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Guidelines for Writing Student Papers
in Fifth Edition
American Psychological Association Style
Joyce M. Buck
Weber State University

Abstract

An abstract is a brief, comprehensive summary of the contents of the article. It can be the most important paragraph in an article. It needs to be dense with information, readable, well organized, concise, and self-contained. Begin the abstract on a new page, use the manuscript page header and the page number 2. Type the abstract as a single paragraph in block format; do not indent, do not exceed 120 words. Type all numbers, except those that begin a sentence, as digits (Publication Manual, 2001, p. 298).

Guidelines for Writing Student Papers
in Fifth Edition

American Psychological Association Style

This document is a brief guide to the essential elements for writing student papers in the American Psychological Association (APA) style as published in the fifth edition of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association in the summer of 2001. Adaptations of the publication guidelines are appropriate in student papers, which are not prepared for publication, and should be specified in writing by individual faculty. The following guidelines are appropriate for students in the Child and Family Studies Department at Weber State University.

Begin the manuscript text on a new page with the manuscript page header and the page number 3. The title of the paper is centered at the top of the page, using uppercase and lowercase letters. Double space the entire manuscript.

Typing the Manuscript

Indent each new paragraph 5 to 7 spaces. Use a tab. Use 12 point Times Roman or Courier typeface. On a standard typewriter, pica or elite type is acceptable. Use standard-sized, heavy white bond paper. All pages of one manuscript must be the same size.

Margins

Leave a 1 inch margin at the top, bottom, right, and left of each page.

Page Numbers

Number all pages, except those for artwork, in Arabic numerals in the upper right-hand corner. Leave 5 spaces between the manuscript page header and the number.

Manuscript Page Headers

Identify each page with the first two or three words from the title in the upper right-hand corner 5 spaces to the left of the page number. On a word processor, use the automatic functions to print headers and page numbers on the manuscript. Do not type them repeatedly in your word-processing file.

Headings

Carefully consider the hierarchy of the ideas you wish to present, and use headings to convey the sequence and levels of importance. Headings function as an outline to reveal a manuscript's organization. For most student papers eight to ten pages in length, two or three levels of heading are sufficient.

Levels of headings. Articles in APA journals use from one to five levels of headings (the level is identified by the numbers on the right):

CENTERED UPPERCASE HEADING (5)

Centered Uppercase and Lowercase Heading (1)

Centered, Italicized, Uppercase and Lowercase Heading (2)

Flush Left, Italicized, Uppercase and Lowercase Side Heading (3)

Indented, italicized, lowercase paragraph heading ending with a period. (4)

Selecting the levels of headings. For a short article, one level of heading may be sufficient. In such cases, use only centered uppercase and lowercase headings (level 1). When two levels of headings are needed, use level 1 and level 3 headings. If three levels of headings are needed, use level 1, level 3 and level 4. The number of heading levels a paper requires may be determined by using heading levels to correspond with the draft outline levels. (In the outline, Roman numerals I, II, and III represent one level; capital letters A, B, and C represent a second level; Arabic numbers 1, 2, and 3 represent a third level.)

Introduction

The body of a paper opens with an introduction presenting the specific problem or theme and summarizing findings or conclusions. Because the introduction is clearly identified by its position in the article, it is not labeled.

Spacing and Punctuation

Space only once after all punctuation: commas, colons, and semicolons; after punctuation marks at the end of sentences; after periods that separate parts of reference citations; and after the periods of initials in personal names. EXCEPTION: Do not space after internal periods in abbreviations (e.g., a.m., i.e., U.S.) or around colons in ratios.

Quotations

"Short quotations of fewer than 40 words should be incorporated into the text and enclosed by double quotation marks"

(Publication Manual, 2001, p. 117). Direct quotes require the page number be cited.

Display quotations of 40 or more words in a double-spaced block of typewritten lines with no quotation marks. Do not single-space. Indent five to seven spaces from the left margin without the usual opening paragraph indent. If the quotation is more than one paragraph, indent the first line of second and additional paragraphs five to seven spaces or 1/2 inch from the new margin.

When quoting, always provide the author, year, and page number and include a complete reference on the References page.

Reference Citations in Text

Document throughout the text by citing author and date of the work researched. This style of citation identifies the source for readers and allows them to locate the source in an alphabetical reference list at the end of the paper. For a direct quotation in the text, give the author, year, and page number in parentheses; when paraphrasing, the page number is not required, give the author's last name and the year in parentheses. Some examples:

(a) In his work, Jones (1994) found... (b) In 1994 Jones published a study documenting... (c) Studies show that children suffer from divorce (Jones, 1994). (d) "When parents divorce, their child feels responsible" (Jones, 1994, p. 201).

When citing electronic sources that do not provide page numbers identify the quoted material with a heading and a

paragraph number. Use the ¶ symbol or type the abbreviation para.

References

Sources cited are listed on a References page. Start the reference list on a new page titled References. Double-space all entries. The first line of each entry is set flush left and subsequent lines are indented (hanging indent). List entries in alphabetical order by author's last name. References cited in the text must appear in the reference list and visa versa.

Note: personal communications do not appear on a References page, but are cited in the text. Give the initials as well as the surname of the communicator and provide as exact a date as possible. For example: H. K. Lawrence (personal communication, August 10, 2001) stated...

Proofing the Manuscript

Final preparations of the manuscript include proofreading after typing, correcting any errors and making changes before submission. Be sure the pages are in the correct order; review an APA style checklist, and type a cover letter (or cover sheet) if required.

Order of Pages

The manuscript begins with the title page, numbered as page 1, followed by the Abstract, page 2 (include the manuscript page header with the page number). The text begins on page 3 with the full title of the article centered and typed in uppercase and lowercase letters. Do not label an introduction. Number all pages consecutively (except for figures, which are placed at the end of

the manuscript). References follow the text on a separate page titled References.

Cover Page

The APA style format does not require a cover page, however some instructors do. The cover page may include course number, paper title or assignment, student's name, and date.

Checklist

Be sure (a) to double space all lines; (b) to space only once after all punctuation; (c) the title page does not include a course number or a date; (d) sources cited are listed on a separate page titled References; (e) to note that hanging indent is used on the References page; (f) author's first names are not included in reference citations, use only first initials and last names; (g) book titles and journal article titles are cited with only the first word and proper nouns capitalized; (h) a capital letter follows a colon in a title.

A checklist for manuscript submission to a publisher is included in the 2001 *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, (5th ed.), on pages 379-383.

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