



# Success Center General Guidelines for APA Formatting

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The American Psychological Association (APA) is the style of documentation often used in the social science disciplines to indicate how a writer has incorporated research information into the paper. The two main components of APA style documentation are **in-text citations** (brief references in the text of the paper) and a **reference page** (a complete alphabetical listing of each source) at the end of the paper.

Choosing to use any part of someone else's work, whether using a direct quotation or simply paraphrasing that writer's ideas, requires acknowledgement. By providing accurate citations and references, a writer is able to build credibility with readers and direct them to research sources. Additionally, carefully and accurately citing sources in APA style will help students avoid plagiarism. (See the *SWIC Student Handbook Student Conduct Code* for more information regarding plagiarism.)

## **APA Formatting (Always check with your instructor for specific requirements.)**

- Set the paper for double spacing, including the reference page and block quotations.
- Use a standard font such as Times New Roman size 12.
- Set margins at one inch on all sides; don't add extra spacing between paragraphs or after titles.
- Use a separate title page and a running head followed by a shortened form of the title and insert the page number.
- The running head will not appear on every page of the paper. When inserting the header, be sure to select "different first page." Tab all information in the running head so it begins at the left-hand margin. (Check with your instructor for header requirements).
- Subsequent pages of the paper will need the title typed in all caps and the page number. (Check with your instructor for additional requirements).
- Check the instructor's paper requirements for including an abstract (a summary of the paper's purpose and content in 150-250 words). An abstract appears on the second page. The word "abstract" should be centered under the heading (Do not bold, underline, italicize, punctuate or use special fonts).
- Position visuals such as charts, images, etc., near the corresponding text in the paper and provide a caption with notes and citation information about the source. Number figures and tables consecutively in the paper.
- Start the reference page on a separate page: it's part of the paper and continues with the next page number.

Detailed examples of APA documentation are on the "APA Citation Style Guidelines" handout and the "APA Documentation Style" handout. For more examples of how to place quotations in your papers, see the handout "Integrating Quotations in Essays and Research Papers."

For additional information on APA style, come to the Success Center for assistance or to consult a copy of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. You may also check their Web site: <http://www.apastyle.org/>