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SEVENTH EDITION

PUBLICATION Manual

of the American Psychological Association

THE OFFICIAL GUIDE TO APA STYLE

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INTRODUCTION

Excellence in writing is critical for success in many academic and professional pursuits. APA Style is a set of guidelines for clear and precise scholarly communication that helps authors, both new and experienced, achieve excellence in writing. It is used by millions of people around the world in psychology and also in fields ranging from nursing to social work, communications to education, business to engineering, and other disciplines for the preparation of manuscripts for publication as well as for writing student papers, dissertations, and theses. The *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* is the authoritative resource for APA Style, and we are proud to deliver its seventh edition.

Why Use APA Style?

APA Style provides a foundation for effective scholarly communication because it helps authors present their ideas in a clear, concise, and organized manner. Uniformity and consistency enable readers to (a) focus on the ideas being presented rather than formatting and (b) scan works quickly for key points, findings, and sources. Style guidelines encourage authors to fully disclose essential information and allow readers to dispense with minor distractions, such as inconsistencies or omissions in punctuation, capitalization, reference citations, and presentation of statistics.

When style works best, ideas flow logically, sources are credited appropriately, and papers are organized predictably and consistently. People are described using language that affirms their worth and dignity. Authors plan for ethical compliance and report critical details of their research protocol to allow readers to evaluate findings and other researchers to potentially replicate the studies. Tables and figures present data in an engaging, consistent manner.

Whether you use APA Style for a single class or throughout your career, we encourage you to recognize the benefits of a conscientious approach to writing. Although the guidelines span many areas and take time and practice to learn, we hope that they provide a balance of directiveness and flexibility and will eventually become second nature.

APA Style for Students

The *Publication Manual* has long been an authoritative source for scholarly writing, and this edition provides more targeted guidance and support for students. All students, no matter what career they pursue, can benefit from mastering scholarly writing as a way to develop their critical thinking skills and hone the precision and clarity of their communication.

Most guidelines in the *Publication Manual* can be applied to both student papers and professional manuscripts. The manual also has elements specifically designed for students, including a student title page; guidance on citing classroom or intranet sources; and descriptions of common types of student papers such as annotated bibliographies, response papers, and dissertations and theses. Journal article reporting standards (JARS) are intended primarily for authors seeking publication but may be helpful for students completing advanced research projects.

Utility and Accessibility

We have created the seventh edition of the *Publication Manual* with the practical needs of users in mind. Within chapters, content is organized using numbered sections to help users quickly locate answers to their questions. This ease of navigability and depth of content mean that the manual can be used as both a reference work and a textbook on scholarly writing.

This edition promotes accessibility for everyone, including users with disabilities. In consultation with accessibility experts, we ensured that the guidelines support users who read and write works in APA Style through a variety of modalities, including screen readers and other assistive technologies. For example, we present a streamlined format for in-text citations intended to reduce the burden of both writing and reading them. We provide guidance on how to use adequate contrast in figures to meet Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (Web Accessibility Initiative, 2018). We also support the use of a variety of fonts and default settings in common word-processing programs, meaning that users need to make fewer adjustments to their systems to be ready to write in APA Style. Above all, our aim is to support the many ways in which people communicate. We encourage authors to be conscientious and respectful toward both the people about whom they are writing and the readers who will benefit from their work.

What's New in the Seventh Edition?

Brief descriptions of new and updated content are provided next on a chapter-by-chapter basis. For a more comprehensive overview of content changes, see the APA Style website (<https://apastyle.apa.org>).

Chapter 1: Scholarly Writing and Publishing Principles

Chapter 1 addresses types of papers and ethical compliance.

- New guidance addresses quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods articles as well as student papers, dissertations, and theses.

- Information on planning for and ensuring ethical compliance reflects best practices.
- Guidance on data sharing, including in qualitative research, reflects open practice standards.

Chapter 2: Paper Elements and Format

Chapter 2 is designed to help novice users of APA Style select, format, and organize paper elements.

- The title page is updated for professionals, and a new student title page is provided.
- For all papers, the byline and affiliation format on the title page aligns with publishing standards.
- The author note includes more information, such as ORCID iDs, disclosure of conflicts of interest or lack thereof, and study registration information.
- The running head format has been simplified for professional authors and is not required for students.
- Font specifications are more flexible to address the need for accessibility.
- An updated heading format for Levels 3, 4, and 5 improves readability and assists authors who use the heading-styles feature of their word-processing program.
- Two new sample papers are provided: a professional paper and a student paper, with labels to show how specific elements appear when implemented.

Chapter 3: Journal Article Reporting Standards

Chapter 3 orients users to journal article reporting standards (JARS) and includes tables outlining standards for reporting quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods research.

- JARS for quantitative research has been significantly expanded and updated (see Appelbaum et al., 2018; Cooper, 2018).
- The updated JARS now cover qualitative and mixed methods research (see Levitt, 2019; Levitt et al., 2018).

Chapter 4: Writing Style and Grammar

Chapter 4 provides guidance on writing style and grammar.

- The singular “they” is endorsed, consistent with inclusive usage.
- More detailed guidance helps writers avoid anthropomorphism.

Chapter 5: Bias-Free Language Guidelines

Chapter 5 presents bias-free language guidelines to encourage authors to write about people with inclusivity and respect.

- Existing guidance on age, disability, gender, racial and ethnic identity, and sexual orientation has been updated to reflect best practices.

- New guidance is provided on participation in research, socioeconomic status, and intersectionality.

Chapter 6: Mechanics of Style

Chapter 6 covers the mechanics of style, including punctuation, capitalization, abbreviations, numbers, and statistics in text.

- Updated guidance answers a common question: Use one space after a period at the end of a sentence, unless an instructor or publisher requests otherwise.
- Formatting of linguistic examples has changed; quotation marks are now used around examples, rather than italics, to promote accessibility.
- Expanded guidance is provided on the capitalization of proper nouns, job titles, diseases and disorders, and more.
- Guidelines for the presentation of abbreviations address common questions, such as how to include a citation with an abbreviation.
- Guidelines for the presentation of numbers have been updated to be consistent throughout a work (e.g., there is no longer an exception for presenting numbers in an abstract).
- New guidance is given on how to write gene and protein names.
- Updated guidelines allow greater flexibility for lettered, numbered, and bulleted lists.

Chapter 7: Tables and Figures

Chapter 7 presents guidance on creating tables and figures.

- More than 40 new sample tables and figures are presented, in dedicated sections, covering a variety of research types and topics.
- The presentation of tables and figures in text is more flexible (either after the reference list on separate pages or embedded in the text).
- Formatting of tables and figures is parallel, including consistent styles for numbers, titles, and notes.
- The accessible use of color in figures is addressed.

Chapter 8: Works Credited in the Text

Chapter 8 addresses appropriate levels of citation as well as plagiarism, self-plagiarism, and other unethical writing practices.

- In-text citations have been simplified; all in-text citations for works with three or more authors are shortened to the name of the first author plus "et al." (except where this would create ambiguity).
- New guidance is provided on how to cite recorded or unrecorded Traditional Knowledge and Oral Traditions of Indigenous Peoples.
- Examples of paraphrasing demonstrate how to achieve clear attribution without overcitation.
- New guidance is provided on how to format quotations from research participants.

Chapter 9: Reference List

Chapter 9 examines the four elements of a reference list entry (author, date, title, and source).

- The number of authors included in a reference entry has changed; up to 20 authors are now included before names are omitted with an ellipsis.
- The presentation of digital object identifiers (DOIs) and URLs has been standardized. Both are presented as hyperlinks; the label “DOI:” is no longer used, and the words “Retrieved from” are used only when a retrieval date is also needed.
- Updated guidance explains when to include DOIs and URLs for works retrieved from most academic research databases as well as from proprietary databases such as ERIC or UpToDate.
- New formatting guidance is provided for annotated bibliographies.

Chapter 10: Reference Examples

Chapter 10 provides more than 100 examples of APA Style references, each with accompanying parenthetical and narrative in-text citations.

- Templates are provided for every reference category.
- References are streamlined; for example, journal article references always include the issue number, and book references now omit the publisher location.
- Audiovisual materials receive expanded coverage, with new examples for YouTube videos, PowerPoint slides and lecture notes, TED Talks, and more.
- Social media, webpages, and websites are addressed in new categories. For consistency and ease of formatting, blogs and other online platforms that publish articles are part of the periodicals category.

Chapter 11: Legal References

Chapter 11 presents expanded and updated legal reference examples.

- Guidelines from *The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation* continue to be the foundation for APA Style legal references, with some modifications.
- New, relevant legal reference examples are provided (e.g., the Every Student Succeeds Act).

Chapter 12: Publication Process

Chapter 12 provides guidance on the publication process.

- New content helps early career researchers adapt a dissertation or thesis into a journal article or articles, select a journal for publication, avoid predatory or deceptive publishers, and navigate journal submission.
- Improved guidance on the journal publication process reflects current processes and policies authors need to be aware of when preparing a manuscript for submission.
- New guidance addresses how authors can share and promote their work following publication.

APA Style Online

The APA Style website (<https://apastyle.apa.org>) is the premier and authoritative online destination for APA Style. In addition to numerous free resources and instructional aids, it contains supplemental content that is referred to throughout the manual, including additional reference examples, sample papers, and guidance on using color effectively and accessibly in figures.

The JARS website (<https://apastyle.apa.org/jars>) contains the full repository of information about journal article reporting standards for a wide range of research designs; it is freely available to complement the orienting information in Chapter 3.

The APA Style blog (<https://apastyle.apa.org/blog>) and related social media accounts will continue to answer questions about and share insights into APA Style with the publication of the seventh edition, providing authoritative content from members of the APA Style team.

Academic Writer (<https://digitallearning.apa.org/academic-writer>) is APA's cloud-based tool for teaching and learning effective writing. Developed by the creators of APA Style, this product helps both student and professional authors compose research papers and master the application of seventh-edition APA Style.

Notes to Users

The *Publication Manual* refers to numerous products and services that are not affiliated with the American Psychological Association but that our readers may encounter or use during the process of research, writing, and publication. The trademarks referenced in the *Publication Manual* are the property of their respective owners. The inclusion of non-APA products is for reference only and should not be construed as an endorsement of or affiliation between APA and the owners of these products and their respective brands.

Finally, some eagle-eyed users have asked why every aspect of APA Style is not applied throughout this manual. The manual is a published work, whereas the guidelines for APA Style are meant to be applied to manuscripts being submitted for publication or to student papers. Considerations for published works such as this book (e.g., typesetting, line spacing, length, fonts, use of color, margins) differ from those of draft manuscripts or student papers and thus necessitate deviations from APA Style formatting. Also, in this manual—in which we are writing about writing—it is often necessary to distinguish between explanatory text and examples through the use of font, color, and other design elements. Wherever possible, however, we have endeavored to demonstrate APA Style while writing about it and to present the information in a way that is accessible for our many users around the world.



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SCHOLARLY WRITING AND PUBLISHING PRINCIPLES





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1

SCHOLARLY WRITING AND PUBLISHING PRINCIPLES

Research is complete only when scholars share their results or findings with the scientific community. Although researchers may post articles on scholarly collaboration sites or preprint servers or share them informally by email or in person, the most widely accepted medium for formal scholarly communication continues to be the published article in a peer-reviewed, scientific journal. Scientific journals contain our primary research literature and thus serve as repositories of the accumulated knowledge of a field.

Students are also important members of the scholarly community. Although most student work is not formally published, by writing papers students engage in critical thinking, thoughtful self-reflection, and scientific inquiry and thereby prepare to make unique contributions to the repository of knowledge. Therefore, student writing deserves the same level of care and attention to detail as that given to professional writing.

In this chapter, we provide important principles that professional and student authors should consider before writing their paper or, in many cases, before embarking on a research study. We begin with overviews of the different types of articles and papers professional and student authors write. This is followed by a discussion of ethical, legal, and professional standards in publishing that all authors of scholarly work, regardless of the type of paper they are writing or their level of experience, must be mindful of and abide by. For example, research conducted with human participants or nonhuman animal subjects must be approved by an institutional review board (IRB), institutional animal care and use committee (IACUC), or another ethical committee. Similarly, an author writing about human participants must protect their confidentiality while following best practices for data sharing. Moreover, any written work, from a course paper to a published manuscript, should represent an original contribution and include appropriate citations to the work of others. Thus, scholarly writing and publishing, in all forms, are inherently embedded in and guided by an ethical context.

Types of Articles and Papers

Many types of articles are published in scientific journals, including quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods empirical articles and replications. These journal articles report *primary*, or original, research—that is, research that has not been previously formally published. Theoretical articles and methodological articles do not present research but describe advancements in theories or methods. Journal articles that review or synthesize findings from primary research include literature reviews and quantitative and qualitative meta-analyses. By understanding the characteristics of different types of articles and the types of information they most efficiently convey, you will be able to select an article type that fits your research and to follow the appropriate journal article reporting standards (discussed in Chapter 3). Students may write the same kinds of articles that are published in journals, as well as student papers (including course assignments, dissertations, and theses) not intended for publication in a journal (see Section 1.10). Sample papers are included at the end of Chapter 2 and on the APA Style website (<https://apastyle.apa.org>).

1.1 Quantitative Articles

In *quantitative articles*, authors report original, empirical, quantitative research. *Quantitative research* refers to a set of approaches commonly used in the behavioral and social sciences and related fields in which the observed outcomes are numerically represented. The results of these studies are typically analyzed using methods (statistics, data analyses, and modeling techniques) that rely on the numerical properties of the measurement system. Quantitative research studies use a variety of experimental designs and a range of analytic techniques. Some quantitative articles present novel hypotheses and data analyses not considered or addressed in previous reports of related data. Within the article, authors should describe elements of their study in the first person (see Section 4.16). Researchers who used a quantitative approach should follow the quantitative journal article reporting standards to report their findings (see Sections 3.5–3.12).

Quantitative articles typically include distinct sections that reflect the stages of the research process and appear in the following sequence:

- **Introduction:** a statement of the purpose of the investigation, a review of the background literature, and an explicit statement of the hypotheses being explored (see Section 3.4)
- **Method:** a full description of each step of the investigation, including details about the materials used and the procedures followed (which should be sufficient to enable replication), a full statement of the research design, statements on the protection of human participants or nonhuman animal subjects and informed consent, and a description (in words and/or a figure) of the flow of participants through the study (see Section 3.6)
- **Results:** data analysis and a report of the findings (see Section 3.7)
- **Discussion:** a summary of the study, including any interpretation, limitations, and implications of the results (see Section 3.8)

Reports of Multiple Studies. Authors of quantitative articles often report the findings of several conceptually linked studies in one manuscript. These authors

should make the rationale, logic, order, and method of each study clear to readers. Headings should be used to label each study—for instance, “Experiment 1,” “Experiment 2,” and so forth. This format organizes the sections and makes them easier to discuss in the manuscript or in later research articles. Method and Results subsections can appear under each study heading. If appropriate, the authors can include a short subsection titled “Discussion” in which they explore the implications of the results of each study, or they can combine the discussion with the description of results under a heading such as “Results and Discussion.” Authors should always include a comprehensive general discussion of all the studies at the end of the article, which often has the heading “General Discussion.”

1.2 Qualitative Articles

In *qualitative articles*, authors report original, empirical, qualitative research. *Qualitative research* refers to scientific practices that are used to generate knowledge about human experience and/or action, including social processes. Qualitative approaches tend to share four sets of characteristics:

- Researchers analyze data consisting of natural language (i.e., words), researcher observations (e.g., social interactions), and/or participants' expressions (e.g., artistic presentations) rather than collecting numerical data and conducting mathematical analyses. Reports tend to show the development of qualitative findings using natural language (although numbers may be used adjunctively in describing or exploring these findings).
- Researchers often use an iterative process of analysis in which they reexamine developing findings in light of continued data analysis and refine the initial findings. In this way, the process of analysis is self-correcting and can produce original knowledge.
- Researchers recursively combine inquiry with methods that require researchers' reflexivity about how their own perspectives might support or impair the research process and thus how their methods should best be enacted.
- Researchers tend to study experiences and actions whose meaning may shift and evolve; therefore, they tend to view their findings as being situated within place and time rather than seeking to develop laws that are expected to remain stable regardless of context.

Researchers who used a qualitative approach should follow the qualitative journal article reporting standards to report their findings (see Sections 3.13–3.17).

Case Studies and Other Types of Qualitative Articles. A variety of methods are reported in qualitative articles, and the structure of qualitative articles varies depending on the nature of the study. For example, in *case studies* researchers report analyses or observations obtained while working closely with an individual, group, community, or organization. Case studies illustrate a problem in depth; indicate a means for solving a problem; and/or shed light on needed research, clinical applications, or theoretical matters. Qualitative articles also describe studies with multiple participants, groups, communities, or organizations that identify commonalities and/or differences across these entities. Such research can have a systemic focus, examining the ways in which social processes, actions, or discourses are structured.

Regardless of the qualitative research approaches they use, when writing reports, authors should carefully consider the balance between providing important illustrative material and using confidential participant data responsibly (see Sections 1.18–1.19 for more on confidentiality; see also Section 1.15). Qualitative reports may be organized thematically or chronologically and are typically presented in a reflexive, first-person style, detailing the ways in which the researchers arrived at questions, methods, findings, and considerations for the field.

1.3 Mixed Methods Articles

In *mixed methods articles*, authors report research combining qualitative and quantitative empirical approaches. Mixed methods research should not be confused with *mixed models research*, which is a quantitative procedure, or with *multi-methods research*, which entails using multiple methods from the same approach. Mixed methods research involves the following:

- describing the philosophical assumptions or theoretical models used to inform the study design (Creswell, 2015);
- describing the distinct methodologies, research designs, and procedures in relation to the study goals;
- collecting and analyzing both qualitative and quantitative data in response to research aims, questions, or hypotheses; and
- integrating the findings from the two methodologies intentionally to generate new insights.

The basic assumption of a mixed methods approach is that the combined qualitative findings and quantitative results lead to additional insights not gleaned from the qualitative or quantitative findings alone (Creswell, 2015; Greene, 2007; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). Because there are many ways to design a mixed methods study, the structure of mixed methods articles varies depending on the specific nature of the study and the balance between the two methodologies. Researchers who used a mixed methods approach should follow the mixed methods journal article reporting standards to report their findings (see Section 3.18).

1.4 Replication Articles

In *replication articles*, authors report the results of work intended to verify or reproduce findings from previous investigations. The aim of a *replication study* is to examine whether the conclusions from an earlier study remain the same or similar over variations in the conduct of the original study. There are internal and external forms of replication; only external replications are addressed in APA journal article reporting standards (see Section 3.10). An *external replication* occurs when researchers obtain a new sample and duplicate, insofar as is possible or desirable, the features of the original study being replicated. New design, measures, and/or data-analysis methods can also be used to test whether a finding has generality beyond the particular situation studied in the original work, but any such variations must be clearly specified in the report.

Researchers conducting an external replication should report sufficient information to allow readers to determine whether the study was a direct (exact, literal) replication, approximate replication, or conceptual (construct) replication. In a *direct replication*, researchers repeat a study collecting data from a new sample in a way that duplicates as far as possible the conditions of the earlier study.

More than 15 million copies sold!

Write With Clarity, Precision, and Inclusion

The *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, Seventh Edition*, is the official source for APA Style. With millions of copies sold worldwide in multiple languages, it is the style manual of choice for writers, researchers, editors, students, and educators in the social and behavioral sciences, natural sciences, nursing, communications, education, business, engineering, and other fields.

Known for its authoritative, easy-to-use reference and citation system, the *Publication Manual* also offers guidance on choosing the headings, tables, figures, language, and tone that will result in powerful, concise, and elegant scholarly communication. It guides users through the scholarly writing process—from the ethics of authorship to reporting research through publication. The seventh edition is an indispensable resource for students and professionals to achieve excellence in writing and make an impact with their work.

NEW TO THIS EDITION

- resources for students on writing and formatting annotated bibliographies, response papers, and other paper types as well as guidelines on citing course materials
- sample papers for both professional authors and student writers
- new chapters on journal article reporting standards, bias-free language guidelines, and legal references
- more than 100 new reference examples covering periodicals, books, audiovisual media, social media, webpages and websites, and other resources
- more than 40 new sample tables and figures
- guidelines that support accessibility for all users, including simplified reference, in-text citation, and heading formats as well as additional font options



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