

APA 7 Style Guide
Columbia International University
Presented by the G. Allen Fleece Library
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APA 7 Style Guide for Undergraduate and Graduate Students

Introduction to APA

APA is the style most commonly used by students in scientific fields, although it is used when writing in other disciplines as well. The most current edition of APA is APA 7. At CIU, the following disciplines will typically use APA in writing assignments:

- Biology
- Biomedical Sciences
- Business Administration
- Healthcare Administration
- Health Sciences
- Human Services
- Nursing
- Psychology
- Sport Management
- Strategic Communication
- Teacher Education
- TESOL

However, students should always make sure to follow their instructor's instructions on what style to use for an assignment, regardless of what the above list says.

APA Title Pages

Every paper written in APA should begin with a title page. The **title page for both undergraduate and graduate students** should consist of **the title, the student's name, the institutional affiliation** (Department Name, Columbia International University), **the course code, the instructor's name, and the assignment due date**. The following page provides an example of a correct APA title page. **On the title page, the title should be bolded** and may be on one or two lines. An example of a correct APA title page is shown on page four.

An Examination of Mob Psychology, Paranoia, and Fearmongering

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PSY 2110: General Psychology

Dr. Brown

September 9, 2025

All the text on the title page should be double-spaced and centered. The title should be in bold, with proper capitalization and punctuation. All following text on the title page should also use correct capitalization and punctuation, but **should not be in bold**.

Abstract

Most undergraduate student papers do not require an abstract, but instructors may require an abstract for specific assignments. Abstracts are typically used in longer essays and in graduate-level papers. The abstract appears on the page after the title page and provides readers with an overview of the work. Typically, abstracts should be no longer than 250 words. At the top of the abstract page, type the word “**Abstract**” and bold and center it. Your abstract should begin on the following line and **should not be indented**.

APA Titles

Every essay written in APA should have a title. The title appears both on the title page and on the first page of your paper. See the “APA Title Pages” section for instructions on how to format your title page. On the first page of your paper following the title page, the title should be centered on at the top of the page. **The title is your chance to capture your reader’s attention and provides a hint about the contents of your essay**, so it should accurately reflect the contents of the paper that follows and should spark interest in the reader. In short, it is best to refrain from using the title of the assignment as the title for your paper, unless your instructor says otherwise.

In addition to being centered on the page, the title should also appear in normal text, **without being bolded, underlined, or in ALL CAPS**. The title also should not be placed in quotation marks. The title should be properly capitalized and punctuated and should be in the same font as the rest of your paper. The title should be double-spaced, as is the rest of the paper.

Formatting the Paper

APA 7 does not list a specific font for use in your paper, but states that the font chosen should be easy to read and accessible for all readers. Purdue OWL recommends a few fonts for papers written in APA, including Times New Roman 12pt font, Arial 11pt font, and Calibri 11pt font. **Always check your instructor’s guidelines to see if you are required to use a specific font in your paper.**

APA papers should have 1-inch margins on all sides of the paper. The body of your paper should be aligned to the left side of the page. Each new paragraph should be indented, which can be done by pressing the **Tab** key once.

APA papers require page numbers in the header of the paper. To insert a page number in Microsoft Word, which is the recommended platform for writing for undergraduate and graduate students, go to the banner at the top of the screen and click on “Insert”. Then click on “Page Number” and you will see a drop-down menu. Select “Top of Page” and then choose “Plain Number 3.” This will insert a page number into the header and will automatically number any following pages. APA pages numbers **do not include your last name**. Only the current page number appears in the header. The final step is to make sure that the page number is aligned to the right-hand side of the page. The top of your first full page (excluding the title page) should look like the example below:

2
Title of Paper Goes Here The body text of the paper begins one line below the title of the paper, and the first line of the paragraph is indented.

Dividing the Paper

A paper written using APA style may be divided into sections, which are marked by appropriately formatted headings. There are **five levels** that you can divide your paper into. Dividing your paper in this way helps the reader to understand which sections go together and allows you to divide your information clearly. This is especially helpful in scientific research papers.

The first level of headings separate sections by topic. Every time you begin a section addressing an entirely new topic, use the level one format for the section heading. The level one format is as follows:

Centered, Boldface, Title Case Heading

The following text begins as new paragraph.

The level two heading is used to denote a subsection within the section under the level one heading. The level two format is as follows:

Flush Left, Boldface, Title Case Heading

The following text begins a new paragraph.

The level three heading denotes a subsection within the section under the level two heading. The level three format is as follows:

Flush Left, Boldface, Italic, Title Case Heading

The level four heading denotes a subsection within the section under the level three heading. The level four format is as follows:

Indented, Boldface, Title Case Heading Ending with a Period. The following text continues on the same line as the heading.

The level five heading denotes a subsection within the section under the level four heading. The level five format is as follows:

Indented, Boldface, Italic, Title Case Heading Ending with a Period. The following text continues on the same line as the heading.

Using these headings in your paper provides the reader with an outline of your paper that makes the flow of thought easier to follow. These headings are often used in scientific papers, but can be used in any paper written using APA style.

Citations

- In-text Citations

In APA, in-text citations typically include the author's last name and the year of publication of the cited work.

There are two types of in-text citations in APA. The first is called a **parenthetical citation**. When citing only one work in the sentence, the parenthetical citation appears at the end of the sentence. This type of parenthetical citation looks like the example shown below:

Had the proper steps been taken, this situation could have been avoided (Rogers, 2022).

When citing two or more sources in one sentence, the parenthetical citation should be placed immediately after the corresponding information. This type of parenthetical citation looks like the example shown below:

Some experts believe that this could have been avoided completely (Rogers, 2022), but others believe that the results of this situation were inevitable (Smith, 2022).

The second form of in-text citation is a **narrative citation**. A narrative citation is **always** placed in the middle of the sentence and will only contain the year that the work was published inside the parentheses, since the author's name will have already appeared in the sentence. A typical narrative citation looks like the example shown below:

According to Rogers (2022), lack of proper data makes this a difficult situation to understand.

Because the author (in this case, Rogers) has already been mentioned in the sentence, the author's name **does not appear** as a part of the citation.

- Citing Multiple Works by the Same Author

When creating in-text citations for multiple works by the same author, it is important for your reader to be able to distinguish between the sources. If you are using two or more works by the same author(s) that are written in **different years**, the year (which is included in the in-text citation) will indicate which source is being referenced.

If the works by the same author were written in the **same year**, then you will organize them alphabetically by title on the Reference List page and place a lowercase letter (starting with “a” and moving through the alphabet as necessary) immediately after the date of publication. See the “Two or more works by the same author in the same year” template on page 11. In the in-text citation, you will distinguish between the works by including the lowercase letter attached to the year of publication on the Reference List. The in-text citations for two works with the same author written in the same year should look like the examples below.

According to James, many scientists were displeased with the results of the study (2012a).

When the experiment was conducted again in a more controlled environment, the results were much more promising (James 2012b).

- Page Numbers in Citations

In-text citations in APA often do not include a page number in the citation. However, when directly quoting a source, you **must** include the page number where the information was found. An in-text citation for a direct quote should look like the example shown below:

While most adjusted quickly, some students “found themselves constantly confused and wishing that the system had never been updated” (Johnson, 2021, p.80).

When referencing (but not quoting) a piece of information from a lengthy source, it is often helpful (although not **required** by APA 7 standards) to list a page number in the citation so that your reader can easily locate the information within the source.

- Reference List Citations

The citations that appear on the Reference List page provide readers with all the information they need to find the source you have used. A full citation should include **the author’s first initial and last name, the year of publication, the title of the work, and the publisher**. Depending on the type of work you are citing, there may be other information included. ***When citing a work in APA 7, only capitalize the first word of the title and any names that appear in the title (see the example with *The Orchard* below). All other words are not capitalized in the citation.*** Templates and examples for citations for different types of sources are shown on the following pages. Note: APA 7 heavily emphasizes electronic sources. While it is possible to cite many different print sources in APA, it may be more difficult to find instructions for citing less common types of print sources.

APA Citation Examples

Physical book, single author:

- Author's last name, author's first name initial. (Year of publication). *Title*. Publisher.
- **Example:** Lewis, C. S. (1951). *Prince Caspian*. HarperCollins Publishers.

Physical book with no author listed:

- *Title of book*. (Year of publication). Publisher.
- **Example:** *The orchard*. (1988). Book Publishing.

Physical book, two authors:

- First author's last name, first author's initial, & second author's last name, second author's initial. (Year of publication). *Title*. Publisher.
- **Example:** Smith, J., and Green, M. (2021). *How to be a human*. Book Publishing.

Physical book, three to twenty authors:

- List all authors in the "last name, first name initial" format, placing a & between the second-to-last and last author listed. (Year of publication). *Title*. Publisher.
- Smith, J., West, C., Andrews, L., Marks, S., & Johnson, D. (2014). *Symbolism in the poetic books*. Book Publishing.

Physical book, more than twenty authors:

- List the last names and first initials of the first nineteen authors of the work (as you would for three to twenty authors), then use an ellipsis (...) in place of the remaining names, then end with the final author's name. **Do not place a "&" before the final author's name.** (Year of publication). *Title*. Publisher.
- **Example:** McFarquhar, G. M., Smith, E., Pillar-Little, E. A., Brewster, K., Chilson, P. B., Lee, T. R., Waugh, S., Yussouf, N., Wang, X., Xue, M., de Boer, G., Gibbs, J. A., Fiebrich, C., Baker, B., Brotzge, J., Carr, F., Christophersen, H., Fengler, M., Hall, P., ... Hawk, D. (2020). *Current and future uses of UAS for improved forecasts/warnings and scientific studies*. Book Publishing.

Important note: The above formats for two, three to twenty, and twenty authors applies to **ALL OTHER SOURCES AS WELL**.

Two or more works by the same author:

- Cite both sources as usual (see “Physical book, single author”). Order them in the Reference List from earliest date of publication to the latest.
- **Example:** Lewis, C. S. (1972). *Perelandra*. Scribner.
Lewis, C. S. (1974). *That hideous strength*. Scribner.

Two or more works by the same author in the same year:

- Cite the sources as usual (see “Physical book, single author”) but use lowercase letters (starting with “a”) after the year to differentiate between the works. Order the works alphabetically using the titles of the works.
- **Example:** Smith, L. (1989a). *Children’s literature in the 20th century*. Book Publishing.
Smith, L. (1989b). *Fairytales and folklore*. Book Publishing.

Scripture:

- *Bible Version Title*. (Year of publication). Publisher.
- **Example:** *English Standard Version Bible*. (2001). Crossway.

Text in a collected work (such as an essay in an anthology):

- Author’s last name, author’s first initial. (Year of publication of anthology). Title of text. In editor’s first initial. Editor’s last name (Ed.), *Title of anthology* (Volume number). Publisher. (Original work published original publication date of text).
- **Example:** Jones, A. (2018). Religion in fiction. In M. Williams (Ed.) *Essays from Christian Writers* (vol. 1). HarperCollins. (Original work published 2015).

Article in a print journal:

- Author’s last name, author’s first initial. (Year of publication). Article title. *Title of journal*, volume number(issue number), pages. DOI or URL (if available).
- **Example:** Jones, E. (2018). Medieval literature in the present day. *The english review*, vol. 8(no. 2), pp. 20-30. <https://englishreview.org/medieval-literature-in-the-present-day/>.

Article in an online journal:

- Author’s last name, author’s first initial. (Year of publication). Article title. *Title of journal*, volume number(issue number), pages. DOI or URL.
- **Example:** Jacobs, M. (2010). Sacrificial love in secular literature. *The english review*, vol. 14(no. 2), pp. 14-20. <https://englishreview.org/sacrificial-love-in-secular-literature/>.

Article in a dictionary:

- Organization name. (Year of publication). Title of entry. In *Title of reference work* (edition, page number). Publisher.
- **Example:** Merriam-Webster, Incorporated. (1974). Feather. In *Merriam Webster's collegiate dictionary* (3rd ed., p. 107). Merriam-Webster, Incorporated.

Book in a series:

- Author's last name, author's first initial. (Year of publication). *Title of work*, volume number. Publisher.
- **Example:** Smith, G. (1980). *Art and literature*, vol. 3. Book Publishing.

Book with an edition statement:

- Author's last name, author's first initial. (Year of publication). *Title of work* (edition #). Publisher.
- **Example:** Greene, M. (2008). *Introduction to English literature* (2nd ed.). Book Publishing.

Translated work:

- Original author's last name, author's first initial. (Year of publication). *Title of publication* (Translator's first initial and last name, Trans.) Publisher. (Original work published YEAR).
- **Example:** Chaucer, G. (1951). *The Canterbury tales*. (N. Coghill, Trans.) Penguin. (Original work published 1476).

Multi-volume work:

- Author's last name, author's first initial. (Year of publication). *Title of work* (Vol. #). Publisher.
- **Example:** Simmons, I. (2025). *History of space exploration* (Vol. 2). Book Publishing.

Important note: When citing the entire multivolume work, rather than a single volume, list the total volumes in the space for the volume number, like this: (Vols. 1-7).

Dissertation or thesis from a database:

- Author's last name, author's first initial. (Year of publication). *Title of dissertation or thesis* (Publication number.) [Doctoral dissertation or master's thesis, Name of Institution Awarding Degree]. Database name.
- **Example:** Johnson, S. (2024). *Examination of deconstructive theory in 20th century literature* (Publication No. 30845712.) [Master's thesis, University of South Carolina]. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global.

Newspaper article:

- Author's last name, author's first initial. (Year of publication, month of publication). Title of article. *Newspaper name*, page.
- **Example:** Brown, J. (2024, April). Turtles no longer endangered. *New York times*, p. A21.

Entire website:

- **If the page lists an author:** Author's last name, author's first initial. (Year of publication, month of publication). *Title of page*. Site name. URL
- **Example:** North, A. (2018, July). *Art therapy in nursing homes*. Caring Hearts. <https://caringhearts.com/art-therapy-in-nursing-homes>
- **If the page was written by a group:** Group name. (Year of publication, month of publication). *Title of page*. Site name. URL.
- **Example:** National Art Historians. (2024, July). *Restoring ancient art*. Art Historian Archive. <https://arthistorianarchive.org/restoring-ancient-art>
- **If no author is listed:** *Title of page*. (Year of publication, month of publication). Site name. Retrieved month date, year, from URL
- **Example:** *Holistic art encyclopedia*. (2024, October). Art in Context. Retrieved August, 2025, from <https://artincontext.org/>

Important note: If there is no date of publication provided for the page, use the abbreviation (n.d.) in the (Year and month of publication) space.

Wikipedia article:

- Title of article. (Year of publication, month of publication). In *Wikipedia*. URL of archived version of page
- **Example:** The American civil war. (2025, August). In *Wikipedia*. <https://w.wiki/F5Jn>

An image (including a photograph, sculpture, or painting):

- - Artist's last name, artist's first initials. (Year of creation). *Title of work* [Format]. Site name. OR Museum, Location. URL
- - **Example:** Da Vinci, L. (1503). *Mona Lisa* [Painting]. Musée du Louvre, Paris, France. <https://artincontext.org/mona-lisa-by-leonardo-da-vinci>.

Important note: When including a photo or an image in your text, you must both present it as a figure (labelling it as fig. and the appropriate number, i.e. fig. 1) and include any copyright or permissions information that accompanies the image.

e-Book:

- It is only necessary to specify if you have used an e-Book **if the content is different from the original physical book** (such as if the content is abridged). If you need to note that an e-Book was used, **the citation is as follows:**
Author's last name, author's first initial. (Year of publication). *Title of book*. [eBook edition]. Publisher. URL
- **Example:** Dickens, C. (2006). *A tale of two cities*. [eBook edition]. Penguin. <https://dickens/tale-of-two-cities.penguinbooks.net>

Database sources:

- In the CIU library databases, there will almost always be a button on the side of your screen that will provide you with a citation for the source if you click on it. This button should appear at the top of the page when you select a source and will look like a quotation mark, like this: “. Selecting this button will give you a menu where you can select “APA” from the list of available citations, then simply copy the provided citation into your Reference List page. **Always double check that all the information in the generated citation is correct.**

Formatting the Reference List

The reference list in APA style is equivalent to the Works Cited page in MLA. When formatting the Reference List page, you should **continue to use the same font, font size, and line spacing as the rest of the paper**. Center the words “Reference List” at the top of the page, then begin the list of works on the next line. The items on the Reference List page should appear in **alphabetical order**. *At CIU, some instructors may ask you to list the Bible first, regardless of alphabetical order. When in doubt, always check with your instructor to confirm what their expectations are.*

To list the works alphabetically, **use the first word that appears in the citation**. This will typically be the author’s last name, but when there is a citation with no author listed, you will use **the first word in the title of the work** to determine where in the list to place the work. Below is an example of proper alphabetical order:

Carpenter, H. (2000). *J. R. R. Tolkien: A biography*. Houghton Mifflin.

L’Engle, M. (1962). *A wrinkle in time*. Ariel Books.

Lewis, C. S. *Prince Caspian*. (1951). HarperCollins Publishers.

The orchard. (1988). Book Publishing.

West, J. (2025). *The butterfly effect: An official apology to the masses*. Book Publishing.

Wilder, L. I. (1932). *Little house in the big woods*. Harper & Brothers.

Each citation should be formatted with a **hanging indentation**. This is different from the indentations that you will use for the rest of the paper. While a normal indentation indents the first line and then leaves the remaining lines flush with the left side of the paper, a hanging indentation leaves the first line flush with the left side of the paper and indents all following lines. Below is an example of a hanging indentation:

West, J. (2035). *The butterfly effect: A hypothetical study of time travel, changing the future, and meddling in the past*. Book Publishing.

A hanging indentation can be inserted into the text by highlighting the text you want to apply it to and right-clicking. Select “Paragraph” from the menu that appears. In the “Indentation” section on the next menu, click on the box underneath “Special” and select “Hanging.” This will apply a hanging indentation to the selected text.

Quick Resources

There are many online resources that can also help you with APA. Some websites will have free citation generators that allow you to put in the information for the work you wish to cite and will generate the citation for you. When using citation generators, always make sure that **all** your information is correct, as the generator will not catch any incorrect information. Below are a few websites that can answer any more detailed questions you may have about APA style and can help you properly cite your sources.

[APA Sample Paper - Purdue OWL® - Purdue University](#) (detailed sample undergraduate paper)

<https://owl.purdue.edu/> (free citation generator and APA style guide)

<https://www.scribbr.com/> (free citation generator and APA style guide)

<https://www.grammarly.com/> (Contact Kevin Flickner at kevin.flickner@ciu.edu to learn how to sign up for a **free** Grammarly Premium account!)

<https://www.mybib.com/> (free APA citation generator)

<https://apastyle.apa.org/> (APA style guide)

Most of the information provided comes from <https://owl.purdue.edu/>

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