic Formatting)

- Your list of sources is **titled** References (and not Works Cited or Bibliography).

- The title, References, is **centered** at the top of the page in **regular print** (no bolding or underlining).

- The entire list of sources is **double-spaced**, without extra spaces between entries. The second and subsequent lines are **indented** a half inch from the left margin. In other words, you’re formatting each entry with a hanging indentation.

- Your full list is **alphabetized** by author’s last name and/or, for unauthored sources, the first word of the source. If the first word of the title is an article (A, An, The), alphabetize the entry based on the first word of the title that *isn’t* an article. (So, both Monsters and The monsters count as “M” as you’re alphabetizing.)

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Authors’ names are inverted with last name appearing first for single authors; first and middle names are reduced to initials only: (Medley, A. P.). For sources with more than one author, all author names are inverted: (Medley, A. P., Harmony, E., & Discord, J. F.). Use the ampersand (&) instead of “and” to set off the final author in the list.

- The date is almost always presented in the second position in the entry and is placed in parentheses. For books, give only the year of publication. For newspapers and magazines, present the year followed by the month and date: (2001, May 12).

- Regarding capitalization of titles, follow these rules...
  - Book titles and article titles: Only capitalize the first word in the title and in the subtitle, as well as any proper nouns (names of places, people, etc.)
  - Periodical titles (journals, newspapers, magazines): Capitalize first words in titles and subtitles; also capitalize all words EXCEPT articles, conjunctions, and prepositions.

- All titles of long works should be italicized, while titles of short works are placed in quotation marks.
  - NOTE: The decision regarding whether a text is “long” or “short” is more about whether a text is published on its own or as part of a larger work than about actual length. If a text is published as a subsection of a larger work (like an article in a newspaper), the subsection should go in quotation marks; the larger text that contains the subsections should be italicized. (i.e., a book title is italicized, while the chapter titles are placed in quotation marks; an album title is italicized, while the songs on the album are placed in quotation marks).

- For web sources, use “Retrieved from” to introduce URLs.

- Your References page only includes references actually cited in the text of your paper.

**STEP 3: Looking Up Each Source**

- Once you have followed these basic formatting rules, draw on your marginal notes (from Step 1) that labeled each source for its source type and look up each source in your APA guide (or the OWL Purdue’s APA website). Use the guide to double-check the details for each entry.