Washtenaw Community College | THE WRITING CENTER

Writing Guide: **APA Documentation Style: The Basics**

Revised June 2020

This handout includes the latest guidelines from *The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, 7ᵗʰ edition (2020).

WHY DOCUMENT YOUR SOURCES?
1. To give credit to the sources you have borrowed from to make your paper stronger.
2. To show your credibility: readers can trust you because you care enough about your subject to do research on it to support your own ideas and opinions with the ideas and opinions of expert sources.
3. To let readers know where they can get further information about your topic.
4. To let readers look for themselves at your sources so they can draw their own conclusions.
5. To avoid *plagiarism* (sometimes called "literary theft"), a serious academic offense in which writers borrow words or ideas from a source and present them as if they were their own.

WHAT IS A SOURCE?
A source is any person, place, or thing from which you borrow information for your paper. Most commonly, it is an article from a journal, magazine, website, or database. It might also be a book, a *YouTube* video, a movie, a song, an illustration. . . . The list goes on.

Part 1: APA References Page

The APA References page, like the MLA Works Cited page, provides publishing information about all of the sources you have borrowed from in your paper.

Its Similarities to a Works Cited Page
- It is placed at the end of your paper.
- It is alphabetized and double-spaced.
- It uses "hanging" indents.

Its Differences from a Works Cited Page
- It is titled "References," not "Works Cited."
- After the full last names, it identifies only the authors' first and middle initials.
- Article and book titles are not placed inside quotation marks, and only the first letter of the first word, of proper nouns, and of the first word after a colon are capitalized.

Here is what a References page should look like:

References

AARP. (2015, February/March). Boost your bone health in your 50s. *AARP: The Magazine, 58*(2A), 24.

American Automobile Association. (2016, May/June). All in the family. *AAA Living*, 19-20.

Carey, B. (2019, March 22). Can we get better at forgetting? *The New York Times*.
        https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/22/health/memory-forgetting-psychology.html

Emerson, R. M., Fretz, R. T., & Shaw L .L. (2011). *Writing ethnographic field notes* (2nd ed.). University of Chicago Press.

Harrison, B. N. (2015, March 4). *The unified theory of Ophelia: On women, writing, and mental illness*.
        HuffPost.

        https://www.huffpost.com/entry/the-unified-theory-of-oph_n_6800830

Hartke, R. (2016, June). The Oedipus complex: A confrontation at the central cross-roads of psychoanalysis. *The*

        International Journal of Psychoanalysis, *97*(3), 893-913,
https://doi.org/10.1111/1745-8315.12561

Insane. (n.d.). In *Dictionary.com*. http://www.dictionary.com/browse/insane

Mak, W. W. S., Chong, E. S. K., & Wong, C. C. Y. (2014). Beyond attributions: Understanding public stigma of mental

        illness with the common sense model. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 84*(2),

        173-181. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/h0099373

Mental Health America. (n.d.). *Mind over pop culture: Hamlet*.
http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/blog/mind-over-

        pop-culture-hamlet

Ophelia complex. (2018, September 27). In *Wikipedia*. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ophelia_complex

Shakespeare, W. (1992). *The tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark* (B. A. Mowat & P. Werstine, Eds.).

        Washington Square Press. (Original work published 1603)

Spears, A. (n.d.). *Defeating depression*. Vocal. https://vocal.media/psyche/defeating-depression

Squires, B. (2017, October 20). What our obsession with tragic, beautiful, mentally ill women says about us. *Vice*.

https://broadly.vice.com/en_us/article/wjg8em/what-our-obsession-with-tragic-beautiful-mentally-ill-women-

says-about-us

United States Census Bureau. (n.d.). *Poverty*. U.S. Department of Commerce. https://www.census.gov/topics/income-

poverty/poverty.html

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. (n.d.). *What is mental health?*

https://www.mentalhealth.gov/basics/what-is-mental-health

Sample References Entries

BOOK

Basic Format

Author's Last Name, Author's First and Middle Initials. (Year of Publication). *Title of book*. Name of Publisher.

Examples

Emerson, R. M., Fretz, R. T., & Shaw L. L. (2011). *Writing ethnographic field notes* (2nd ed.). University of Chicago Press.

[Note: This book has three authors and an edition number.]

Shakespeare, W. (1992). *The tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark* (B. A. Mowat & P. Werstine, Eds.). Washington

Square Press. (Original work published in 1603)

[Note: This book has editors. Also, because the work is old, its original publication date is given, which is optional.]

JOURNAL ARTICLE

Basic Format

Author's Last Name, Author's First and Middle Initials. (Year, Month Day). Article title. *Journal Title, volume*

> *number*(issue number), pages. DOI or URL

Example

Mak, W. W. S., Chong, E. S. K., & Wong, C. C. Y. (2014). Beyond attributions: Understanding public stigma of mental

> illness with the common sense model. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry,* 84(2), 173-181.

> http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/h0099373

[Note: This source has multiple authors. Also, because it is a journal, it has volume and issue numbers. Indicate page numbers if they are available. If this were a print source, the entry would look the same, except there would be no DOI or URL.]

MAGAZINE OR NEWSPAPER ARTICLE

Basic Format

Author's Last Name, Author's First and Middle Initials. (Year, Month Day). Article title. *Magazine or Newspaper Title,*

> *volume number*(issue number), pages. URL

Examples

AARP. (2015, February/March). Boost your bone health in your 50s. *AARP: The Magazine, 58*(2A), 24.

[Note: This article has an organization as its author and is a print source.]

Carey, B. (2019, March 22). Can we get better at forgetting? *The New York Times*.

https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/22/health/memory-forgetting-psychology.html

PAGE ON A WEBSITE

Basic Format

Author's Last Name, Author's First and Middle Initials. (Year, Month Day). *Title of page*. Website Name. URL

Examples

Harrison, B. N. (2015, March 4). *The unified theory of Ophelia: On women, writing, and mental illness*. HuffPost.

https://www.huffpost.com/entry/the-unified-theory-of-oph_n_6800830

[Note: Citing pages on websites in APA style can be confusing. The seemingly smaller title, that of the page, is italicized while the seemingly larger title, that of the site, is not.]

Mental Health America. (n.d.). *Mind over pop culture: Hamlet*. http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/blog/mind-over-

pop-culture-hamlet

[Note: This source has an organization as author, and that organization is also the name of the site, so it is not repeated.]

WORK FROM A GOVERNMENT WEBSITE

Basic Format

Name of Government Agency. (Date). *Title*. Publisher [often a parent organization]. URL

Examples

United States Census Bureau. (n.d.). *Poverty*. U.S. Department of Commerce. https://www.census.gov/topics/income-

poverty/poverty.html

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. (n.d.). *What is mental health?*

https://www.mentalhealth.gov/basics/what-is-mental-health

[Note: These sources have no publication dates, so the abbreviation "n.d." is used. If there is a larger "parent" agency that is not the author, indicate it as a publisher or sponsor.]

ENTRY FROM AN ONLINE DICTIONARY OR ENCYCLOPEDIA

Basic Format

Author's Last Name, Author's First and Middle Initials. (Year). Term or word. In *Name of Dictionary or*

Encyclopedia. URL [or publisher if a print source]

Examples

Insane. (n.d.). In *Dictionary.com*. http://www.dictionary.com/browse/insane

Ophelia complex. (2018, September 27). In *Wikipedia*. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ophelia_complex

[Note: If there is no author, place the term or word you have looked up in the author position.]

Part 2: APA Quoting and Paraphrasing

The two main ways to borrow information from a source and include it in your paper are quoting and paraphrasing.
- A **quotation** is an exact borrowing of words from a source, and those borrowed words are put in quotation marks.
- A **paraphrase** is the borrowing of an idea for a source, and that borrowed idea is written in the student's own words. To do this, careful writers change both the wording and the sentence structure of what the author has written originally. A paraphrase is not put in quotation marks.
  [Note: A paraphrase is not a summary of an entire work; it is merely the borrowing of an idea or two from a work.]

APA In-Text Citation Style

APA requires an in-text citation style that uses a minimum of clutter to match the quotations and paraphrases in your paper with the publication information about the sources of them in your References page.

Here is the basic formula:

Phrase of attribution that mentions author's last name and perhaps some additional information

+

(Year of publication in parentheses after author's name)

+

"Exact words borrowed enclosed in quotation marks" or Paraphrase

+

(page number, if available, where the quoted words or the idea you've paraphrased appear).

Here are some examples of effective quoting and paraphrasing:

Quotations with Author in Phrase of Attribution

According to Squires (2017), "The hysteria diagnosis fell out of favor in the 20th century, in part due to the activism of feminists and mental health advocates."

[Note: This source has no page numbers.]

The American Automobile Association (2016) discussed "the portion of travelers who planned to take a multigenerational family vacation next year" (p. 20).

[Note: This source has an organization as its author. Also, notice that APA verbs of attribution are written in past tense ("discussed") or present perfect ("has discussed") and that this source has a page number.]

Paraphrases with Author in Parentheses

The romanticized, mentally ill woman remains a common figure in media despite recent activism (Squires, 2017).

[Note: This source has no page numbers.]

One source indicated that 36% of vacationers reported that they would travel accompanied by more than one generation of their families (American Automobile Association, 2016, p. 20).

[Note: Although APA style does not strictly require it, providing a page number for a paraphrase is probably a good idea.]

Long Quotation (More Than 40 Words)

The U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (n.d.) has provided a helpful definition of mental health:

> Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices. Mental health is important at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood.

[Note: Place (n.d.) *after the author to indicate that the source has no publication date. Also, long quotations are indented, and quotation marks are unnecessary.]*

Sample Student Paper—APA Style, 7ᵗʰ ed.

1

Feeling Is Believing

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ENG 111, Sec 13

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May 29, 2020

Feeling Is Believing

An old adage advises that seeing is believing; however, with invisible disabilities, perhaps the more accurate wisdom is "feeling is believing." Invisible disabilities are, as their name implies, disabilities that people cannot see. Most people can recognize a person in a wheelchair or someone who has severely impaired eyesight, for example. On the other hand, though, it can be very difficult to identify as disabled a person with a closed-head injury or ADHD. Nevertheless, even though people with these conditions appear "normal," they might require special assistance or accommodations. Indeed, people with invisible disabilities deserve society's understanding and extra support so theycan live the healthy, happy, productive lives that are the basis of human dignity.

Of course, there are people who believe that invisible disabilities do not exist. Some would say that those afflicted with them are simply hypochondriacs, that "it's all in their heads." Others might believe, as Reed (2015) mentioned, that, instead of being disabled, such people are lazy, unintelligent, or "slow." Still others might claim, regarding people who suffer from ADHD, for example, that lack of parental or self-discipline, rather than a medical condition, is to blame. No doubt the controversy surrounding the treatment of ADHD with Ritalin and Adderall has hindered society's acceptance of the condition as a legitimate disease, as Reynolds (2015) pointed out (p. 20).

Despite these arguments, little doubt remains that invisible disabilities are real. Reed (2015) pointed out that "invisible disabilities are hidden conditions that can cause difficulty with learning, thinking patterns, and interacting with others," and lists brain injuries, Asperger's syndrome, learning disabilities, and ADHD among the conditions. In addition, Reed stressed the "biological" nature of invisible disabilities, citing in particular ADHD and mental illness (and its most common invisible manifestation, depression). It could be that society is still in the dark ages of its understanding of invisible disabilities. People who are afflicted with them are shunned, made fun of, and discriminated against. Nevertheless, continued sensitive and perceptive study as well as increased media coverage will shed light on these

replantation was deemed a success by her doctors, Lajiness still asked, "When a distressing event disables our bodies, can we ever feel the same again physically?" No doubt the same question can be asked about ever feeling the same again psychologically. Perhaps our society should remember that some people who appear to be healed or even seemingly unharmed are living with painful scars.

Given that invisible disabilities are both very real and very painful, society should take steps to relieve the suffering of and level the socioeconomic playing field for those people with invisible disabilities. How can this be done? First, and most broadly, people must use their imagination to try to understand what their fellow humans are feeling. Second, more study is needed of what Reynolds (2015) called "the underlying psychological and environmental causes of our illnesses" (p. 20). Third, new laws should be enacted, and existing ones enforced, to protect the rights of people with invisible disabilities and provide them with fair and reasonable accommodations in both public spaces and the workplace. These steps will lead society to greater equity and humanity.

Ultimately, with invisible disabilities, feeling is believing. Because people probably cannot see ADHD or a closed-head injury or Asperger's syndrome or severe depression in others, they must try to open their hearts and minds to feel what it must be like to live with one of these conditions. At least as importantly, people, and society at large in its manifestations of leaders and laws, should act on these feelings by exhibiting more humane behavior and enacting more equitable laws. These are the right ways to feel and act. This is the light that will illuminate the darkness.

References

Lajiness, B. (2015, May 30). Typical summer day. *Generations E-Gazette*. http://genegaz.com

Reed, S. (2015, April 24). Invisible disabilities. *Science Sense*. http://www.scisens.org