

## **Common APA Style and Formatting Challenges**

The following guidelines are followed by most faculty members on most Walden coursework.

1. **Font:** According to APA 7th edition, a sans serif font such as 11-point Calibri, 11-point Arial, or 10-point Lucida Sans Unicode are acceptable. Serif fonts such as 12-point Times New Roman, 11-point Georgia, or normal (10-point) Computer Modern (the latter is the default font for LaTeX) also are acceptable.
2. **Spacing:** Double-space all of your work. Per APA's revised 7th edition, insert a single space after a period.
3. **Margins and page numbers:** All margins should be 1" from the edge of the paper. Page numbers go in the upper right corner, 1" down and 1" in from the edge of the paper. The first line of text should start 1.5" down. (Note: MS Word defaults the first line of text at 1".)
4. **Italics:** Use italics, not underlines. APA does not allow bold type except in headings, tables and figures.
5. **Punctuation:** The APA nuance most commonly missed by students follows:

In a series of three or more nouns or noun phrases, you must insert a comma before the word "and" or "or," as in the following examples: *bacon, lettuce, and tomato*; *Tom, Dick, or Harry*; *eating lunch, going to the gym, and then going home*.

Use a semicolon to combine two independent clauses or to separate elements of a list that contain a comma, as in the above example.

Add an apostrophe + s for possessives of names: *Smith's*; *Jones's*.

Do not hyphenate most prefixes: *semistructured*, *nondenominational*, *multimedia*, *antisocial*.

6. **Capitalization and spelling:** Do not capitalize job titles unless immediately preceding a person's name: the superintendent, but Superintendent Williams; the president of the school board; Vice President Agnew.

Use a lowercase letter after a colon unless introducing a complete sentence.

In general, do not hyphenate words with prefixes: pretest, posttest, antidiscrimination, bilingual, codependent, multinational, underserved, overextended.

When a colon is part of the title of an article in the reference list, the first word after the colon is capitalized (Health policy: The new era).

7. **Lists (Seriation) and Bullets:** Within a paragraph, list items using (a), (b), (c), and so on. The teachers identified three challenges: (a) teaching hungry children, (b) making do with outdated books, and (c) organizational bureaucracy.

In a vertical list, list the items like this:

1. Teaching hungry children is difficult.
2. Using outdated books creates misconceptions.
3. Organizational bureaucracy limits access.

Bullets are also used.

The following are barriers to education:

- Teaching hungry children;
- Making do with outdated books; and
- Organizational bureaucracy.

8. **Numbers and percentages:** The rules for numbers are tricky and should be studied. **In general, numbers 10 and higher appear as numerals; nine and lower are written out.** There are exceptions: elements of time, distance, ratios, and percentages always appear as numerals, unless at the start of a sentence.

Use a percentage sign unless at the start of a sentence:

There was a 4% increase in the price of lettuce.  
Seventy percent of the children were malnourished.  
We administered 4.15 mg of peanut butter.

9. **Use respectful language:** The 7th edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* offers important information on language use with respect to gender, race, disabilities, and so forth. Avoid the generic pronouns *he* and *she*, or *he/she*, when possible, by using *they*:

Wrong: When a nurse has a bad day, she feels like screaming.  
Better: When nurses have a bad day, they feel like screaming.

### Formatting In-text Citations

These basic rules relate to in-text citations.

1. Use the author/date system. Be careful with punctuation.

Others (Duncan, 2003; Evans & Barker, 2004) challenged Gould's (1999) analysis.

Separate the two pairs of studies with a semicolon. Use an ampersand (&) as a substitute for the word "and" when inside parentheses.

2. Do not plagiarize. Just changing a couple of words or rearranging a sentence is not paraphrasing. **For direct quotes, identify the page number or paragraph number** of the original source. When paraphrasing, identify the author, date, and page number.

*Original of Latham (2006):* Luxury boxes and other amenities aimed at affluent fans are one way to attract new revenue to a stadium, but the public dollars that fund them benefit only the privileged classes, not the common good.

*Plagiarism:* Luxury boxes and other amenities aimed at rich fans are a way to get new revenue at a stadium. However, the public monies that fund them benefit only the wealthy—and not the common good (Latham, 2006).

*Paraphrased:* Latham (2006) argued that spending public dollars on comforts enjoyed solely by wealthy fans is not in the overall public interest (p. 432).

3. Normally, the final punctuation after a direct quote comes after the page identifier while the final/closing quotation mark comes right before page identifier, as in this example:

Jorgenson (2005) indicated that the price of coffee rose "dramatically" during the previous decade because of "consumers' lust for an overpriced buzz" (p. 513).

4. When **directly quoting a source of 40 or more consecutive words**, format the quote **in block form**. The final punctuation comes *before* the parenthetical element. Also note that with block quotes there is no need to use quotation marks.

If this were a direct quote, indent about five spaces on the left. This is in block form because it contains 43 words. The final period is before the parenthetical element, not after it as in the Latham examples. (Rachmaninoff, 1936, p. 3)

5. Cite different groups of authors in alphabetical order using the first author's surname. Separate groups of authors with semicolons.

Several authors found that students enjoy reading stories about real people (Hart, 2008; Iksic & Holmes, 1995; Melnick et al., 2010).

6. "et al." should not be used the first time a work is cited unless that work has six or more authors. For works with fewer than six authors, list **all** authors in the first citation, then use the surname of the first author and "et al." and the year in subsequent references. Be careful with the punctuation.

As noted earlier, Melnick et al. (2010) suggested that. . . .

7. With two or more authors in a parenthetical citation, use "&" rather than "and" before the last author.

Stein **and** Hernandez (2005) but other authors (Gomez **&** O'Hara, 2007). . . .

### **Formatting the Reference List**

Several software companies have created programs to automatically format your reference list per APA (including APA itself). Students have spoken highly of Zotero, Perilla, and several others. Check the Walden Writing Center ([writingcenter.walden.edu](http://writingcenter.walden.edu)) for information.

The following examples are formatted with hanging indents. Commas separate all authors, and use an ampersand (&), not the word *and*. Only surnames appear in full; otherwise, use initials. Book titles are italicized and appear in sentence case—not title case.

1. **An entire book.**

Melnick, A., Ek, S. A., & Fazio, M. J. (2010). *Finishing high school without trying*. Peach Street Press.

2. **A chapter in an edited book.**

Pogoff, S. (2008). Hair and nails to match. In L. Rubenstein & A. Perl (Eds.), *Preteen survival guide* (pp. 48–56). Gordon Books.

Note that in the above example, Pogoff, the chapter author, gets the in-text citation—not the book editors.

3. **A journal article.**

Latham, M. (2008). The future of stadiums is not the past. *Sports Economics*, 17, 431–468.

Note that the title of the article is written in sentence case, and no quotation marks are used, nor does "pp." appear before the page numbers.

**4. A magazine article, no author.**

Enough scandals for one day. (2009, May 19). *Newsweek*, 46.

When the author is not provided, indicate the title of the author in the first spot. In the in-text citation, the article title is shortened, in quotation marks, to lead the reader to the right spot in the references. ("Enough Scandals," 2009).

**5. Newspaper article found online.**

Bartlett, S. (2010, March 3). Schools helpless against nursing shortage. *Press-Republican*.  
[http://pressrepublican.com/0100\\_news/x1726192028/Schools-helpless-against-nursing-shortage](http://pressrepublican.com/0100_news/x1726192028/Schools-helpless-against-nursing-shortage)

**6. One author, two publications in the same year.**

Whittemore, A. (2009a). Finding a path toward recovery. *Journal of Zen Studies*, 15, 314–345.

Whittemore, A. (2009b). Loss of hair and the effect on the aging white male. *Coping Today*, 13, 25–29.

In text, note the first publication by citing it as (Whittemore, 2009a), the second as (Whittemore, 2009b).

**7. A reprinted version of an earlier text, in an edited volume.**

Watson, M. (2004). Balancing family and work. In H. Simon & F. Parker, *Psychological despondence* (pp. 135–150). (Original work published 1915).

If you read something that was originally published in a different book or journal, cite both dates in text, separated with a slash: (Watson, 1915/2004)

**8. A secondary source—meaning: you are reading a resource, the author refers to a previous work that he or she read, but you did not read that previous work.**

Suppose you read the following on page 203 in a book by Hassan (2006), and you want to refer to the work by Reynolds that you did not read firsthand:

Economic and political conditions in sub-Saharan Africa in the 1990s led to a large increase in the number of African immigrants to the Upper Midwest (Reynolds, 2003).

In your paper, you will write Reynolds (as cited in Hassan, 2006) stated that struggles in sub-Saharan Africa near the end of the 20th century resulted in an increase in the native African population into the American Upper Midwest (p. 203).

## 9. Personal communication.

Per APA, references to personal communication, such as letters, memos, email messages, or phone interviews, show up only in-text and not in the reference list.

The drop in crime among youth may actually increase the need for mental health services in Aitkin County (M. Lemieux, personal communication, February 1, 2005).

### Citing Web-Based Articles

**Citing documents:** To cite a specific document on the web, start by following the format of other documents as noted in the APA manual. Below are two common examples. The first is an online version of a print article, unchanged, that you find on the journal's website.

Lippold, L., & Johnson, B. (2010). Religious intolerance in the health care profession. *Issues in Atheism*, 5, 146–157. <https://doi.org/10.8902143875cxuyg1>

The in-text citation would simply be: Lippold and Johnson (2000).

If you have no DOI number, then show the URL of the journal's homepage.

Bodine, J., Clampett, J., & Clampett, E. M. (2004). Management practices of the recently wealthy. *Journal of Accumulation*, 18, 345–378. [www.joa-wealth.com](http://www.joa-wealth.com)

For a “permanent” website, meaning one that is likely to be around for a long time:

Giovanetti, F. (2019, November 16). *Why we are so obsessed with personality types*. Medium. <https://medium.com/the-business-of-wellness/why-we-are-so-obsessed-with-personality-types-577450f9aee9>

If referring to the entire text, the in-text citation would simply be: Giovanetti (2019).

Refer to <http://apastyle.apa.org/> for examples of other online references.