

## APA Quick Reference Guide, 6<sup>th</sup> edition

**Author/Creation:** Academic Center staff. **Revision:** January 2010.

**Summary:** Provides an overview to APA documentation style as described in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (Sixth Edition). Section I explains APA documentation in text. Section II shows how to format the title page, the abstract, the text, and the reference list of an APA paper. This guide is not intended to be a complete reference, but it does provide guidelines for the most common elements used by students writing research papers.

**Learning Objectives:** To write proper in-text citations in APA documentation style. To format reference entries and the reference, title, and abstract pages correctly in APA documentation style.

### Section I

This section of the APA Quick Reference Guide explains citations in text and how to cite

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### Section II

This section of the APA Quick Reference Guide provides information and examples of the different sections of an APA paper:

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\*Page eight includes tips for citing electronic sources.

A plagiarism supplement appears at the end of this guide. For questions regarding your paper, please schedule an appointment with an Academic Center tutor at <http://www.rich37.com/uhv/> or email your questions to [tutor@uhv.edu](mailto:tutor@uhv.edu).

## APA Quick Reference Guide: Section I



APA style uses the author-date method of citation: the surname of the author and the year of publication are inserted in the text at a specified point. This method gives readers useful information in text and helps them locate the citation easily in the alphabetical reference list. For direct quotations, the page number must be cited as well (see page 5 of this guide for more information). Generally, the author and year should not be separated. **Note: If your instructor's guidelines differ from those specified in this guide, follow your instructor's requirements.**

### Works with One Author

If the name of the author occurs in the discussion within the sentence and you are paraphrasing or summarizing the original material, cite only the year of publication in parentheses. If the sentence does not mention the author's name, cite both the author and the year in parentheses, but separate the author and year with a comma.

Jackson (1996) identifies three key problems that lead to stress in today's families.

*or*

Today's families face three main problems that can cause stress (Jackson, 1996).

In continuous discussion of a particular source's ideas, after the initial parenthetical citation, you can cite the author's name without the parenthetical citation of the year if no ambiguity results within that paragraph. If the reader might misinterpret the source of the information, provide the year of publication. **(In an actual paper, the following text would be double-spaced.)**

Davidson (1996) concludes that psyche represents the source of the problem. His studies of adolescents reveal that pressures tend to arise during the early years of psychological development. These pressures can include peer interactions, family obligations, and academic achievement. Davidson suggests that parents recognize the effects that these pressures can have on their teens.

Note that this form can only be used if the author's name is included as part of the narrative. If the name and year are both used in a parenthetical in the first reference, subsequent references should have the year included.

Studies of adolescents reveal that pressures tend to arise during the early years of psychological development (Davidson, 1996). Davidson (1996) elaborates that...

### Works with Two Authors

If a work has two authors, always cite both authors' names every time you cite the source. **(The examples in the following text would be double-spaced if they appeared in the text of an actual paper.)**

Braden and Darly (1997) recognize the financial benefits of this tax deduction. If individuals apply for this specific deduction by September 1, 1997, then their tax liability is decreased by \$200.00. Braden and Darly suggest that qualifying individuals file at least one month in advance of the deadline.

For *parenthetical* citations of two authors, use the ampersand symbol & instead of the word *and*. For parenthetical citations of two authors, insert a comma between the last name mentioned and the year of publication.

Qualifying individuals need to file at least one month in advance (Braden & Darly, 1997).

### Works with More than Two Authors

If the work has from three to five authors, cite all the authors *the first time* the reference occurs. In *subsequent* citations of the same source, include only the surname of the first author followed by the words *et al.* (Do not italicize *et al.*, but do use a period following *al.*) **(The examples in the following text would be double-spaced if they appeared in the text of an actual paper.)**

Jarvis, Haley, and Reed (1996) indicate that the computer operating system is extremely efficient. The program works well with integrated packages, and it provides more user options. Jarvis et al. conclude that this operating system represents the best one on the market.

For *discontinuous* discussion or where ambiguity may result, place the year after *et al.*

The authors indicate that web technology enables anyone to publish: The approval or sanction of others is not needed. The effect is that writers are liberated, but readers bear the burden because they must be more critical of what they read (Jarvis et al., 1996).

Be careful with citations of two sources that have the same first name and same year.

Harkins, Straight, and Lemper (1996) . . .  
Harkins, Madison, and Levitt (1996) . . .

In subsequent citations, each source above could technically be cited as "Harkins et al. (1996)" in text, making the two indistinguishable. In such cases, cite the surnames of the first authors and of as many of the subsequent authors as necessary to distinguish the two references. "(Harkins, Straight et al., 1996)" would be the correct parenthetical citation.

For sources with six or more authors, always cite only the first author's last name followed by *et al.* in text. (See page 175 in the *APA Manual*.) If you should encounter a situation where the same first few authors of two studies produced in the same year, as in the scenario above, you should follow the same guideline of including as many of the authors as necessary to distinguish the two.

Note: In the reference list, a study with six to seven authors would have all authors listed. If the work has eight or more authors, list the first six authors, insert three ellipses, and the last author's name.

### Works with Corporate or Group Authors

When a group (e.g. corporations, associations, and government agencies) serve as the author of an article, the name of the group should be spelled out in the first reference. For most groups, an abbreviation will follow that will be used in subsequent references. To decide whether to use an abbreviation, consider whether the abbreviation form is common enough to locate the source on the reference list.

The first time corporate or group authors are used, spell out the names *followed by* the abbreviated form in parentheses. **(In an actual paper, the following text would be double-spaced.)**

The Department of Public Safety (DPS, 1997) explains that the increase in traffic problems is particular to a given location.

*or*

The increase in traffic problems is particular to a given location (Department of Public Safety [DPS], 1997).

If the name of the group is short or if abbreviation is unknown or could cause ambiguity, it is better to spell out the entire group name each time it is used.

Note: In the reference list, always write out the full corporate or group author name.  
See pages 94-95 of the APA manual for the use of brackets.

### **Works with No Authors or Anonymous Author**

If a work has no author, use the first two or three words of the source's title and the year. **(The examples in the following text would be double-spaced if they appeared in the text of an actual paper.)**

The title of an article, chapter, or webpage with no author should be enclosed in quotation marks:

The juvenile detention center contains many repeat offenders ("Juvenile Recidivism," 1997).

The title of a book, periodical, brochure, or report with no author should be italicized:

Most employees experience violence in the workplace at least once (*Business Trends*, 1996).

If a work indicates the author is anonymous, cite in text the word *Anonymous* (not italicized) followed by a comma and the date. In the reference list, alphabetize by the word *Anonymous*.

Copyright and authority are often extensions of each other in the print culture (Anonymous, 2001).

Note: Legal materials should be treated as a work with no author using the first few words and the year in the in-text reference. See pages 216-224 of the APA Manual for further information regarding citing specific types of legal references.

### **Two or More Separate Works by Different Authors**

When citing several works by different authors within the same parentheses, list them in alphabetical (*not chronological*) order by the first author's surname. Separate the citations by semicolons. **(In an actual paper, the following text would be double-spaced.)**

Several studies by environmentalists indicate that the rain forests soon will live only in our memories (Decker & Nowles, 1997; Marley, 1995; Sullivan, 1996).

If one of the studies is a major citation, it can be separated from the others within the parentheses by inserting a phrase such as *see also* before the other citations included.

(Dabney, 1936; see also Woodward, 1971; Grantham, 1983)

## Secondary Sources

Secondary sources are works that reference other authors. **Always try to locate and use the original work.** If it is not possible to do so, cite the original source (the source who originally stated the idea) in your sentence and the secondary source (the source where you actually located the information) and its year of publication in parentheses. Include the words *as cited in* (not italicized) for the parenthetical documentation of the secondary source. Provide a year of publication only for the source where you located the information since only this source will be listed in your reference section. **(In an actual paper, the following text would be double-spaced.)**

According to Sampson (1954), individuals tend to vote the party supported by their ancestors (as cited in Povarick, 1996).

Note: Sampson = original person making the observation  
Povarick = secondary source where Sampson's observation is discussed.

## Personal Communications

Personal communications include interviews, e-mails, electronic bulletin boards, letters, memos, and telephone conversations. Use the interviewee's initials or first name, the surname, and the exact date of the communication. Identify this source as personal communication and provide the date *at the end of the first sentence referencing the source by name*. Personal communications are considered *non-recoverable data*, which means it should *not* be listed in the references. **(In an actual paper, the following text would be double-spaced.)**

Dr. J. Thompson, humanities professor at Purdue, stresses the crucial feature of point of view in a piece of literature (personal communication, January 17, 1997). She emphasizes that the point of view represents a unique feature within fictional texts.

Some forms of communication facilitate informality in communication; information cited should always have scholarly relevance.

## Direct Quotations

When directly repeating words from a source, use quotation marks to indicate the original wording used by the source.

When citing print sources you have quoted, include the page number in your citation. Electronic sources may or may not have page numbers. Include the page number if the electronic source *does* have a page number. If the electronic source *does not* have a page number, include paragraph numbers (if visible). If paragraph numbers or page numbers are not visible and headings are within the document, cite the heading and the number of the paragraph following the heading to direct the reader to the quoted material. Use the abbreviation "para." When no page, or paragraph is used or if the headings are too unwieldy to cite in full, it may be necessary to use a shortened version of the title in quotation marks instead. (See page 172 in the *APA Manual* for further information.)

## Short Quotations (fewer than 40 words)

Incorporate the information into the text of the sentence. Place the period *after* the parenthetical citation of the page number. **(In an actual paper, the following text would be double-spaced.)**

Rivera (1998) found that "98% of those surveyed preferred the term 'bucket' to 'pail'" (p. 34).

As Norlink (2001) indicates, "hypnosis is effective in 35 out of 100 cases" (Hypnosis Explained section, para. 3).

### **Long Quotations** (40 or more words)

For long quotations, use the block quote format and omit the quotation marks (unless the author uses quoted information). Begin the quote on a new line indented ½ inch from the left margin only and type the block quotation using double spacing between the lines. Place a period at the end of the quotation, followed by a single space, and then type "p." and the page number(s) in parentheses. (Quotation marks should not be included around p.) Note that no period follows the closing parenthesis. **(In an actual paper, the following text would be double-spaced.)**

According to Haley (1996), the bonding process occurs within the first two weeks after birth:

The bonding process among infants exhibits a unique characteristic within the 14-day post-partum period. During this time, infants can identify and later recognize characteristics unique to the caretaker. These characteristics can include the tone of voice, body scent, and smile of a given caretaker. (p. 61)

This bonding process, unless interrupted, can significantly affect the relationship that develops during the pre-school years.

Note: For quotes from two or more pages, use "pp." and the page numbers (pp. 56-57).

Note: To identify information within a block quotation that is already quoted, use double quotation marks around the quoted material.

### **General Tips**

- ◆ Use a topic sentence to "set up" the discussion within an entire paragraph.
- ◆ Avoid "stringing together" sources, which involves placing one author's information in one sentence and moving on to another source's information in the next. Comment on, conclude, interpret, or "tie up the loose ends" of one author's information before advancing to another source.
- ◆ Spell out numbers zero through nine; use the Arabic representations for 10 and over.
- ◆ Use APA preferred spelling and capitalization for common terms: database, e-mail, FTP, Internet, online, PDF, URL, and Web.

### **APA Quick Reference Guide: Section II**



Section II of the Quick Reference Guide shows you about the formatting conventions of APA style and also provides tips.

### **Title Page**

A sample title page is shown on p. 9 of this guide. Elements of the title page will include minimally a running head, title, author's name, and institutional affiliation. Some documents may require an author's note. However, for most class papers, the author's note is not required. If you do need one, see pages 24-25 in the *APA Manual*.

### Tips for the Title Page

In the header position type a running head on the left margin. This should be titled “Running head:” and be followed by a shortened version of the title written in all capital letters, as shown on the sample page. (Quotation marks should not be included around Running head:.) The running head should not exceed 50 characters, including spaces and punctuation. On the right margin of the header include the page number; for a title page this should be 1. Center the paper’s title, your name, and the university’s name in the upper half of the page. For more information on title pages, visit pages 23 and 229 in the *APA Manual*.

### **Abstract**

The abstract of an APA paper should follow the format shown on p. 10 of this guide. The abstract provides a brief description of the contents of your paper.

### Tips for the Abstract

- ◆ The abstract should have the running head in the header position and the page number 2. Omit the words “Running head:” on all but the title page.
- ◆ Three lines below the header type the word *Abstract* (without italics). Center it horizontally.
- ◆ Double space between the word *Abstract* and the text.
- ◆ Do not indent the text on this page; keep it all one unindented paragraph.

### Tips for Writing the Abstract

- ◆ Write your abstract last, after you have written the paper.
- ◆ Keep it short—150 words is about average. It should range from 150-250 words.
- ◆ Double space your abstract and do not indent the first line of text. You should have 1 paragraph with no indentation.
- ◆ Use only your own words and *do not use* any outside sources. The only time that outside sources should ever be noted in an abstract is if the document replicates or expands a prior study.

The exact content of the abstract may vary based on the type of study that the document provides. For a list of suggested elements see pages 26-27 of the *APA Manual*.

### **First Page of Text**

The first page of your text should follow the format shown on page 11 of the Quick Guide.

### Tips for the First Page of Text

- ◆ The running head should appear in the header position along with the number 3. Omit the words “Running head:” on all but the title page.
- ◆ Three lines below the header type the complete title of the paper (the same title that appears on your title page). The title should be written in standard font, no italics or bolding.
- ◆ Double space between title and text, and continue double spacing throughout the text.

### **References Page**

The purpose of the references page is to enable readers to retrieve and use the sources, so the information provided should be as complete and accurate as possible. Writers are responsible for the completeness and accuracy of their reference lists. Entries for sources from print media and electronic media both send readers to the source’s location, but electronic source entries often have more parts because they require more information to get readers to the source. A sample reference page, including sample references, can be found on pages 12-13 of the *Quick Guide*.

### Parts of the basic print entry

Author(s). (Date). Title(s). Publication data.

### Parts of the basic electronic entry

Author(s). (Date). Title(s). Print publication data. Access data (including URL or DOI if available)

For more specific information on electronic entries and guidelines on what to do if your source is different from the kind of source illustrated in the basic entry model we provided above, see pages 187-192 in the 6<sup>th</sup> edition of the *APA Manual*.

**Note: The bold text on the sample reference page indicates the type of source referenced and should not be included in your references page.**

#### Tips for the Reference Page

- ◆ Arrange entries in alphabetical order.
- ◆ Maintain double spacing on the reference page, with no extra spaces between references.
- ◆ Begin reference entries flush left. Indent the second and subsequent lines of each entry.
- ◆ Pay special attention to APA's conventions for capitalization.
- ◆ Many journal articles contain a DOI which is a universal identification number. If the article, whether print or online version, has a DOI, this number should be provided in the references.

#### Tips for Citing Electronic Sources on the Reference Page

- ◆ Ideally, Internet entries should have an author. At the very least, Internet sources should provide a document title and description, date, and Web address.
- ◆ Use “retrieved from” to indicate information obtained from a document on the Internet.
- ◆ Finish the retrieval element with a period unless it ends with a Web address.



**Note: The running head should appear one-half inch from the top of the page in the header position. Type the words Running head: and include a shortened version of the paper's title.**

Three Types of Communication and Effective Online Teaching  
in the Technical Communication Field

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**Note: The footer in this guide is to help you locate pages from the table of contents. You should not include a footer in your paper.**

### Abstract

This paper introduces a new approach to the technical communication field by discussing the student-instructor, student-student, and student-content communications that must occur successfully within an online course to make it valuable to students. This approach appears often in discussions surrounding distance education or online teaching, but has not been directly applied to teaching technical communication online. Specifically, this paper examines five strategies for each of these communication types and draws on research in the technical communication and distance learning fields in order to offer a mix of theory and practice, but it focuses more on successful practices so that it may be of immediate use for instructors new to teaching online. This paper defines online teaching as instruction where the instructor and student are physically separate and learning takes place primarily online (the Internet or World Wide Web). This instruction may occur either synchronously or asynchronously.

**Note: The footer in this guide is to help you locate pages from the table of contents. You should not include a footer in your paper.**



### Three Types of Communication and Effective Online Teaching in the Technical Communication Field

Even a cursory search of the Internet reveals the growth of distance education, of schools reaching out to students. In the technical communication field, students can find certificate programs, bachelor and master programs available via a variety of distance means (correspondence, ITV, and partially or fully online) from a variety of different traditional and non-traditional institutions and organizations. Simply put, students have ever-increasing options for their education in technical communication. For those instructors teaching online the question then becomes, what composes a successful online course or program in technical communication? Various authors (Boyden et al., 1988; Tebeaux, 1995, and Wendel, n.d., to name a few) have begun to suggest some answers for the technical communication field. Tebeaux suggests that communication is what underlies successful online courses and programs and ultimately successful online learning experiences. Two communication themes are explicit in Tebeaux's discussion: student-instructor (instructor becomes facilitator) and student-content (student takes an active role in acquiring knowledge). A third communication theme is more subtle in Tebeaux's definition but is vital, namely student-student communication. This paper uses these three communication dimensions (student-instructor, student-content, and student-student) as an organizing framework in order to suggest practical strategies that a technical communication instructor would want to consider as planning or teaching an online course.

#### Online Teaching Defined

The literature surrounding online teaching uses many terms to refer to this concept. A few examples include web-based teaching, computer-mediated teaching, teaching in virtual classrooms, and

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Reproduction Service No. ED183875) (**ERIC source; No date**)

**Note: Maintain double-spacing on the reference page, with no extra spaces between citations.**

**Note: The bold text on the sample pages indicates the type of source being referenced. Do not include it on your references page.**

**Note: The footer in this guide is to help you locate pages from the table of contents. You should not include a footer in your paper.**



## Plagiarism Supplement to the APA Quick Guide

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**Author/Creation:** Summer Leibensperger, 2003. **Revised:** 2005.

**Summary:** Provides a definition of plagiarism and discusses repercussions for the offense at UHV. Also provides instruction about what needs to be cited and what common strategies for avoiding plagiarism are.

**Learning Objectives:** To define plagiarism. To list examples of what needs to be cited. To discuss what does not to be cited (common knowledge) and identify issues that may be involved in defining common knowledge for an audience. To list strategies to avoid plagiarism. For UHV students, to demonstrate awareness of potential consequences for plagiarism as defined in the *UHV Student Handbook*.

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### What is plagiarism?

Plagiarism is the use of information (words, sentences, and/or ideas *and* even the structure of sentences and/or ideas) from another source that is not properly credited. Plagiarism may be unintentional and may occur even if a source is credited but is done so improperly.

### Why should I be concerned about plagiarism?

All plagiarism, even if unintentional, can result in serious consequences. The *UHV Student Handbook* (2001-2002) \* indicates, “students who are trying conscientiously to learn and to demonstrate what they know need not worry about academic dishonesty and should feel free to use any assistance available in advancing their knowledge. Education and scholarly research depend, after all, upon shared assistance. On the other hand, no one should claim credit for the work of others, misrepresent or misappropriate the work of others, or try to gain unfair advantage over others” (p. 17). Essentially, plagiarism is a form of academic dishonesty with disciplinary actions ranging from a reduced grade for the assignment or course to expulsion.

The *UHV Student Handbook* further indicates, “students also have a responsibility to fulfill, and indeed an investment to protect, in helping to ensure that academic achievement is characterized by honesty and fair play” (p. 17). Remember, it is your responsibility to be conscientious about avoiding plagiarism.

\*More information about academic dishonesty is available in the *UHV Student Handbook*.

### What needs to be cited?

Robert Harris (2002), in *Using Sources Effectively*, provides a list of what you would need to cite. He indicates,

you must cite someone else’s words you quote, words you summarize, words you paraphrase, idea (interpretation, opinion, conclusion), data, graph, photograph, drawing, table of information, experiment, example, unique concept, apt phrase, expression of common knowledge, solution to a problem, speech, video source (film, TV program), [and] the structure or sequencing of facts, ideas. or arguments. (p. 18)

Harris' list, though not extensive, shows that plagiarism may involve not only the 'borrowing' of words or sentences but also tables and graphics.

Harris, R. (2002). *Using sources effectively: Strengthening your writing and avoiding plagiarism*. Los Angeles: Pyrczak.

### **What is common knowledge?**

Above, Harris mentions that you have to cite an "expression of common knowledge." You may or may not have to cite common knowledge (which Harris explains later in his chapter).

Common knowledge may consist of commonly known dates and factual information (i.e. the Alamo fell on March 6, 1836, to Santa Anna; or the chemical composition of water is H<sub>2</sub>O) or common sayings like proverbs or clichés (i.e. A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush; or strike while the iron is hot.).

Common knowledge also may exist when you and your reader(s) share the same perspective. For example, if you're writing a research report on the Victoria, Texas, Public School System and your audience is the citizens of Victoria, you probably wouldn't need to cite that Victoria is in the coastal bend region or that Victoria has a consolidated school district. On the other hand, if you live in North Dakota and are writing a research paper on consolidated school districts, you may need to cite information that lists the school districts in Texas that are consolidated.

You *will* need to cite *opinions* related to the facts. It may be a well-known fact that the Alamo fell on March 6, 1836, and that in Victoria the school district is consolidated, but you will need to cite someone's opinion or interpretation of those facts. Also, your sources may present both opinion and factual information. Because that factual information is part of an opinion, you will need to cite the source.

If in doubt, cite the source.

### **What are some strategies to avoid plagiarism?**

Attention to detail will help you avoid plagiarism.

1. Take careful notes when you research and clearly document whether you've directly quoted, paraphrased, or summarized the material in your notes.
2. Keep photocopies of each source for easy reference.
3. Borrow from the source correctly. (The handout titled "Decide when to Quote, Paraphrase, and Summarize" may be helpful in borrowing from the source correctly.)
4. Credit the source of any ideas, whether directly quoted, paraphrased, or summarized in your paper. For information on how to cite your sources, please consult the proper manual. The Academic Center offers an APA Quick Guide and an MLA Quick Guide, and, while these guides are not comprehensive in nature, they do answer basic questions about documentation. (The Academic Center handout titled "Signal the Use of a Source" may be helpful also.)
5. Make sure all cited information has an entry in your bibliography or works cited page.
6. Give an adequate signal to your reader to show you are using someone else's words. (For more information on signaling, please pick up a copy of the "Signal the Use of a Source" handout.)
7. Review your paper and consider your use of documentation carefully.

**Remember that it's your responsibility to avoid plagiarism.  
If in doubt, cite it.**