An Introduction to APA Documentation and Formatting

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An Introduction to APA Documentation and Formatting

For many of you, MLA (Modern Language Association) was the documentation style that you learned in high school. That’s because MLA is the official style of documentation used for the discipline of English, and you usually learn how to document in your English courses. However, at Kettering College, you will be required to use another style of documentation known as APA, which stands for American Psychological Association.

This is not to say that these are the only two style guides out there. On the contrary, there are literally hundreds of styles of documentation, and you will encounter many different ones in your own research and reading. APA happens to be very commonly used in health care education, and that is why it is the official style of documentation required by most of your professors here at Kettering College.

This handout is designed to function as a quick reference guide to APA documentation. It will answer most of the questions you might have about how to format and document a paper using APA, but it will not necessarily answer all of them. Remember, the best place to go for questions regarding APA is the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (6th Ed.). There are other books and web sites that you can use, but you can’t be completely sure that the information on these sources is always correct.

The rules in this document are those which are recognized and followed by the Kettering college faculty. Every effort will be
made to ensure consistency in your classes and your writing assignments.
Formatting Your Paper Using APA

There are some things that APA requires that MLA does not. For one thing, APA requires a title page, whereas this is optional in MLA. The APA title page looks like this:

1. Include a cover page

Running head: RAISED WITH BOYS

Raised with Boys
Mildred Bickle
Kettering College
2. Format subsequent pages of the paper as follows:

Raised with Boys

Growing up with nothing but males in the house when you are a female poses unique problems.

3. Use 12-point font, Times New Roman
4. Use 1 inch margins
5. Use double line spacing
Citing Sources Using APA

Citing your sources in the body of your paper using APA is, in some ways, similar to MLA. They both use what’s known as an *in-text parenthetical citation*. This means that neither MLA nor APA uses the little numbers you might have seen in some documents.

Smith argued that “such an interpretation is illogical.”¹

Instead, parenthetical citation cites the sources that you are using in your paper by including information in a set of parentheses that allows the reader to find the source in your bibliography. With APA, the typical citation includes the author(s)’s last name(s), the year of publication, and, if you are citing a *quotation*, a page number reference. It would therefore look something like this:

(Smith, 2006, p. 53)

If you’re used to MLA, you will immediately notice some crucial differences. The year of publication is included, for one thing, and there is a “p.” in front of the page number. An MLA citation would look like this:

(Smith 53)

Some Variations

Occasionally, your citation might include a slight variation from this format. The first one would occur if you mention the
author’s name in the text of your paper. Such a citation would look like this:

Smith (2006) argued that “such an interpretation is illogical” (p. 53).

Notice 3 things here:

First, the date always immediately follows the author’s name. Even if you mention the author later on in the paper, you still include the date after the name. This is an important thing to remember!

Smith (2006) argued that “such an interpretation is illogical” (p. 53).

Second, the page number reference follows the quote in a separate parenthetical citation, requiring 2 different parenthetical citations for a single quote.

Smith (2006) argued that “such an interpretation is illogical” (p. 53).

Third, the period is the very last thing in the sentence, following the parenthetical citation. You do not need two periods, one after the quote and one after the citation.

Smith (2006) argued that “such an interpretation is illogical” (p. 53).
Although APA does not require you to include a page number when citing a *paraphrase*, it does recommend it, so it’s probably a good practice to include one. An example of citing a paraphrase (reworded in your own words) might look like this:

*According to Smith (2006), this interpretation is not a rational one (p. 53).*
Formatting Your References (Bibliography) Using APA

There are, of course, a lot of rules regarding how to format the sources in your References page. They are as varied as your sources are. However, there are a few basic rules that might help you get started.

1. Titles
   a. Article titles: They are not capitalized in the same way you have probably been accustomed to with MLA. You only capitalize the first word of the title, any proper nouns, acronyms, and the first word following a colon.

   Struggling with the glass ceiling: A study of American women working at IBM

   b. Periodical Titles: They are capitalized and italicized.

   The Journal of the Working Woman

   c. Book Titles: They are not capitalized, but are italicized.

   The working woman in corporate America

   d. A chapter from a book: Use the same formatting rules for an article title.

   The roots of discrimination
2. Author’s Name(s)

There are many rules associated with listing your authors, depending on how many your source has. One important distinction between MLA and APA is that you include the last name and then you use only the initials, not the full first and middle name.

The other important thing to remember is that the rules for formatting multiple authors’ names is different for the References and in the paper itself.

Here are the rules for formatting authors’ names in the References:

One author:
Smith, K. R.

Two authors:
Smith, K. R., & Brown, J. M.

Three to seven authors:

More than seven authors: list the first six ... and the very last
Here are the rules for formatting authors’ names in the text:

One author:

Smith (2008) stated that Gender is a complex concept (Smith, 2008, p. 53).

Two authors:

Smith and Brown (2007) stated that Gender is a complex concept (Smith & Brown, 2007, p. 53).

Three, four or five authors:

For three, four or five authors write out all the authors’ names the first time you cite them:

Gender is a complex concept (Smith, Brown, Porter, Smith, & Brynn, 2009, p. 53).

After that, list the first author followed by et al.

Gender is a complex concept (Smith et al., 2009, p. 53).

Six or more authors:

List the first author followed by et al.

Gender is a complex concept (Smith et al., 2010, p. 32).

Commented [k7]: Notice that the word and is used rather than the symbol & when it occurs in the text itself.

Commented [k8]: Notice that the symbol & is being used in the parenthetical citation.
APA Samples

Print Sources

1. Book


2. Edition Other Than the First


3. References to chapters


• If book does not have an editor, include the word In before the book title.

4. Daily Newspaper Article, No Author


• Alphabetize works with no author by first significant word in title.
• Precede page numbers for newspaper articles with "p." or "pp."
5. **Dictionary or Encyclopedia**


- For major reference works, with a large editorial board, you may list the name of the lead editor, followed by “et al.”
- If no author or editor, place the title of the book in the author position.


7. **Journal Article, Journal Paginated by Issue (Separate pagination)**


8. **Magazine Article**


- Give the date shown on the publication—month for monthlies or month and day for weeklies.
Electronic Sources (Web Site, Full Text or E-Journal)

www.apastyle.org/elecref.html

Because electronic sites are widely varied in format and purpose, you will often have to use your common sense when deciding what to include in your bibliographic citations. APA has recently adapted the use of the Digital Object Identifier, or DOI in bibliographic references. A DOI is an alphanumeric string that provides a persistent link to a location on the Internet.

How do I find the DOI?

The companies that provide full text access to articles that you find in a periodical database are called full text vendors. Two full text vendors that students use a great deal, EbscoHost and EJC, both identify the DOI in the individual record for a source. This is the screen you get when you click on the link to the source from a search results list page. Otherwise you might want to check with one of the librarians to see if the article has been assigned a DOI.

Web Sites

1. An Entire Web Site

When citing an entire Web site, it is sufficient to give the address of the site in just the text.

Kidspych is a wonderful interactive web site for children (http://www.kidspych.org).

2. Article on a Web Site


Immunization safety review: Vaccinations and sudden unexpected death in infancy.


Note: for documents with no date use: (n.d.) as in the citation above.
3. Document Available on University Program or Department Web Site


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Full Text Journal Articles & E Journal Articles

1. Electronic Copy of a Journal Article with DOI


2. Electronic Copy of a Journal Article with no DOI


*Use the URL of the journal home page.

3. Article in an Internet Only Journal (E-Journal)


* Again, use either the DOI, if available, or the URL to the journal home page.