

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 APA editorial style, consult chapters two and three of 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 Style quicktips.

GENERAL STRUCTURAL GUIDELINES

- Double-space the entire document, and use 1-inch margins on all sides (top, bottom, left, and right).
- Begin the paper with a title page. Centered on the title page are the title, the author's name and institution, and an Author Note (see the *Manual*, section 2.03, for more on the Author Note). Some instructors also like the instructor's name, course name, and date to be included. If you are writing for a course, check your syllabus and assignment sheet to determine specific instructor preferences.
- After the title page, the prescribed 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. For a description of what each of the other sections includes, consult the *Manual*, chapter two.
- Include a page header at the top of each page, with the title text on the left and a page number on the right. For the title page, include the words "Running head" before a shortened version of the title in capital letters; for all subsequent pages, remove the words "Running head," but keep the shortened version of the title in capital letters. All pages, including the title page, should be numbered on the top right.

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

Header on top left of title page: Running head: REDUCING HOMOPHOBIA

Header on top left of all subsequent pages: REDUCING HOMOPHOBIA

- 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.

Incorrect: The subject completed a questionnaire, was interviewed and participated in two focus groups.

Correct: The subject completed a questionnaire, was interviewed, and participated in two focus groups.

GENERAL STYLISTIC GUIDELINES

APA writing style is intended to improve the clarity and conciseness of wording and maintain a standard throughout all APA-related writing. For more on APA writing style, see chapter three of the *Publication Manual*.

- Present information in a logical order
- Avoid creative writing; aim for clear and logical communication
- Use the past tense (e.g., *investigated*) to describe other researchers' published work and to

report your results; use the present perfect tense (e.g., *have investigated*) “to express a past action or condition that did not occur at a specific, definite time or to describe an action beginning in the past and continuing to the present” (American Psychological Association, 2010, p. 78).

- The APA Publication Manual (2010) recommends choosing the active voice unless “you want to focus on the object or recipient of the action rather than on the actor” (p. 77).
- Choose words carefully: be aware of colloquial expressions, words with multiple meanings, and unclear comparisons.
- When describing actions you took, use first person rather than the third person (I reviewed the literature, not The author 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 people in their writing.

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

Incorrect: A person with depression often has trouble sleeping; he also has a change in eating habits.

Correct: People with depression often have trouble sleeping; they also have a change in eating habits.

- Use appropriate labels for racial and ethnic identities, be aware of what group members’ 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.

Incorrect: 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 for all words

Literature Review

- **Level 2:** Left justified, boldface, upper- and lowercase letters for all words

Literature Review

Proponents of Emotional Intelligence

Opponents of Emotional Intelligence

- **Level 3:** Indented, boldface, first word uppercase and the rest lowercase; heading ends with 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.

References

- American Psychological Association. (2010). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.
- American Psychological Association. (2012a). *APA style*. Retrieved from <http://apastyle.org/>
- American Psychological Association. (2012b). *APA style blog*. Retrieved from <http://blog.apastyle.org/apastyle/>
- Seas, K., & Brizee, A. (2010) *APA Style Workshop*. Retrieved from <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/664/01/>