



# APA 7 Formatting & Style Tips

## Do:

**1. Include the year of publication in the body of your paper** (not just on the References page) APA values current research. Whenever you cite research, you should include the year it was published.

- The date *usually* appears in parentheses after the authors' names as part of a signal phrase:
  - **Holbrook et al. (2017)** studied the effects of...
- But it can be written in the body of the sentence itself:
  - **In 2017**, Holbrook et al. studied the effects of...
- When citing paraphrases (in your own words), the date can go inside the parentheses at the end of a citation:
  - The effects of ... (Holbrook et al., **2017**).

Narrative citation style

Paraphrased citation style

**2. Know how to use "et al."** "et al." means "and others." Use it for works with three or more authors.

For **Narrative** in-text citations:

- **1-2 authors.** Include both authors' names in the parentheses:
  - Xu and Adams (2019) identified. . .
- **3 or more authors.** List only the **first author's** (last) name (the "leading" author), and et al.:
  - Ghosh **et al.** (2018) found . . .

For **Paraphrased** in-text citations:

- **1-2 authors.** Include both authors' names in the parentheses:
  - These findings suggest that . . . (Xu & Adams, 2019).
- **3 or more authors.** Include only the **first author** and et al.:
  - These findings suggest that. . . (Ghosh **et al.**, 2019).

**3. Use block quotations** for direct (verbatim) citations that are 40 words or longer.

- Start a new line and indent this text so that it's set apart from the rest of your text.

Source

Colon

Smith (2015) identified several contributing factors in the childhood obesity crisis, such as:

Indent

Advertising directed at children ... a reduction in physical education classes ..., an increase in the availability of sodas and snacks in public schools, the growth in the number of fast-food outlets ..., and the increasing number of highly processed high-calorie and high-fat grocery products. (p. 34)

Page #

Addressing each of these areas requires more than a doctor armed with a prescription pad; it requires ...

**4. Format your title page**

- Open the header and Insert Page Number (upper right) (for every page, even the title page).
- Title in bold, Title Case, centered, in the top 1/2 of page, with one blank line under it
- Then under the blank line, if not instructed otherwise, include:
  - Student Name, University, Course Name and Number, Instructor, and Due Date
    - Each on separate lines, all Title Case, not bold, and all centered

**5. Use past tense or present perfect tense to refer to researchers' actions**

- Ortiz found / suggested / argued ... (past tense)
- Ortiz has found / has suggested / has argued ... (present perfect tense)
- Not: Ortiz ~~finds~~ / ~~suggests~~ / ~~argues~~ ... (**don't use** present tense)

**You can use present tense for discussing implications of results and presenting conclusions**

- The results indicate... / Limitations of the study include...

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## Do:

6. **Ask your instructor about their specific policies**
  - Instructors vary in their expectations for APA. Ask your instructor what they want.
7. **Know where to look (and who to ask) for APA help/questions.**
  - Ask the Writing Center tutors or look at an APA handbook in the Library or Writing Center
  - The APA Style Blog has the answers to APA 6 and 7 FAQs: <https://apastyle.apa.org/blog>

## DON'T:

1. **Don't write the titles of articles, books, or journals in the body of the text**
  - ~~In a book titled "Examiner comments on Ph.D. theses,"~~ Mendoza et al. (2007) noted...
  - ~~In an article in the journal *Studies in Higher Education*,~~ Mendoza et al. (2007) found...
2. **Don't write an author's first name or first initial in the body of the text**
  - ~~Tyrone~~ Jones (2013) examined...
  - ~~T.~~ Jones and ~~R.~~ Moretti (2013) have argued that...
3. **Don't confuse "and" with "&"!**
  - "&" should only appear in **Parenthetical**-style citations (or on the References page):
    - Personal connection contributes to tutoring success (Babcock & Thonus, 2012).
  - "and" is used in **Narrative**-style citations, when "and" is a regular word in the sentence:
    - Babcock **and** Thonus (2012) have claimed that personal connection contributes to tutoring success.
4. **Don't confuse "p." and "pp."!**
  - "p." refers to text that only appears on one page:
    - Hass et al. (2007) observed that "peer review is the main process by which the quality and contribution of research is judged" (p. 337).
  - "pp." refers to something that appears on two or more pages, e.g.: (pp. 337-338).
5. **Don't use "informal" language!**
  - Avoid using "I/we/our" in expressions like "as we have seen," or "as I mentioned above"
    - But **you can use "I/we"** when you're talking about your own experiment/methods:
      - "I selected subjects..." / "We conducted a study..."
  - Avoid using "you" for statements about people in general; instead, name the specific group of people.
    - For example: replace "if **you** really care about solving the health crisis..." with: "if **voters/politicians/Americans** really care about solving the health crisis..."
  - Avoid contractions like: it's, isn't, didn't, and can't.
6. **Don't overgeneralize! (And avoid bias!)**
  - Avoid labeling people if the label is irrelevant to your research.
  - Call groups of people what they call themselves.
  - Be as specific as possible when you refer to a group of people, especially for the first time.
    - For example, instead of "youth," explain whether your argument relates to all people under the age of 18, or only to adolescents and/or high school students, or only to young adults ages 18–25, etc.