

American Psychological Association (**APA**) Style 6th Ed.

APA style is very explicit and methodical, and provides guidelines for a variety of formatting and content issues, including layout, spacing, word choice, grammar, and references. Basic elements of APA style are described in this handout with page references to the description in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association Sixth Edition*.

Basic Formatting

- With few exceptions, the document is double-spaced (p. 229).
- Sentences are separated by two spaces (p. 88).
- Maintain a 1" (2.54 cm) margin on all sides (p. 229).
- The first line of every paragraph is indented (p.229).
- Every page is numbered (p. 229).
- Specially formatted section headings are used to break up the document and establish hierarchies of information. Avoid only using a subsection heading once and having only one subsection in a section (p. 62-63)

Running head: PSYCHOLOGICAL ISSUES AND PROCESSES 1

Psychological Issues and Processes of the Mind

Timothy A. Buck and Kendall A. Doe

Course, date, student number, professor's name (optional,
or by request).

University of Northern British Columbia

*Note: Use Header and Footer command in MSWord to insert Running Head and page number. Do *not* type the running head at the top of each page.

The Title Page

- An APA title page includes: Running Head, Page Number, Title, Name, and Institutional Affiliation (p. 229).
- The Title is 12 words or less in upper and lowercase letters (p. 23). It is centred near the middle, but on the upper half of the page.
- The Running Head is an abbreviated title in capitals and 50 characters or less. The Running Head appears as a header on every page (p. 230).

Paper Layouts

APA-formatted papers effectively fall into two categories: literature reviews and empirical studies. The APA Manual describes the formatting of empirical studies in detail, but provides few formatting guidelines for literature reviews.

Paper Layout: Literature Review

A literature review is a comprehensive review of a specific topic. Guidelines for literature reviews differ between instructors, but there are some general guidelines. Usually, literature reviews have a statement of purpose rather than a thesis statement or hypothesis.

e.g. The causes of childhood mortality among recent immigrants are reviewed and analyzed in this paper.

*Note: Avoid anthropomorphizing inanimate objects in the statement of purpose (p. 69).

Paper Layout: Empirical Study

➤ Abstract (p. 25-27)

- An abstract is brief summary of the paper.
- The abstract is self-contained (all abbreviations and special terms are defined) and the purpose of the paper and general conclusions are stated.

➤ Introduction (p. 27-28)

Note that the paper will start with a title (centered) on the first page, and then double-spaced to start the introduction. The title must be the same title as indicated on the title page.

- State the issue or problem at hand.
- State why the issue is important, and its theoretical implications.
- Develop a background of other research in the area.
- After all variables are defined, state the hypothesis (or thesis) of the paper. *The hypothesis is your thesis.*
- For papers that do *not* report research results (e.g. essays, term papers, and reviews) this section usually describes the organization of the paper.

➤ Methods (p. 29-32)

The contents of the methods section differ by discipline and sub-discipline; therefore, a methods section may contain all of the following components, or only a select few.

- **Participants**
- *This part of the paper includes the participants' demographics that identify to which populations the results can be related.*
- Include: sex, age, and, if relevant, their socioeconomic status and race/ethnicity.

- **Sampling Procedures**
- Here include the method used for sampling, as well as the settings and locations used for data collection.
- Any agreements made with participants should also be included in this section.

- **Sample Size, Power, and Precision**
- Include intended versus achieved size of your sample, and the reasoning behind choosing the intended size.

- **Measures and Covariates**
- Describe all measures used in data collection, regardless of if they were included in the report.
- Also include information on reliability, cultural validity, and training of assessors.

- **Research Design**
- Talk about the specifics of the research design: manipulation vs. natural observation, between-subjects vs. within-subjects, assignment to groups, etc.
- Depending on the research design used, there may be specific reporting needs (p. 247-252).

- **Experimental Manipulations or Interventions**
- Where manipulations or interventions were used, describe all details relevant to the study. This may include descriptions of an apparatus, any parameters used, the person administering the intervention, the setting, the time span, and any incentives used.
- If descriptions are technical, wordy, or interrupt the flow of the paper, they may be presented in an appendix.

➤ Results (p. 32-35)

- All raw data is not necessary; include only the data relevant to sufficiently support the conclusions.
- Do not discuss any implications here, only the data.
- All tables and figures must be referred to in the text of the results section, but placed on a separate page after the reference section.
- Use scientific abbreviations when appropriate (p. 108-110).
- Use proper APA format for all statistics and numbers (p. 111-124).
 - e.g. $F(2, 20) = 4.21, p < .05$.

➤ Discussion (p. 35-37)

Here is where you discuss the implications of the study, specifically in relation to the hypothesis.

- Was your null hypotheses rejected or did you fail to reject your null hypothesis?
- Were the results significant and did your results therefore support or refute your predictions?
- Is there any literature that you can include that supports or refutes your findings?
- What areas need to be clarified in the future, and what were the possible confounding variables of current research?
- There is a certain conceptual symmetry between the Introduction and the Discussion, as shown in figure 1. The Introduction section starts from a broad perspective then focuses down to a specific question. In contrast, the Discussion starts at the specific question and works outwards, applying the new knowledge to the “big picture.”

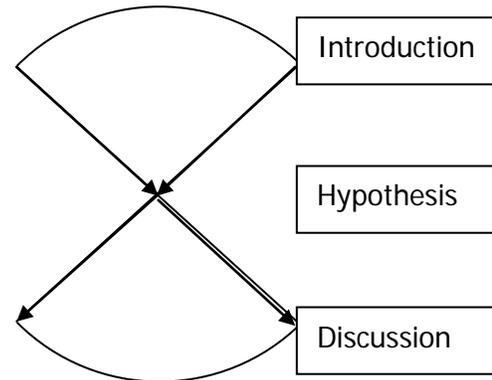


Figure 1. Conceptual symmetry between Introduction and Discussion.

➤ References (p. 180-192)

The references section is started on a new page, with the title “References” centred.

- References are used in APA (do not use works cited or a bibliography).
- References are all double-spaced.
- **All references are in alphabetical order of last name.**
- The reference starts left-justified, and then every other line below must be indented on following lines (for that specific reference).

➤ Tables/Figures (p. 125-167)

- Tables or figures are placed at the end of a paper.
- All tables and figures must be referred to in the text of the results section.
- All tables and figures must have titles that clearly define the contents.

In-Text Citations

Citation Basics

- Any information or idea that is not your own must be referenced in-text (p. 169). Unless it is a quotation, the reference must include only the author(s)' last name and publication date. If the reference is a direct quotation, you must also include the exact page number(s) after the date.
- There are two types of in-text citations with different formatting rules (p. 177): nonparenthetical, e.g. "Samson and Tranget (2000) described the effective...", and parenthetical, e.g. "...the effective radius (Samson & Tranget, 2000)."

Citations for Works with Varying Numbers of Authors (p. 175-177)

- If you are referencing two authors, you must separate the last names with an "&" sign. (e.g. Berk & Lang, 2002).
- If you are citing two authors, cite both names every time the reference occurs.
- If you are referencing multiple authors, you also use the "&" sign before the last author. Example: (Berk, Lane, & Mayer, 2002).
- If you are referencing the same article with multiple authors (Berk, Lane, & Mayer, 2002) after the initial one in your paper, the first citation must list all of the authors, and every citation afterward may state: (Berk et al., 2002). However, if you are using the same citation within the same paragraph, you can omit the date after the first citation. E.g. first citation in text: One study found ... (Berk, Lane, & Mayer, 2002); second citation in the text: The study contributes to the ... (Berk et al., 2002), second citation, but in the same paragraph as the first: (Berk et al.).
- When an article has six or more authors, cite only the surname of the first author followed by et al. but in the references list you must cite ALL authors, up to seven (see p. 184 for referencing articles with more than eight authors). For example, an in-text citation for work by Berk, Lane, Mayer, Jacobson, Owen, & Kramer would be (Berk et al., 2002).

Types of Citations

Specific Quotations (p. 170-171):

In psychology and other scientific disciplines, direct quotations are discouraged unless special meaning inherent in the original wording will be lost.

- 1) According to Berk (2001) "During middle childhood, attention changes in three ways. It becomes more selective, adaptable, and playful" (p. 293).
- 2) At this time children become "more selective, adaptive and playful" (Berk, 2001, p. 293).

Paraphrase (p. 171):

In psychology and other scientific disciplines, paraphrasing is the preferred method for referring to others' work.

- 1) Berk (2001) explains attention changes occur in childhood.
- 2) Some authors explain attention changes in childhood (Berk, 2001).

Example References (p. 193-224)

Book:

Berk, L. E. (2001). *Development through the lifespan* (2nd ed.). Toronto: Allyn & Bacon.

Chapter or Different Authors in Edited book:

Russell, A. (1999). A way of life. In J. MacDonald (Ed.), *True North: Canadian essays for composition* (pp. 86-102). Don Mills, Ontario: Addison-Wesley.

Corporate/Government Author:

National Council of Welfare (Canada). (2001). *Child poverty profile, 1998*.

Ottawa, ON: Author.

Journal Article:

Vrana, S. R., & James, S. T. (1995). Emotional modulation of skin conductance and eyeblink responses to a startle probe. *Psychophysiology*, 32, 351-357.

Electronic Journal Article:

Vrana, S. R., James, S. T., & Berk, L. E. (1995). Emotional modulation of skin conductance and eyeblink responses to a startle probe. [Electronic version] *Psychophysiology*, 32, 351-357.

➤ See p. 198-199 for examples of electronic articles that include a DOI.

Internet source with author:

Lentz, T. W. (2001, April 15). *Examining trust and honesty. A survey on relationships!*

Retrieved from <http://www.trustingrelationships.com/>

For more information contact the Academic Success Centre (ASC) at 960-6367 or visit <http://www.apastyle.org>.