APA 7 Job Aid

Basic Stylistic Guidelines

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Writing   Academic Writing   APA

This job aid provides a brief guide to common APA 7 rules for academic writing along with tips on how to avoid common mistakes.

Document Formatting

Table 1

Document Setup Guidelines

Element	Formatting
Margins	1" on all sides
Line Spacing	Double-space (without extra line breaks between paragraphs and headings)
Paragraph Indentation	Indent the first line of every paragraph 0.5" (use the indentation feature rather than manual tabs or spaces)
Paragraph Alignment	Left-align

Font Selection

Fonts should use one of the group/size combinations in Table 2. Generally, manuscript text uses a serif font and tabular text uses a sans-serif font.

Table 2

Font Styles

Style Group	Options
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

Headings

Table 3

Heading Levels

Level	Formatting
1	** Centered, Bold, Title Case **
2	**Flush Left, Bold, Title Case**
3	***Flush Left, Bold, Italic, Title Case***
4	**Indented with Paragraph, Bold, Title Case, Ending with Period.**
5	***Indented with Paragraph, Bold, Italic, Title Case, Ending with Period.***

Headings are best utilized by using your word processor's built-in style system. Here is a simple Google Docs template with the styles preset so that all you need to do is highlight your heading and apply the appropriate style to apply the proper formatting. Using styles is also preferable to manually formatting each heading because it allows the word processor to identify headings for the purpose of constructing outlines and tables of contents.

Citations

Table 4

Parenthetical Citation Examples

Author Count	Parenthetical Citation	Narrative Citation
One	(Kimmons, 2020)	Kimmons (2020) found that...
Two	(Kimmons & Johnstun, 2019)	Kimmons and Johnstun (2019) argued that...
Three or more	(Kimmons et al., 2020)	Kimmons et al. (2020) suggested that...

Parenthetical citations are used within paragraphs to cite the source of a claim. An example of this would be the following:

> Current trends in educational technology reveal that exploring new technologies may be prioritized over addressing persistent educational problems (Kimmons, 2020).

Narrative citations are similar to parenthetical citations but are mainly used if the name of the author is important for adding gravity to the claim or for making clear that the claim is that of the cited author and not your own. An example of this would be the following:

Kimmons and Johnstun (2019) argue that the multihyphenate approach to navigating paradigms in educational technology is superior to alternatives.

Narrative citations referencing an article's title should place the title in quotes and apply sentence capitalization as follows:

Kimmons and Johnston explained in "Navigating paradigms in educational technology" (2019) that paradigms are deep and poorly understood.

Narrative citations referencing the title of a book or journal should italicize the title and apply title case capitalization as follows:

Kimmons et al.'s (2019) article in *The International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning* showed that scraping school websites nationwide to glean valuable information was a possibility.

References

References are included at the end of your paper to provide full details for any parenthetical or narrative citations that were included. References should be formatted with a hanging indent of 0.5".

Journal Article

Surname, F. M., & Surname, F. M. (2020). Journal article title goes here. *Journal Title Goes Here, 1*(2). https://doi.org/10.10.10/10.10.10

In this example, the number 1 is the journal volume number and the number 2 is the journal issue number. If there is no issue number, exclude the number and the parentheses.

If a DOI is available, always include it at the end of the reference as a complete URL.

Book

Surname, F. M. (2020). *Book title goes here*. Publisher Name.

Please note that as of APA 7 no publisher location is required. This is a change from APA 6.

Book Chapter from Edited Volume

AuthorSurname, F. M. (2020). Chapter title goes here. In F. M. EditorSurname & F. M. EditorSurname (Eds.), *Book title* (pp. 23-67). Publisher Name.

Here's an example of the chapter you're currently reading:

Kimmons, R. (2018). APA 7 job aid: Basic stylistic guidelines. In R. Kimmons & R. E. West (Eds.), *Rapid Academic Writing*. EdTech Books. https://edtechbooks.org/rapidwriting/apa_formatting_job_aid

Authors

Table 5

Examples of Formatted Author Names

Author Count	Example Reference (Journal Article)
1	Kimmons, R. (2020). Current trends in educational technology research and practice. *TechTrends, 64*(6).
2	Kimmons, R., & Johnstun, K. (2019). Navigating paradigms in educational technology. *TechTrends, 63*(5), 631-641.
3-20	Kimmons, R., Graham, C., & West, R. (2020). The PICRAT model for technology integration in teacher preparation. *Contemporary Issues in Technology and Teacher Education, 20*(1).
21+	One, O., Two, T., Three, T., Four, F., Five, F., Six, S., Seven, S., Eight, E., Nine, N., Ten, T., Eleven, E., Twelve, T., Thirteen, T., Fourteen, F., Fifteen, F., Sixteen, S., Seventeen, S., Eighteen, E., Nineteen, N., ... Last, N. (2020). The PICRAT model for technology integration in teacher preparation. *Contemporary Issues in Technology and Teacher Education, 20*(1).

Indents

When indentations are necessary, use 0.5" indentations, and use your word processor's built-in indentation tools. Do not use tabs or spaces in place of indentations, as this will create formatting issues later on. Especially do not artificially break a citation with returns to indent subsequent lines.

In Google Docs, you can adjust indents in the ruler bar or by going to *Format > Align & Indent > Indentation Options*.

Page Breaks

If you need to move content down to a new page, do not hit enter/return a bunch of times to create empty paragraphs. Rather, use your word processor's page break feature. In Google Docs you can do this with ctrl+enter/cmd+enter or by clicking *Insert > Break > Page break*. This prevents formatting issues later, such as when you add more content above the break point that might move the content after the break around in unexpected ways.

Lists

Lists can be helpful for grouping content or ideas together. Some general principles to follow when using lists include the following:

- Use unordered (bulleted) or alphabetic (a, b, c) lists instead of ordered/numeric lists (1, 2, 3) unless there is a reason for the order (such as in the steps for following a recipe or process).
- Use parallel structure in list items, such as starting each item with the same form of speech (like a verb or gerund).

In-text Lists

In-text lists can be useful for clarifying breaks between ideas in long pieces of text. Here is an example:

Open education can (a) reduce costs to students, (b) improve teacher flexibility to revise content, and (c) encourage a culture of continuous improvement.

Block Lists

Block lists are useful for lists with larger amounts of content. When creating lists, use your word processor's built-in list feature rather than manually typing the letters, numbers, or bullets. This will help prevent formatting problems and allow you to more easily adjust list content or list item order.

You can introduce a list with a sentence followed by a colon if the sentence is a complete sentence.

> Elements of good design include the following: `correct`
> - Knowing your user story;
> - Focusing on user needs;
> - Iteratively improving minimum viable products;
>
> - ...

> Elements of good design include: `incorrect`
>
> - ...

Quotations

Direct quotations should generally be used sparingly (relying instead on paraphrasing), but they are sometimes useful for preserving the exact wording used by a cited author or to ensure that you are not misrepresenting an author's claim (especially when you intend to argue against it).

In-text Quotations

When including a direct quotation, you should encapsulate it in quotation marks and include the page number (p. XX) or paragraph number (para. XX) of the quote within the citation. An example of this would be the following:

> The authors argued that paradigmatic plurality "may be a necessary reality of addressing complex educational problems" (Kimmons & Johnstun, 2019, p. 632).

Block Quotations

Lengthy quotations of 40 words or more should not be encapsulated in quotation marks, however, and should represent their own block of text with a 0.5" indentation on the left. Include the citation after the final punctuation mark in the blockquote itself unless you have previously referenced the citation in an introductory sentence. An example of this would be the following:

> The authors argued the following:
>
> > Though the hard sciences may be more amenable to a single-paradigm model (e.g., the Earth and the Sun cannot both be the center of the universe), social sciences and endeavors like education will exhibit greater plurality as professionals harbor fundamental disagreements about morality, people, and the social world. Either way, we have not, as a field, adequately grappled with this plurality nor articulated intentional ways for professionals to navigate it. (Kimmons & Johnstun, 2019, p. 632)

Commas

Commas are perhaps the most misused form of punctuation. Do not use them to merely show when you would take a breath or just because a sentence is getting long. Rather, you should generally only use them in the following situations provided in Table 6, and common examples of comma misuse are provided in Table 7.

Table 6

Correct Comma Usage

Situation	Example(s)	Note(s)
Between Seriated or Listed Elements	The student was sad, angry, and frustrated. `correct` I collected the data, analyzed the results, and reported on my findings. `correct`	Use the Oxford rule Use parallel structure
After an Introductory Phrase	First, I collected the data. `correct` After collecting the data, I ran the results. `correct`	
To Set Off Nonessential Clauses	Problem-based learning, which is now commonly used, involves giving students a problem to solve. `correct`	Denoted by "which" or "such as" but not "that"
To Separate Independent Clauses	We collected the data, and we analyzed the results. `correct` We found one result, but the other team found another. `correct`	Must use a conjunction, such as "and," "or," or "but"

In lists, also be sure to use Oxford commas, which means placing a comma prior to the last conjunction. This is important because some items in a list might also use conjunctions. Consider the following incorrect example:

My favorite sandwiches are ham and cheese, grilled cheese and peanut butter and jelly. `incorrect`

Does this mean that I like "grilled cheese and peanut butter" sandwiches and also "jelly" sandwiches or "grilled cheese" sandwiches and also "peanut butter and jelly" sandwiches? Rewriting with an Oxford comma makes it clear that "grilled cheese" is its own sandwich and so is "peanut butter and jelly," as follows:

My favorite sandwiches are ham and cheese, grilled cheese, and peanut butter and jelly. `correct`

Table 7

Incorrect Comma Usage

Situation	Example(s)
Before an Essential Clause	Games, that depict violence, are bad for children. `incorrect` Games that depict violence are bad for children. `correct`
Between Two Parts of a Compound Predicate	We collected the data, and analyzed the results. `incorrect` We collected the data and analyzed the results. `correct`

Semicolons

Semicolons may be used to join two independent clauses into a single compound sentence without using a conjunction, as in this example:

We shouldn't teach students what to think; we should teach them how to think. `correct`

Colons

Colons may be used between an independent introductory clause and a final phrase or clause of illustration, as in this example:

> The evidence is clear: Tutoring improves student test performance. `correct`

Do not use a colon after an incomplete sentence, as in this bad example:

> According to the evidence: Tutoring improves student test performance. `incorrect`

If the text following the colon is a complete sentence, it should be capitalized.

Em Dash

An em dash may be used to set off an element that adds to or digresses from the main clause, as in this example:

> Evidence shows that tutoring—direct, one-on-one communication with a more-knowledgeable other—improves student learning. `correct`

Do not use spaces around the em dash, and do not merely use a dash (-) or two dashes (--) in place of an em dash.

On a Mac, you can use option+shift+dash(-) to get an em dash. On Windows, you can use windows+period(.) to bring up the symbols panel. You can also copy the em dash by copying it from here: —

Hyphens

Hyphens are used to join two words together into a compound word. They are generally used in situations where the meaning of the sentence might be unclear without them, as in this example:

> High-achieving students from middle-class families are overrepresented at charter schools. `correct`

In this example, placing the first hyphen helps clarify that "high" refers to "achieving," while the second clarifies that "middle" applies to "class." One rule of thumb is that if a compound word is being used as an adjective modifying a noun (e.g., "high-achieving" is modifying "students"), then it should be hyphenated.

Tables

Coming soon.

Figures

Coming soon.

Latin Abbreviations

e.g.,

The abbreviation "e.g." is short for the Latin phrase "exempli gratia," translated as "for example." You may use it followed by a comma when providing a single example or a non-exhaustive list of examples, as in this example:

> Teachers use many technologies (e.g., Google Docs, interactive whiteboards, and 3D printers) in their classrooms. `correct`

i.e.,

The abbreviation "i.e." is short for the Latin phrase "id est," translated as "that is." You may use it followed by a comma to restate, define, or clarify something you have already said, as in this example:

> Teachers now use interactive whiteboards (i.e., electronic whiteboards with features that allow for tactile interaction) to perform a variety of common tasks. `correct`

cf.

The abbreviation "cf." is short for the Latin term "confer/conferatur," translated as "compare." You may use it to point your reader to another idea or source related to your statement, as in this example:

> Thompson (2019) found that tutoring had little effect on student achievement, unlike previous studies (cf. Adams, 2011). `correct`

etc.

Generally avoid using "etc." or "et cetera," and use "e.g." instead. Definitely do not use "e.g." and "etc." in the same list, because if you do, "e.g." means that you think it's important to provide some items in a list, but "etc." means that you don't think it's important to provide additional items in the list, which is unnecessary, because you're only providing the needed items to begin with.

> Teachers use many technologies (e.g., Google Docs, interactive whiteboards, 3D printers, etc.) in their classrooms. `incorrect`

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