APA: Frequently Asked Questions

1) **Why APA format?**
   "APA" stands for the American Psychological Association. This is often the standard format used in the social sciences. It's a consistent way for writers to document sources and avoid plagiarism.

2) **What do I need to cite?**
   Cite anything that's not your own (ideas of others, words of others (quotes), paraphrases of others' ideas in your own words, statistics, graphs/charts, etc.)

3) **What if I can't find the author for my source?**
   If the source was written by an organization, you can use the organization's name as the author. If there isn't an author or organization, then you can use the title of the source.

   > *Example*:
   > In-text citation:
   > > According to the CDC (2017),
   >
   > References Page:
   > > Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). (2017). What's new for the 2017-2018 Flu Season? [Fact Sheet]. Retrieved from: https://www.cdc.gov/flu/pdf/freeresources/general/whats-new-2017-2018-factsheet.pdf

4) **How do I cite something that I could only find in a different source? (Indirect source)**
   You should try to track down the original source! For example, If you're reading Schafer and you want to cite something <u>Rosen</u> said that was <u>mentioned in Schafer</u>, you should first try to read Rosen's work yourself.

   If you cannot find Rosen's work (e.g., because it's out of print or in another language), then cite using "as cited in":

   > *Example:*
   > In her study, Rosen (**as cited in Schafer, 2012**) demonstrated that…

   > **Note**: Only include Schafer (the source you actually read) in your References list.

5) **How do I cite multiple pages on a website?**
   If you are using multiple pages on a website, for example, the "About" page and the "Mission Statement" page on an organization's website, you can cite them two different ways: 1) Cite the entire website, or 2) Cite each page individually. Citing each page individually on your References page makes it clearer where you found the information.

6) **When do I use et al.?**
   The abbreviation et al. ("and others") can be used in your in-text citations that have 3+ authors. If there are 3-6 authors in your citation, list all authors' last names in the first citation, and then use the first author's last name + et al. for all later citations. If there are 7+ authors, use the first author's last name + et al. for *all* in-text citations.

   > *Examples*:
   > > *First citation*: (Preston, O'Neal, & Talaga, 2013, p. 213)
   > > *Later citations*: (Preston et al., 2013, p. 213).
   > > *All citations for 7+ authors:* (Lang et al., 2017, p. 101)

7) What if my source has no page numbers?

If there are no page numbers for your source (e.g., an online source), you may not need to include any, or you may want to include a paragraph number or section number for your readers, to indicate exactly where an idea came from.

> *Example*: (author, year, para. 5)

8) If I'm talking about one source in a few sentences, can I just cite once at the end of a paragraph?

No.

You need to make sure that your reader can tell which ideas are your own, and which are paraphrases. A good strategy is to use a signal phrase (author last name + year) in the first sentence, then use phrases like "They also pointed out…" in the next few sentences to show your reader that you are still paraphrasing/quoting the same source.

> *Example*:
> > **Smith (2015)** suggested that students prefer texting over phone calls.
> > **He also found** that some students send up to "300 text messages a day" (p. 7).

If you include this type of phrase, then you do not need to include another parenthetical citation with the author name/year. (Just include the page numbers for any quotes.)

9) How do I cite a teacher's lecture? / How do I cite lecture notes?

(Teacher's last name, First initial., year, personal communication)

> *Example*: (Galaska, J., 2018, personal communication)
> Personal Communication does NOT go on your References page, only in-text.

10) Do I need an abstract?

It depends on your teacher/project. Check your assignment guidelines or email your professor if you are unsure.

a. **How do I write an abstract?** 150-250 words. It should briefly explain the gist of your paper. Abstracts are used by readers/researchers to decide if the content of a paper is relevant to them. Write the abstract last, once you know the content of your entire paper.

Double-Check: Formatting Reminders

Paper Format:

1) Page 1 header format: Running head: TITLE   *not:* Running Head: TITLE
2) If your title is longer than 12 words, use a shortened version of it in the header.

In-text Citation Format:

1) Format long quotes (40+ words) as block quotes.
2) Include a comma between the author's last name and the year: (Park, 2016)
3) Use p. for one page (Murray, 2017, p. 17), and pp. for a range (Murray, 2017, pp. 17–19.)

References Format:

1) Double-check formatting of any references you copy and paste from Google Scholar, RefWorks, or Easy Bib.