APA STYLE

Concise Guide, 7th Edition
Student Paper Checklist

Use this checklist while writing your paper to make sure it is consistent with seventh edition APA Style. This checklist corresponds to the writing and formatting guidelines described in full in the *Concise Guide to APA Style* (7th ed.).

Refer to the following chapters for specific information:

- paper elements and format in Chapter 1
- writing style and grammar in Chapter 2
- bias-free language in Chapter 3
- punctuation, lists, and italics in Chapter 4
- spelling, capitalization, and abbreviations in Chapter 5
- numbers and statistics in Chapter 6
- tables and figures in Chapter 7
- in-text citations in Chapter 8
- reference list and reference examples in Chapters 9 and 10

Information and resources are also available on the APA Style website. If you have questions about specific assignment guidelines or what to include in your APA Style paper, please check with your assigning instructor or institution. If you have questions about formatting your thesis or dissertation, check your institution's guidelines or consult your advisor.

Student Title Page

☐ **Format (Section 1.6):** Double-space the title page. Center each element on its own line. Do not use italics, underlining, or different font sizes.

☐ **Title (Section 1.7):** Concise, engaging summary of the paper and its main topic and/or variables. Write the title in title case: Capitalize the first letter of the title, the subtitle, and any major words of four letters or more (plus linking verbs "Is," "Are," and "Be"). Double-space, center, and bold the title in the upper half of the title page (three or four lines down from the top margin).

☐ **Author Name (Section 1.8):** Full name of each author of the paper. The preferred format is first name, middle initial(s), and last name (e.g., Maribel S. Quantez). Center the name two double-spaced lines after the title (i.e., one blank line between the title and author name).

☐ **Author Affiliation (Section 1.9):** Name of the department of the course to which the paper is being submitted and name of the college or university. Use the format: Department, College (e.g., Department of History, Williams College). Do not include the school's location unless part of its name. Center the affiliation one double-spaced line after the author name(s).

☐ **Course Number and Name (Section 1.6):** Number and name of course to which the paper is being submitted. Use the format shown on course materials (e.g., syllabus). Write the number and name on the same line. Center the number and name one double-spaced line after the affiliation.

☐ *Instructor Name (Section 1.6):* Name of the instructor of the course to which the paper is being submitted. Use the title and name shown on course materials (e.g., syllabus). Center the name one double-spaced line after the course number and name.

☐ *Due Date (Section 1.6):* Due date of the assignment. Include the month, day, and year in the format used in your country (e.g., May 4, 2020, or 4 May 2020). Spell out the month and write the full year. Center the date one double-spaced line after the instructor name.

☐ *Page Header (Section 1.17):* Page number 1. Flush right in the header (upper right corner).

Paper Format

☐ *Page Header (Section 1.17):* Page number. Appears flush right in the header (upper right corner) of all pages. Insert page numbers using the automatic page-numbering function of your word-processing program.

☐ *Font and Font Size (Section 1.18):* Use the same font and font size throughout your paper (exception: figure images require a sans serif font and can use various font sizes). Recommended serif and sans serif fonts:

- 11-point Calibri
- 11-point Arial
- 10-point Lucida Sans Unicode
- 12-point Times New Roman
- 11-point Georgia
- 10-point Computer Modern

☐ *Line Spacing (Section 1.20):* Double-space the entire paper. Do not add extra lines before or after headings or between paragraphs.

☐ *Margins (Section 1.21):* Margins are 1 in. on all sides (top, bottom, left, and right).

☐ *Paragraph Alignment and Indentation (Sections 1.22–1.23):* Left-align the text (do not use full justification). Indent the first line of each paragraph 0.5 in. (one tab key).

☐ *Paper Length (Section 1.24):* Follow the assignment guidelines. If not instructed

otherwise, use the word-count function of your word-processing program to determine paper length, counting every word in the paper—but do not count words in figure images.

Paper Organization

☐ *Introduction (Section 1.11):* Repeat the paper title on the first line of the first page of text, before the opening paragraph. Center and bold the title. Do not include an "Introduction" heading. Start the first line of the text one double-spaced line after the title. Use Level 2 headings for subsections in the introduction.

☐ *Text (Section 1.11):* Use headings as needed to organize the text. Use Level 1 headings for main sections after the introduction (e.g., Method, Results, Findings, Discussion).

☐ *Page Order (Section 1.16):* Start each main paper section on a new page. Arrange pages in the following order:

- title page
- abstract (if needed)
- text
- references
- footnotes (if needed)
- tables (if needed)
- figures (if needed)
- appendices (if needed)

☐ *Headings (Section 1.26):* Start each new section with a heading. Write all headings in title case and bold. Also italicize Level 3 and 5 headings. Follow seventh edition guidelines for the alignment of headings, as described on the Headings page.

☐ *Section Labels (Section 1.27):* Bold and center labels, including "Abstract" and "References."

Writing Style

☐ *Continuity (Sections 2.1–2.3):* Check for continuity in words, concepts, and thematic development across the paper. Explain relationships between ideas clearly. Present ideas in a logical order. Use clear transitions to smoothly connect sentences, paragraphs, and ideas.

- [ ] **Conciseness (Sections 2.4–2.6):** Choose words and phrases carefully and deliberately. Eliminate wordiness, redundancy, evasiveness, circumlocution, overuse of the passive voice, and clumsy prose. Do not use jargon, contractions, or colloquialisms. Avoid overusing both short, simple sentences and long, involved sentences; instead, use varied sentence lengths. Avoid both single-sentence paragraphs and paragraphs longer than one double-spaced page.

- [ ] **Clarity (Sections 2.7–2.11):** Use clear and precise language. Use a professional tone and professional language. Do not use jargon, contractions, colloquialisms, or creative literary devices. Check for anthropomorphistic language (i.e., attributing human actions to inanimate objects or nonhuman animals). Make logical comparisons using clear word choice and sentence structure.

Grammar

- [ ] **Verb Tense (Section 2.12):** Use verb tenses consistently in the same and adjacent paragraphs. Use appropriate verb tenses for specific paper sections, as described on the Verb Tense page.

- [ ] **Voice and Mood (Sections 2.13–2.14):** Use the active voice instead of the passive voice as much as possible. Use the passive voice only when focusing on the recipient of an action rather than on who performed the action.

- [ ] **Subject and Verb Agreement (Section 2.15):** Use verbs that agree in number (i.e., singular or plural) with their subjects.

- [ ] **Pronouns (Sections 2.16–2.21):** Use first-person pronouns to describe your work and your personal reactions (e.g., "I examined," "I agreed with"), including your work with coauthors (e.g., "We conducted"). Use the singular "they" when referring to a person who uses it as their self-identified pronoun or to a person whose gender is unknown or irrelevant. Use other pronouns correctly.

Bias-Free Language (Chapter 5)

- [ ] Eliminate biased language from your writing. Avoid perpetuating prejudicial beliefs or demeaning attitudes. Instead, use bias-free language to describe all people and their personal characteristics with inclusivity and respect, including

  - age
  - disability
  - gender
  - participation in research
  - racial and ethnic identity
  - sexual orientation
  - socioeconomic status
  - intersectionality

  For guidelines on writing about people without bias and examples of bias-free language, see the Bias-Free Language pages.

Punctuation, Italics, and Lists

- [ ] **Punctuation (Sections 4.1–4.6, 4.8–4.10):** Use punctuation marks correctly (periods, commas, semicolons, colons, dashes, parentheses, brackets, slashes), including in reference list entries. Use varied punctuation marks in your paper. Avoid having multiple punctuation marks in the same sentence; instead, split the sentence into multiple shorter sentences. Use one space after a period or other punctuation mark at the end of a sentence. Use a serial comma before the final element in lists of three or more items. Use parentheses to set off in-text citations.

- [ ] **Quotation Marks (Sections 4.7):** Use quotation marks correctly. Place commas and periods inside closing quotation marks; place other punctuation marks (e.g., colons, semicolons, ellipses) outside closing quotation marks. Use quotation marks around direct quotations.

- [ ] **Italics (Sections 4.15–4.16):** Use italics correctly to draw attention to text. Use italics for the first use of key terms or phrases accompanied by a definition. Do not use italics for emphasis.

☐ ***Lists (Sections 4.11–4.14):*** Ensure items in lists are parallel. Use commas to separate items in simple lists. Use semicolons to separate items when any items in the list already contain commas.

For more information, including how to create lettered, numbered, and bulleted lists, see the Lists pages.

Spelling, Capitalization, and Abbreviations

☐ ***Spelling and Hyphenation (Sections 5.1–5.2):*** Spelling and hyphenation should match the *Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary* or the *APA Dictionary of Psychology*. Write words with prefixes and suffixes without a hyphen.

For more information, including the spelling of common technology terms, see the Spelling and Hyphenation pages.

☐ ***Capitalization (Sections 5.3–5.11):*** Use title case and sentence case capitalization correctly. Capitalize proper nouns, including names of racial and ethnic groups. Do not capitalize names of diseases, disorders, therapies, treatments, theories, concepts, hypotheses, principles, models, and statistical procedures, unless personal names appear within these terms.

For more information, including capitalization to use for specific paper elements, see the Capitalization pages.

☐ ***Abbreviations (Section 5.12–5.18):*** Use abbreviations sparingly and usually when they are familiar to readers, save considerable space, and appear at least three times in the paper. Define abbreviations, including abbreviations for group authors, on first use. Do not use periods in abbreviations. Use Latin abbreviations only in parentheses, and use the full Latin term in the text. Do not define abbreviations listed as terms in the dictionary (e.g., AIDS, IQ) and abbreviations for units of measurement, time, Latin terms, and common statistical terms and symbols.

For more information, including abbreviations that do not need to be defined, see the Abbreviations pages.

Numbers and Statistics

☐ ***Numbers (Sections 6.1–6.8):*** Use words to express numbers zero through nine in the text. Use numerals to express numbers 10 and above in the text. In all cases, use numerals in statistical or mathematical functions, with units of measurement, and for fractions, decimals, ratios, percentages and percentiles, times, dates, ages, scores and points on a scale, sums of money, and numbers in a series (e.g., Year 1, Grade 11, Chapter 2, Level 13, Table 4).

For more information and exceptions, see the Numbers pages.

☐ ***Statistics (Sections 6.9–6.12):*** Include enough information to allow readers to fully understand any analyses conducted. Space mathematical copy the same as words, with spaces between signs. Use statistical terms in narrative text: "the means were," not "the Ms were." Use statistical symbols or abbreviations with mathematical operators: "($M = 6.62$)," not "(mean = 6.62)."

Tables and Figures

☐ ***General Guidelines (Sections 7.1–7.7):*** Include tables and/or figures if required for your paper or assignment. When possible, use a standard, or canonical, form for a table or figure. Do not use shading or other decorative flourishes.

In the text, refer to each table or figure by its number. Explain what to look for in that table or figure by calling out the table or figure in the text (e.g., "Table 1 lists…" "As shown in Figure 1…").

Either embed each table or figure in the text after it is first mentioned or place it on a separate page after the reference list. If embedded, place the table or figure at either the top or the bottom of the page with an extra double-spaced line between the table or the figure and any text.

☐ ***Tables (Sections 7.8–7.21):*** Use the tables feature of your word-processing program to create tables. Number tables in the order they are mentioned in the text. Include borders only at the top and the bottom of the table, beneath

column headings, and above column spanners. Do not use vertical borders or borders around every cell in the table.

All tables include four basic components: number, title, column headings, and body. Write the table number above the table title and body and in bold. Write the table title one double-spaced line below the table number and in italic title case. Label all columns. Center column headings, and capitalize them in sentence case. Include notes beneath the table if needed to describe the contents. Start each type of note (general, specific, and probability) on its own line, and double-space it.

See sample tables on the APA Style website.

☐ *Figures (Sections 7.22–7.32):* Use a program appropriate for creating figures (e.g., Word, Excel, Photoshop, Inkscape, SPSS). Number figures in the order they are mentioned in the text. Within figures, check that images are clear, lines are smooth and sharp, and font is legible and simple. Provide units of measurement. Clearly label or explain axes and other figure elements.

All figures include three basic components: number, title, and image. Write the figure number above the figure title and image and in bold. Write the figure title one double-spaced line below the figure number and in italic title case. Write text in the figure image in a sans serif font between 8 and 14 points. Include a figure legend if needed to explain any symbols in the image. Position the legend within the borders of the figure, and capitalize it in title case. Include notes beneath the figure if needed to describe the contents. Start each type of note (general, specific, and probability) on its own line, and double-space it.

See sample figures on the APA Style website.

In-Text Citations (Chapter 8)

☐ Cite only works you read and ideas you incorporated into your paper.

☐ Include all sources cited in the text in the reference list (exception: personal communications are cited in the text only).

☐ Make sure the spelling of author names and the publication dates in the in-text citations match those of the corresponding reference list entries.

☐ Paraphrase sources in your own words whenever possible.

For guidance on how to paraphrase sources, see the Paraphrasing pages.

☐ Cite appropriately to avoid plagiarism, but do not repeat the same citation in every sentence when the source and topic do not change.

For guidance on appropriate citation, see the Appropriate Level of Citation page.

☐ Write author–date citations according to seventh edition guidelines: Include the author (or title if no author) and year. For paraphrases, it is optional to include a specific page number(s), paragraph number(s), or other location (e.g., section name) if the source work being paraphrased is long or complex.

  ○ *One author:* Use the author surname in all in-text citations.

  ○ *Two authors:* Use both author surnames in all in-text citations.

  ○ *Three or more authors:* Use only the first author surname and then "et al." in all in-text citations.

For more information, including exceptions to basic in-text citation styles, see the Basic Principles of Citation pages.

☐ Use either the narrative or the parenthetical citation format for in-text citations.

  ○ *Parenthetical citation:* Place the author name and publication year in parentheses.

  ○ *Narrative citation:* Incorporate the author name into the text as part of the sentence and then follow with the year in parentheses.

☐ For works with two authors,

  ○ use an ampersand (&) in parenthetical in-text citations: (Guirrez & Castillo, 2020)

  ○ use the word "and" in narrative in-text citations: Guirrez and Castillo (2020)

For more information, see the Parenthetical and Narrative Citations page.

☐ When citing multiple works in parentheses, place the citations in alphabetical order. When multiple parenthetical citations have the same author(s), order the years chronologically and separate them with commas (e.g., Coutlee, 2019, 2020). When the authors are different, separate the parenthetical citations with semicolons (e.g., Coutlee, 2019, 2020; Ngwane, 2020; Oishi, 2019).

For more examples, see the Citation of Multiple Works page.

☐ Limit the use of direct quotations. Include the author (or title if no author), year, and specific part of the work (page number(s), paragraph number(s), section name) in the citation.

○ **Short quotation (less than 40 words):** Use double quotation marks around the quotation.

○ **Block quotation (40 words or more):** Use the block format: Indent the entire quotation 0.5 in. from the left margin and double-space it.

For more information, see the Quotations page.

References (Chapters 9 and 10)

☐ Start the reference list on a new page after the text.

☐ Center and bold the section label "References" at the top of the page.

☐ Double-space the entire reference list, both within and between entries.

☐ Use a hanging indent for each reference entry: First line of the reference is flush left, and subsequent lines are indented by 0.5 in. Apply the hanging indent using the paragraph-formatting function of your word-processing program.

☐ All reference entries should have a corresponding in-text citation. The beginning of the reference entry (usually the first author's surname) and year should match the corresponding in-text citation.

☐ List references in alphabetical order according to seventh edition guidelines.

☐ Create the appropriate reference entry for the type of work being cited, as described in Chapter 9 and shown in Chapter 10 and on the Reference Examples pages.

☐ Do not create reference entries for personal communications and secondary sources.

For a list of works to include and exclude from a reference list, see the Works Included page.

☐ Each reference entry includes four elements: author, date, title, and source.

See exceptions for references with missing information on the Missing Information page.

☐ Use punctuation to group information and separate reference elements.

For more information, see the Basic Principles of References page.

☐ List authors in the same order as the original source. Use initials for authors' first and middle names. Put a comma after the surname and a period and a space after each initial (e.g., Lewis, C. S.). Put a comma after each author (even two authors). Use an ampersand before the last author.

For more information, including what to do when a work has more than 20 authors, see the Reference Elements page.

☐ Capitalize titles in sentence case: Capitalize only the first word of the title, the subtitle, and any proper nouns. Format titles according to the type of work.

○ **Works that stand alone:** Italicize the title (e.g., authored books, reports, data sets, dissertations and theses, films, TV series, albums, podcasts, social media, websites).

○ **Works that are part of a greater whole:** Do not italicize or use quotation marks around the title (e.g., periodical articles, edited book chapters, TV and podcast episodes, songs). Write the title of the greater whole (e.g., journal or edited book) in italics in the source element.

For more information, including when to include bracketed descriptions for titles, see the References Elements page.

☐ Do not include database information for works retrieved from academic research databases. Do include database information for works retrieved from databases with original, proprietary content or works of limited circulation (e.g., UpToDate).

For more information, see the [Database Information](#) page.

☐ Include a DOI or URL for any work that has one. If there is no DOI, include a URL if the work is retrieved online (but not from a database). Present DOIs and URLs as hyperlinks (beginning with "http:" or "https:"). Copy and paste DOIs and URLs directly from your web browser. Do not write "Retrieved from" or "Accessed from" before a DOI or URL. Do not add a period after a DOI or URL.

For more information, see the [DOIs and URLs](#) page.