



APA EDITORIAL STYLE

The *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed., 2010) prescribes a specific editorial style for APA-formatted papers; some common aspects are described below. For all the specifics of how to format a document in APA style, consult the *Publication Manual*. Departments sometimes have different regulations for dissertations than the APA manual; check with your department to find out its requirements. To learn more about APA documentation consult the Center for Writing's APA Documentation Quicktip.

GENERAL STYLISTIC GUIDELINES

- Double-space the entire document
- Use 1-inch margins on all four sides (top, bottom, left, and right)
- Include a running head (page header) at the top left of each page (including the title page) with a shortened version of the title, and the page number at the top right (some professors prefer the student's last name instead of a shortened version of the title)

Paper Title: Reducing Homophobia in Public School Settings: Meta-analysis of Thirty School Districts

Possible Running Head: REDUCING HOMOPHOBIA (left justified in the header)

- Begin the paper with a Title Page. After the Title Page, the order of sections within a paper is Abstract, Introduction, Method, Results, Discussion, References, and Appendices and supplementary materials. (Most papers have some of these sections, but not all of them.) The Title Page, Abstract, Introduction, References, and Appendix (if included in the paper) each begin on a separate page. Centered on the Title Page are the title, the author's name and institution, and an Author Note. Some professors also like the professor's name, course name, and date to be included. For a description of what each of the other sections includes, consult the *Publication Manual*, chapter two.
- Follow standard punctuation rules. One exception is that the comma before the conjunction (and or or) in a series is required, whereas in other styles this comma is optional.

Wrong: The subject completed a questionnaire, was interviewed and submitted to a battery of psychological tests.

Correct: The subject completed a questionnaire, was interviewed, and submitted to a battery of psychological tests.

WRITING STYLE

APA writing style is intended to improve the clarity and conciseness of wording and maintain a standard throughout all APA-related writing.

- Present information in a logical order
- Avoid creative writing; aim for clear and logical communication
- Write concisely: be aware of wordiness, excessive jargon, and redundancy
- Choose words carefully: be aware of colloquial expressions, words with multiple meanings, and unclear comparisons
- Use first person rather than the third person when describing actions you took (I reviewed

the literature, not The authors reviewed the literature.)

USE OF UNBIASED LANGUAGE

In order to maintain clarity and writing free from bias, APA requires authors to be specific, clear, and fair in their treatment of others in their writing.

- Use gender-neutral terms unless the gender is relevant to the content. Avoid using the terms *he/she*, *s/he*, or alternating between *he* and *she*.

Wrong: A depressed person often has trouble sleeping; he also has a change in eating habits.

Correct: Depressed people often have trouble sleeping; they also have a change in eating habits.

- Use appropriate labels for racial and ethnic groups, be aware of what their preferences are, and be specific when applicable. For instance, if all the subjects are either Ojibwe or Cree, stating this is more accurate than calling them all Native Americans.

- Use person-first language.

Wrong: a schizophrenic

Correct: a person with schizophrenia

- Use appropriate labels when referring to sexual orientation: the terms *lesbians*, *gay men*, and *bisexuals* or *bisexual women and men* are preferred to the term *homosexuals*.

HEADINGS

To help the reader, it is recommended to include headings throughout the paper. Each level has a different heading format.

- **Level 1:** Centered, boldface, upper and lowercase letters

Literature Review

- **Level 2:** Left justified, boldface, upper and lowercase letters)

Literature Review

Proponents of Emotional Intelligence

Opponents of Emotional Intelligence

- **Level 3:** Indented, boldface, first word uppercase and the rest ending in a period, with the text starting on the same line immediately after the period

Literature Review

Proponents of Emotional Intelligence

Theories Prior to 1950. Text text text text

Theories After 1950. Text text text text

- If you need **more than three levels**, consult the *Publication Manual*, section 3.03 for more information.

For more information:

American Psychological Association. (2010). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

Mooney, K. S. (1995-2004). *American Psychological Association (APA) Style Workshop*. Retrieved June 16, 2005, from Purdue University, Online Writing Lab Web site: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/workshops/hypertext/apa/index.html>