

APA Citation Basics

6th Edition

This guide will provide information about:

- Understanding the fundamentals of APA citations, including:
 - Capitalization rules
 - Author formatting
 - Organizing a reference list
- APA citation examples of source types, including:
 - Popular and scholarly sources
 - Audiovisual media
- Tips and examples for citing online sources
- Creating parenthetical in-text citations, including:
 - Formatting parenthetical citations and block quotes
 - Citing sources with multiple authors and corporate authors

Be sure to check out our visual guides, which provide detailed examples for print, online and audiovisual source types.



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APA Citation Fundamentals

Generally, APA citations require some or all of the following bibliographic data:

- Author
- Title
- Publication year
- Publication month and date
- Publisher
- City and state of publication
- Page or paragraph numbers

Contributor Information and Titles

The main contributors to the source, normally the authors, are placed first in the citation. All author names are formatted by last name, followed by the first and middle (if available) initial of the author. If there is more than one author, arrange them in the same order as found in the source. (For more information, see the APA's Publication Manual, 6th Edition, 6.27.)

One author	Last, F. M.
Two authors	Last, F. M., & Last, F. M.
Three to seven authors	Last, F. M., Last, F. M., & Last, F. M.
Seven or more authors	Last, F. M., Last, F. M., Last, F. M., Last, F. M., Last, F. M., Last, F. M., . . . Last, F. M.

*For sources with 7+ authors: list the first six authors, insert ellipses, then insert the last author listed in the source.

Sometimes there are other contributors to a work, such as an editor. If there is an editor but no author, place the editor's name in the author's position of the citation and add "(Ed.)" or "(Eds.)" after the last editor's name.

Editor, no author	Editor, F. M., & Editor, F. M. (Eds.). (Year). <i>Title of work</i> . Location: Publisher.
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For works with an author *and* an editor – such as a story in an edited anthology – place the editor's name(s), uninverted, before the source's title. Note: The name (s) should be preceded by "In" and followed by the source title.

Author and editor	Author, F. M. (Year). Title of chapter. In F. M. Editor (Ed.), <i>Title of work</i> (pp. xx-xx). Location: Publisher.
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Do not include author credentials (e.g., Ph.D, M.D.) in your citations.

Capitalization Rules

Capitalization in APA style varies based on the source you are citing.

Article or chapter titles:

- Capitalize the first word in the title and subtitle, and any proper nouns.

Journal, newspaper or magazine titles (periodical works):

- Include the entire title in upper case and lowercase letters (also known as title case).
- Italicize the title.

Book or report titles (nonperiodical works):

- Capitalize the first word in the title and subtitle, and any proper nouns.
- Italicize the title.
- If the work includes an edition or volume number, include it in parentheses after the title.

Organizing Your Bibliography

Arrange citation entries in a reference list alphabetically by author's last name.

Chan, D.
Gover, E.
Kalita, R.
Parekh, R.
Selleck, A. C.

Multiple works by different authors with the same last name should be alphabetized by the author's first initial:

Kessman, J.
Kessman, R.

If a work is authored by a group or corporation, alphabetize it by the first main word in the group's name.

Alberto, A.
Association of National Advertisers.
Covert, K.
Ikemoto, W.

APA Examples of Popular Sources

Book

APA Author, F. M. (Year of publication). *Book title: Subtitle*.
City, State: Publisher.

Ex: Green, J. (2012). *The fault in our stars*. New York, NY:
Dutton Books.

Chapter/Anthology

APA Author, F. M. (Year of publication). Title of chapter. In F.
M. Editor (Ed.), *Title of book* (pp. xx-xx). Location:
Publisher.

Ex: Melville, H. (1989). Hawthorne and his mosses. In N.
Baym (Ed.), *The Norton anthology of American
literature* (pp. 5-25). New York, NY: W. W. Norton.

Magazine

APA Author, F. M. (Year, month of publication). Article title.
Magazine title, Volume(Issue), pp-pp.

Ex: Winerman, L. (2013, June). Breaking free from
addiction. *Monitor on psychology*, 44(6), 30-34.

Newspaper

APA Author, F. M. (Year, month date of publication). Article
title. *Newspaper title*, pp. xx-xx.

Ex: Bowman, L. (1990, March 7). Bills target Lake Erie
mussels. *The Pittsburgh Press*, pp. A4.

Journal (online)

APA Author, F. M. (Publication year). Article title. *Journal title*, *Volume*(Issue), pp. xx-xx. doi:xx.xxxxx OR Retrieved from journal URL

Ex: Citation:
Trier, J. (2007). "Cool" engagements with YouTube: Part 2. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 50(7), pp.598-603. doi:10.1598/JAAL.50.7.8

*Database information and retrieval date are not required in APA journal article citations.

Journal (print)

APA Author, F. M. (Publication year). Article title. *Periodical title*, *Volume*(Issue), pp. xx-xx.

Ex: Lin, M. G., Hoffman, E. S., & Borengasser, C. (2013). Is social media too social for class? A case study of Twitter use. *Tech Trends*, 57(2), pp. 39-45.

Website

APA Author, F. M. (Year, month date of publication). Article title. Retrieved from URL

Ex: Limer, E. (2013, October 1). Heck yes! The first free wireless plan is finally here. Retrieved from <http://gizmodo.com/heck-yes-the-first-free-wireless-plan-is-finally-here-1429566597>

TV/Radio Show

APA Writer, F. M. (Writer), & Director, F. M. (Director). (Year of airing). Episode title [Television series episode]. In F. M. Producer (Executive producer), *TV series name*. City, State of original channel: Channel.

Ex: Dick, L. (Writer), & Yaitanes, G. (Director). (2009). Simple explanation [Television series episode]. In P. Attanasio (Executive producer), *House, M.D.* Los Angeles, CA: Fox Broadcasting Company.

Film

- APA Producer, F. M. (Producer), & Director, F. M. (Director). (Release year). *Title of motion picture* [Motion picture]. Country of origin: Studio.
- Ex: Stiller, B. (Producer) & Ayoade, R. (Director). (2011). *Submarine* [Motion picture]. United Kingdom: Film4 Productions.

Audio recording

- APA Songwriter, F. M. (Copyright year). Song title [Recorded by F. M. Last (performer's name)]. On *Album title* [Medium of recording]. City, State of label: Record label name.
- Ex: Turner, A. (2013). Do I wanna know? [Recorded by Arctic Monkeys]. On *AM* [MP3 file]. London, England: Domino Records.
- *If the songwriter and performer's name are the same, leave out the bracketed data following the song title.

Online lecture

- APA Author, F. M. (Publication year). *Name or title of lecture* [file format]. Retrieved from URL
- Ex: Jacobson, T. E. & Mackey, T. (2013). *What's in a name?: Information literacy, metaliteracy, or transliteracy* [PowerPoint slides]. Retrieved from <http://www.slideshare.net/tmackey/acrl-2013>

Thesis/dissertation

- APA Author, F. M. (Publication year). *Title of dissertation/thesis* (Doctoral dissertation **or** Master's thesis). Retrieved from Name of database. (Accession **or** Order No.)
- Ex: Knight, K. A. (2011). *Media epidemics: Viral structures in literature and new media* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from MLA International Bibliography database. (Accession No. 2013420395)

APA Web Rules

APA provides citation formats for many different source types found on the web, such as online newspapers, encyclopedias, and blogs.

Here are some tips to keep in mind when citing sources you find from the web:

All sources

- Only include retrieval date information if the source information is likely to change (i.e., wikis).
 - Format it as follows: Retrieved Month Date, Year, from <http://xxxxx>
- If a URL runs across multiple lines of text in the citation, break the URL off before most punctuation (e.g., periods, forward slashes) – *except* <http://>.

Journal/newspaper articles

- Include the DOI (digital object identifier) in the citation.
 - Format it as follows: doi:xxxxx
- If no DOI is provided, include the URL of the *homepage* for the journal that published the article.
 - Format it as follows: Retrieved from <http://www.xxxxx>
- Do not include database information.

**Note: Purdue OWL guides include database information, but the APA Publication Manual (6th ed.) does not. Check with your instructor if database and/or retrieval information is required.*

General websites

- If the online source is not easily identified as an online newspaper, journal, book, blog, film, encyclopedia, recording, etc., cite it as a general website.
 - Ex.: Websites like TechCrunch and Gizmodo regularly publish articles, but are considered neither a blog, nor an online newspaper. These would be general websites.
- Only include retrieval date information if the source is likely to change over time (i.e., wikis).
 - Format it as follows: Retrieved Month Date, Year, from <http://xxxxx>



Examples of citations for a/an:

General website article with an author

Limer, E. (2013, October 1). Heck yes! The first free wireless plan is finally here. Retrieved from <http://gizmodo.com/heck-yes-the-first-free-wireless-plan-is-finally-here-1429566597>

General website article with no author

India: Country specific information. (2013, October 3). Retrieved 2013, October 23 from http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1139.html

Online newspaper article

Kaplan, K. (2013, October 22). Flu shots may reduce risk of heart attacks, strokes and even death. *Los Angeles Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.latimes.com>

Journal article (found in a database or elsewhere online)

Trier, J. (2007). "Cool" engagements with YouTube: Part 2. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 50(7), pp.598-603. doi:10.1598/JAAL.50.7.8

Online encyclopedia article

Musser, G. (2013). Hedgehog. In *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Retrieved from <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/259273/hedgehog>

Blog post

Silver, N. (2013, July 15). Senate control in 2014 increasingly looks like a tossup [Web log post]. Retrieved from <http://fivethirtyeight.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/07/15/senate-control-in-2014-increasingly-looks-like-a-tossup/>

APA Parenthetical Citations

Why we use parenthetical/in-text citations

Researchers place brief parenthetical descriptions to acknowledge which parts of their paper reference particular sources. Generally, you want to provide the last name of the author, the year of publication and page numbers (if citing a direct quote other specific information).

If such information is already given in the body of the sentence, exclude it from the parenthetical citation. In-text citations typically appear at the end of the sentence, between the last word and a period.

Parenthetical citation without author's name in the text:

The point was argued extensively (Belafonte, 2008).

Parenthetical citation when author is mentioned in the text:

Belafonte argues this point (2008).

Parenthetical citations with multiple authors

Works with two authors:

- Include both names, separated by an ampersand (&).

Rallying to restore sanity was a revolutionary undertaking (Stewart & Colbert, 2010).

Works with three to five authors:

- Include all names in the first reference, separated by commas and then an ampersand (&).
- For all subsequent references, include only the first author, followed by "et al." and publication year if it is the first citation in a paragraph.

First in-text parenthetical citation:

Rallying to restore sanity was a revolutionary undertaking (Stewart, Colbert, & Oliver, 2010).

All subsequent in-text parenthetical citations:

The event resulted in thousands of participants flocking to the National Mall in support of the cause (Stewart et al. 2010).

Works with six or more authors:

- Include only the last name of the first author, followed by “et al.” and publication year in all parenthetical citations.

The study did not come to any definitive conclusions (Rothschild et al., 2013).

Citing sources without an author

If a work has no author, include the first few words of the bibliography entry (in many cases, the title) and the year.

- Use double quotations around the titles of articles, chapters, websites

Statistics confirm that the trend is rising (“New Data,” 2013).

- Italicize the titles of periodicals, books, brochures or reports

The report includes some bleak results (*Information Illiteracy in Academia*, 2009).

*See Table 6.1 in the APA Publication Manual (6th ed.) for more information on formatting parenthetical citations.

Citing part of a work

When citing a specific part of a work, provide the relevant page or section identifier, such as chapters, tables or equations. Direct quotes should always have page numbers.

One of the most memorable quotes is when he says, “You are going to live a good and long life filled with great and terrible moments that you cannot even imagine yet!” to Augustus (Green, 2012, p. 272).

Continued...



If the source does not include page numbers (such as online sources), you can reference specific parts of the work by referencing the:

- Paragraph number (if given) with the abbreviation “para. xx”

He quickly learned that pandas were not considered good pets (Chan, 2011, para. 3).

- Section or heading and the number of the paragraph in which the information is found
 - For lengthy headings, use the first few words of the title in the parenthetical citation.

The sample population included both red and giant pandas (Chan, 2011, Methodology section, para. 1).

Citing groups or corporate authors

Corporations, government agencies and associations can be considered the author of a source when no specific author is given.

Write out the entire group’s name in all parenthetical citations:

Facial transplants pose significant risk to the autoimmune system (American Medical Association, 2011, p. 12-34).

If the group’s name is lengthy, you may abbreviate the group name (if it is a commonly understood abbreviation) in the second and all subsequent parenthetical citations.

The organization established the National Inventory of the Collateral Consequences of Conviction last year (NIJ, 2013, p. 25)

Citing classical works

For classical sources, such as ancient Greek works, cite the year of the translation or version used. Precede this information with “trans.” or “version,” respectively.

(Homer, trans. 1998).

Continued...

When citing specific content from these types of sources, include the paragraph/line numbers that are included in classical works. This information is consistent across versions/editions, and is the easiest way to locate direct quotes from classical works.

The Bible extols the virtues of love; “Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud” (1 Cor. 13:4 New International Version).

Remember, you do not need to create formal citations in your reference list for classical works.

Citing and formatting block quotes

When directly quoting information from sources in your writing, you may need to format it differently depending on how many words are used.

If a quote runs on for more than 40 words:

- Start the direct quotation on a new line
- Indent the text roughly half an inch from the left margin
 - If there are multiple paragraphs in the quotation, indent them an extra half inch
- Remove any quotation marks
- Double-space the text
- Add the parenthetical citation after the final sentence

...here is some text from the book that clearly defines early on in the novel:

He smiled understandingly-much more than understandingly. It was one of those rare smiles with a quality of eternal reassurance in it, that you may come across four or five times in life. It faced--or seemed to face--the whole eternal world for an instant, and then concentrated on you with an irresistible prejudice in your favor. (Fitzgerald, 2012, p. 44)

