Top 10 APA Style Basics

Use this as a quick reference guide only. The APA Publication Manual, 7th edition is your authoritative guide.

1. **Font (p. 44)**: APA suggests the following fonts:
   - Serif: 12-point Times New Roman, 11-point Georgia, or 10-point Computer Modern.
   - Sans serif: 11-point Calibri, 11-point Arial, or 10-point Lucida Sans Unicode.

2. **Margins (p. 45)**: 1 inch on all sides (top, bottom, left, and right).

3. **Line alignment (p. 45)**: Text should be flush to the left margin, with the right margin unjustified (“ragged”). Paragraphs should be indented 0.5 inch. Do not hyphenate words at the end of a line.

4. **Line spacing (p. 45)**: Double-space everything.

5. **Citations (p. 253)**: “Cite the work of those individuals whose ideas, theories, or research have directly influenced your work … Cite only works that you have read and ideas that you have incorporated into your writing … The number of sources you cite in your paper depends on the purpose of your work” (APA, 2020, pp. 255-256). In addition, “each work cited in the text must appear in the reference list” (p. 257).

   **After a paraphrase (p. 263)**: Include the author’s name and the year of the work’s publication (no page number needed).
   - The public can receive skewed information from falsely balanced news sources (Koehler, 2018).
   - Koehler (2018) noted the dangers of falsely balanced news coverage.

   **After a quotation (p. 263)**: Include the parenthetical citation after the last quotation mark and before the period and include the page number.
   - “Falsely balanced news coverage can distort the public’s perception of expert consensus on an issue (Koehler, 2018, p. 263)
   - Koehler (2018) stated, “Falsely balanced news coverage can distort the public’s perception of expert consensus on an issue” (p. 263).

   **Personal communications (p. 260)**: When citing an email, text message, online chat or direct message, interview, or phone conversation, include the initial(s) and last name of the communicator and provide as exact a date as possible in the text. Do not include in the reference page.
   - (T. Nguyen, personal communication, February 24, 2020).

6. **References (p. 281)**: “Each work in the reference list must be cited in the text” (p. 257). There are four elements of a reference: **Author** (Who is responsible for this work?), **Date** (When was this work published?), **Title** (What is this work called?), and **Source** (Where can I retrieve this work?).
• Alphabetize by the last name of the first author.
• The first line of an entry should be aligned to the left margin, with subsequent lines indented 0.5 inch (hanging indent).
• For 2–20 authors, include last names and initial(s) and an ampersand before the last author:
  Author, A. A., Author, B. B., & Author, C. C.
• Pay attention to the formatting, capitalization, and punctuation for the examples in the box below:


*Title of webpage*. (n.d.). www.website.com

7. **Quotations** *(p. 270)*: It is better to paraphrase content within the context of your own paper and style, but quotations should be used if “reproducing an exact definition … when an author has said something memorably or succinctly, or when you want to respond to exact wording” *(p. 270)*.
• For short quotations (fewer than 40 words), follow the formatting with quotation marks in the “After a Quotation (p. 263)” subheading’s example above.
• For long quotations (40 or more words), use block quotation formatting; start the quotation on a new line with a 0.5-inch indentation, do not include quotation marks, and indent any following paragraphs an additional 0.5 inch.

8. **Page numbers and headings** *(p. 44)*: The title should be left-aligned in all capital letters in the header (see the top of this page), and page numbers should be right-aligned in the header. Use the automatic numbering in your word processor; do not manually type in page numbers.

9. **Section headings** *(p. 48)*:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Format</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>Centered, Bold, Title Case Heading</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Text begins as a new paragraph.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><strong>Flush Left, Bold, Title Case Heading</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Text begins as a new paragraph.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td><strong>Flush Left, Bold Italic, Title Case Heading</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Text begins as a new paragraph.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Title case capitalization** *(p. 167)*: Capitalize the first word of the title; the first word of the subtitle; the first word after a colon or end punctuation; any major words, including the second word of a hyphenated phrase (e.g., “Self-Report”); words four or more letters long. Do not capitalize conjunctions, articles, or prepositions less than four letters.
10. **Numbers (p. 178):** In general, express numbers zero through nine in words, and 10 or more through numerals. There are a few exceptions:

*When to use numerals (p. 178):* Numbers preceding units of measurement (e.g., a 5-mg dose, with 10.5 cm); numbers that represent statistical or mathematical functions, fractional or decimal quantities, percentages, ratios, and percentiles and quartiles (e.g., 3 times as many, a ratio of 16:1), the 5th percentile); numbers that represent time, dates, ages, scores and points on a scale, and sums of money (e.g., about 8 months, scored 4 on a 7-point scale, 2-year-olds, received $5).

*When to use words (p. 179):* Any number at the beginning of a sentence, title, or heading (e.g., Twelve students improved, and 12 students did not improve.) (avoid this by rewording the sentence if possible); common fractions (e.g., one fifth of the class, two-thirds majority); universally accepted usage (e.g., Twelve Apostles, Five Pillars of Islam).

11. **Bonus Features:**

*Elements of a student title page (p. 30):*

**Title in the Upper Half of the Page, Centered, Bold, Title Case Heading, Followed by Two Double-Spaced Returns**

Name(s) of Each Author

Institutional Affiliation (most likely the University)

Course Number and Name

Instructor Name

Assignment Due Date

*The running head (p. 37):* Running heads are only required for works submitted for publication, not for student papers (unless required by the professor or institution).

*Spacing after punctuation marks (p. 155):* Use one space after every kind of punctuation, except for internal periods in abbreviations (e.g., a.m.) and colons in ratios (1:4).