

Preview the basics of APA style

Used in many social science disciplines, APA style requires a list of references, giving publication information for all the sources you have paraphrased, summarized, or quoted following APA's guidelines.

For an overview of related key topics on working with documentation styles, visit the [videos](#) and [quizzes](#) in this tutorial.

Explore It

Required by most courses in the social sciences, APA style uses in-text citations and a list of sources used that are placed at the end of the paper, called *References*. In the body of your draft, for each source you use APA requires you to include the author name, the year of publication, and in some cases the page number in the text. When citing a source without page numbers, omit the page number.

For complete advice on citing sources APA style, see *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, Sixth Edition (2010). You can also find comprehensive coverage in any composition handbook. Questia School's bibliography tool allows you to save APA-style references entries for the sources you locate there. For practice using the tools that offer help with APA style in Questia School, see the Use It section, below.

Learn It

Following is a preview of the basics of APA style, offering a closer look at examples of some of the more widely cited sources: books with a single author, articles found in magazines and via databases, and works found on websites. (For additional advice on in-text citation, see the other examples in this tutorial.)

APA In-text Documentation

In APA style, when you include a quotation, paraphrase, or summary of a source in your draft you must include information to indicate where the material comes from using in-text citation. In most cases, this means giving the name of the author, the year of publication, and the page where the material was found. Often you can cite the author in a signal phrase and follow with the year of publication, given in parentheses. For quotations, give the page number(s) in parentheses. Include a page number for paraphrases or summaries if your readers might need it to find the material in a long work.

Paumgarten (2011) cautioned that the legal issue of using drones domestically is itself like a drone: "it has stolen up on us and is now hovering noiselessly overhead" (p. 48).

If you do not name the author of the source in a signal phrase, include it in the parentheses with the page number: (Paumgarten, 2011, p. 48).

If your source has no page numbers or is a single page, omit the page numbers. If the author of your source is unknown, use the title (or a shortened version) in the signal phrase or in a parenthetical reference:

Teen athletes are at higher risk of concussion and take longer to recover ("Concussion in Sports," 2012).

APA List of References

The complete listing of all sources you use in your paper appears on a separate page, labeled **References**. Here you record all the sources you cite, listed in alphabetical order.

The APA's *Publication Manual* and all composition handbooks offer dozens of models and examples of how to cite a variety of sources. The following examples represent commonly used sources, color coded to help you identify the pieces of information necessary for these citations.

Book with One Author For a book with one author, you need to provide the following information:

- **Author's name**, giving last name first, then initial(s)
- **Year of publication**, in parentheses
- **Title of the book**, in italics
- **City and state of publication**
- **Name of publisher**

Example

Kaku, M. (2008). *Physics of the impossible*. New York, NY: Anchor Books.

Article in a Magazine For an article in a periodical, include the following:

- **Author's name** (if given), giving last name first, then initial(s)
- **Date of publication**, in parentheses
- **Title of article**, with only the first word of the title and subtitle and proper nouns or adjectives or proper nouns capitalized
- **Title of periodical**, in italics
- **Page numbers**

Example

Hunt, W. (2012, May). Secrets of the white shaman. *Discover*, 50–56.

Article in a Scholarly Journal, Found in a Database For an article in a periodical found in a database, include the following:

- **Author's name** (if given), giving last name first, then first initial(s)
- **Date of publication**, in parentheses
- **Title of article**, with only the first word of the title and the subtitle and proper nouns and proper adjectives capitalized
- **Title of periodical**, in italics
- **Volume**, in italics, and **issue number** (in a journal paginated by issue rather than volume)
- **Page numbers**
- **Digital Object Identifier (DOI)**

If no DOI is given, write *Retrieved from*, then add the URL of the homepage of the journal (not that of the database).

Example

Kiel, J. M. (1999). Reshaping Maslow's hierarchy of needs to reflect today's educational and managerial philosophies. *Journal of Instructional Psychology*, 26(3), 167–187. Retrieved from http://www.projectinnovation.biz/jip_2006.html

Work from a Website For a work found in an online periodical, include publication information if possible. Include a DOI, if available (if not, include the URL for the periodical's homepage). For works from a website, list the following information:

- Author's name, if given
- Date the site was published or last updated, in parentheses
- Title of the web article or page
- Title of the online periodical or website, in italics
- URL (if no DOI is available) introduced by the phrase *Retrieved from*

Example

Lardner, E. & Malnarich, G. (2008, July-Aug.). A new era in learning-community work: Why the pedagogy of intentional integration matters. *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning*. Retrieved from <http://www.changemag.org/index.html>

If a DOI has been assigned to the article, replace the URL with the DOI at the end of the entry (for example, doi:10.1037/0279-6132.23.2.225).

Use It

Questia School offers help creating entries for your *References* page using documentation tools. Note that with all such tools, you should never assume that a database's help with documentation means entries are complete and fully formatted. There may be information about your source the documentation tool cannot provide accurately. Always check entries for accuracy against a current handbook or other reference guide to your documentation style.

To gain practice with APA citation style, use the topic from a current research project and conduct a search to locate two or three relevant sources in Questia School. Save these sources to a project folder devoted to the assignment. Then, within your project folder, select the sources that are most relevant, and use the bibliography tool to create a first draft of a references list for these sources. Click the "Create bibliography" button at the bottom of the project page, and choose "APA" from the list. Following is a sample from one student's set of sources found in Questia School for a research project on the psychology of motivation.

QUESTIA SCHOOL BIBLIOGRAPHY TOOL: CREATING APA REFERENCES LIST ENTRIES

The screenshot shows the Questia School Bibliography Tool interface. At the top, the project name is "psychology of motivation paper". Below it, there is a search bar and a "Show all items" dropdown. The main area displays a list of project folders under "Your projects": "psychology of motivation paper (3)", "Internet safety project (8)", and "Create a new project". A "Bibliography style" dialog box is open, showing options for MLA, APA (selected), and Chicago, Notes/Bib. Below the dialog, there are "Selected items tools" including "Create bibliography", "Move", "Copy", and "Delete". A status bar at the bottom indicates "2 items selected" and a "Clear all" link.

List of project folders.

Selected items are added to the bibliography.

List of documentation styles.

Generates a bibliography for selected items in the folder.

The screenshot shows the "Bibliography (APA)" tool output. It includes a list of instructions for creating a bibliography and a list of references.

Bibliography (APA)

- Double-check your bibliography to ensure that it conforms to the specific criteria for your course or assignment.
- To comply with your bibliography style, you need to change all book, chapter, and article titles to use sentence casing. This means that you capitalize only the first word of the title and subtitle, plus all proper nouns and acronyms.
- If you cut and paste this into your paper, make sure your margins and spacing are

References

Kiel, J. M. (1999). Reshaping Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs to Reflect Today's Educational and Managerial Philosophies. *Journal of Instructional Psychology*, 26(3), 167. Retrieved from <http://www.questia.com>

Lavoie, M. (2005). Rene Roy, the Separability and Subordination of Needs, and Post Keynesian Consumer Theory. *History of Economics Review*, 42, 45+. Retrieved from <http://www.questia.com>

References

Save the results to a new file for your word processor. Using the list of references created in Questia School as a rough draft, carefully proofread each entry and check formatting, including capitalization and italics.

Next, check for information not supplied by the bibliography tool. For example, APA requires you to cite the DOI of an article or the URL of a journal's homepage, not the URL of the database. So for articles without DOI's, you must take the extra step of locating the journal's URL. Use a composition handbook or other research manual for more detailed advice about APA style, if necessary.

Alternate activity From the sources you have gathered for a current research assignment, choose several of your own examples that correspond to the general sources listed here and create your own citation entries for a references list. Use the information in this document as a guide, and consult a composition handbook or other research manual for more models and advice, if needed.