

Running head: APA IS EASY

APA Is Easy!

Insert Name Here

Salt Lake Community College

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Abstract

The abstract is an up-to 120-word summary of your paper. As you can see, the abstract paragraph is not indented. This is a change from the 4th Edition to the 5th Edition of the APA Manual.

Also, you may use numbers in the abstract, any number -- except at the beginning of a sentence.

If you have a number at the beginning of a sentence, try to rewrite the sentence. The abstract should be one paragraph and contain enough information about your paper or research study that it can stand alone. Often, when your paper is indexed in a database, the readers scan your abstract to see if they need to read the entire paper. This abstract has 120 words.

APA is Easy!

The American Psychological Association (APA) developed a style of writing that is really quite simple once you know the basics. This paper will discuss the basics you need to know about writing in the APA style by describing and demonstrating the various components you will be using in your nursing papers. Many nursing programs and nursing journals require this writing style. The components presented here include formatting, direct quotations, paraphrasing, and references. The last section of this paper will talk about writing style and how to keep the reader informed of what you are talking about. This paragraph is an example of an introductory paragraph. The first paragraph of the paper, or section of the paper, should introduce the reader to what is going to follow. Remember, you're writing the paper for the reader -- not for yourself!

Title Page

Items to be placed on the title page include the page number, page header, running head, and student identification. You will notice the page numbering begins on the title page. The page number is placed in the top right corner on the first line of type leaving a one-inch margin. A one-inch margin is the smallest you may use. The page header is a short title used on all pages throughout your manuscript. It is placed five spaces in front of the page number. The running head is a short title for the paper used in publication and should “be a maximum of 50 characters, counting letters, punctuation, and spaces between words” (APA, 2001, p. 12). The first line of type is the running head information and is placed on the left margin. Note the difference in how the upper and lower case letters are used in the running head. Student identification includes the title of your paper, your name, college, date the paper is due, and the nursing course number centered on the page.

Abstract

Your abstract will be on page two. Abstracts may not be required on all nursing papers. The purpose of the abstract is to inform the reader quickly of the contents. The abstract should be limited to about 120 words (APA, 2001, p. 13). The sentences in the abstract should be accurate, self-contained, concise, and specific. Use the active voice. An example of active voice is, “This paper describes a research study...” versus “This paper will describe a research study...”

First Page of Text

On page three you begin your paper. The title is centered on the first line of type. Remember to place the header in the same position as on the title page. If you are using a word processing program, this task can be completed for you when you enter the header. All lines of type in the entire manuscript are double-spaced. Bold type and italics for emphasis are not used in the body of a paper in APA style; these measures for emphasis should only be done in a heading. Remember to use the same title for the paper that you put on the title page.

Quotations and Citations

When you directly quote an author, you will need to cite the reference in the text of the paper. “This is done by using author’s last name, year of publication of the reference, and page number” (Clark, 2000, p. 2). If you are paraphrasing an author, including the page number is optional (Clark, 2000). When quoting two authors, you connect their last names with an ampersand (Clark & Brown, 1997). The first time you cite an article with three to five authors, you will reference them parenthetically as in this example (Clark, Brown, Comana, Williams, & Patton, 1997). After the first time you list the authors, you can then use this reference (Clark et al., 1997). When referring to a chapter in an edited book, cite the author(s) of the chapter in the text. See the reference list for the proper documentation (Morris & Parker, 1997). The names of

all authors referenced in the text of the manuscript should be listed on the reference page in alphabetical order. If you are citing an electronic reference, they often do not have page numbers. In this case, you will note the paragraph number like this (Clark, 1997, para 5), with the abbreviation “para” preceding the paragraph number.

Abbreviations and Numbers

When you are using words that will later be abbreviated, you must first spell out the word followed by the abbreviation in parentheses. Using abbreviations in papers with medical terminology can be particularly helpful to the reader. Also note the appropriate use of figures or words when expressing numbers. The patient is receiving 100 milligrams (mg) of Demerol. Later the patient will receive 50 mg of Demerol every four hours. The general rule about numbers is to “use figures to express numbers 10 and above and words to express numbers below 10” (APA, 2001, p. 122).

Spelling and Grammar

A most important point regarding the text of the paper is spelling and grammar. There should be no errors of spelling or grammar. A great paper can be ruined for the reader who finds mistakes are present. Using the spell-check on a word processing program is not enough to catch the errors. It can be extremely valuable to trade papers with another student, and proofread each other’s papers for spelling and grammatical errors. This will also enable a check of APA formatting.

Reference Page

The reference page is the last page of this paper. The title “References” is centered on the first line of type (without the quotation marks). References are listed in alphabetical order. Two articles by the same author are listed chronologically as seen on the reference page (Clark, 1996

& 1997). The following reference page will supply most of the reference styles you will need during your stay in this program. The format is called "hanging indent." This means that the first line of the reference is flush with the left margin. If a second line is needed, indent it five to seven spaces. Use the tab key for this.

Writing Style

This section will discuss your writing style for most nursing papers. Nursing students write in a technical manner. This really implies that we write about the facts and not about our opinions (most of the time). We use gender neutral language, no exaggerations or extreme language, no slang or euphemisms, and we present the "facts". All the information we learn, and that we add to our papers, must be cited or quoted.

Introductory paragraphs should be used at the beginning of your paper, and at each major section. Even if the introduction is one or two sentences, the reader will be able to keep on track better. Remember, you're writing for the reader (not yourself). Of course, each paper must be summarized or conclusions are drawn at the end. Make sure the "summary" is the last section of your written paper.

To write a good, well-organized paper, begin with a draft with the major headings. Then fill in the information you need to include for each major heading. By doing this, you will avoid redundant information and your paper will flow more easily. All sentences in your paper should contribute something to the end result. Avoid redundant sentences, complex or incomplete sentences, and bologna. Your teachers can see through most "fill", and can tell whether or not you know what you are writing about. Don't try to pull the wool over their eyes.

Plagiarism is defined by APA as claiming the words of another person or persons as your own (APA, 2001, p. 349). You must give credit where credit is due. Examples of when you need

to cite a reference in the text (and therefore, the reference page) include: any statistical information; facts for which you found through reading a particular book or article; direct quotes of another author; paraphrasing another author's words; definitions; and, ideas you learned by reading someone else's work. Some students do not recognize that faculty can tell when they are "borrowing" the words of an author. The penalty for plagiarism varies between institutions, but may include receiving a grade of zero for the paper or a failure for the entire course. Be careful when writing formal papers that you "give credit where credit is due."

Summary

APA style is not as difficult as it seems. The faculty recommends that students purchase a personal copy of the manual. By reviewing the major components and consulting the APA manual for the finer points, your nursing papers will look great and be easy to read. While this paper summarized some of the major components of APA style, it is not meant to replace the APA Manual.

References

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[*Note: please consult the APA Manual for questions about citing sources. Its tricky.]