WRITING CENTER APA STYLE GUIDE

APA style can be found in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* located in the library’s reference section. Please contact us with any questions or to set up an appointment: writingcenter@itascacc.edu or 218-322-2454. We are located in the library.

General Essay Guidelines

- Type your paper on a computer and print it out on standard, white 8.5 x 11-inch paper.
- Double-space the text of your paper, and use a legible font (e.g. Times New Roman). Whatever font you choose, APA recommends that the regular and italics type styles contrast enough that they are recognizable one from another. The font size should be 12 pt.
- Leave only one space after periods or other punctuation marks (unless otherwise instructed by your instructor).
- Set the margins of your document to 1 inch on all sides (*Microsoft Word* default).
- **IMPORTANT:** Include a page header (also known as the "running head") at the top of every page. To create a page header/running head, insert page numbers flush right. Then type "TITLE OF YOUR PAPER" in the header flush left using all capital letters. The running head is a shortened version of your paper’s title and cannot exceed 50 characters including spacing and punctuation. It will look like this:

Formatting the Four Major Sections

Your essay should include four major sections: the Title Page, Abstract, Main Body, and References.
Title Page

The title page should contain:

- the **title** of the paper, in upper and lowercase letters centered in the upper half of the page. It may take up more than one line.
- the **author's name**: first name, middle initial(s), and last name
- the **institutional affiliation**, e.g. Itasca Community College
- **IMPORTANT**: Include the page header (described above) flush left with the page number flush right at the top of the page. Please note that on the title page, your page header/running head should look like this:

  Running head: TITLE OF YOUR PAPER

Pages after the title page should have a running head that looks like this (you do not include the phrase *Running head*):

  TITLE OF YOUR PAPER

Abstract

- Begin a new page. Your abstract page should already include the **page header** (described above). On the first line of the abstract page, center the word “Abstract” (no bold, formatting, italics, underlining, or quotation marks).
- Beginning with the next line, write a concise summary of the key points of your research. (Do not indent.) Your abstract should contain at least your research topic, research questions, participants, methods, results, data analysis, and conclusions. You may also include possible implications of your research and future work you see connected with your findings.
- Your abstract should be a single paragraph double-spaced. Your abstract should be between 150 and 250 words.
- You may also want to list keywords from your paper in your abstract. To do this, indent as you would if you were starting a new paragraph, type *Keywords*: (italicized), and then list your keywords.

Here is an example:
CHARACTERISTICS OF MANURE FROM FEEDLOT CATTLE

Abstract

Open lot cattle production systems present unique challenges for nutrient planning processes. Previous estimates of quantities and characteristics of harvested manure from this type of facility are based upon data from the early 1970s. In addition, harvested manure is impacted by weather, feeding program, season, and pen management decisions. The objectives of this study are to characterize under commercial conditions for open lot beef systems: 1) harvested manure

MAIN BODY

- Begin a new page. This should be page 3 and should already include the page header (described above).
- Type and center the title at the top of the page.
- Type the text double-spaced with all sections following each other without a break. However, each new section will have a heading. Headings are formatted like this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>APA Headings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Level 1 headings divide main sections, level 2 headings make divisions within sections, level 3 headings indicate changes within those divisions, and so on.

- **IMPORTANT**: identify the sources you use with in-text citations (see following).

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**CITATION BASICS**

Citation allows the reader to find the source of quoted material in the reference page.

- **Whenever you use a source, provide in parenthesis**: The author’s last name and the year of publication. Here are some examples,

  According to Jones (1998), “Students often had difficulty using APA style, especially when it was their first time” (p. 199).

  Or

  She stated, ”Students often had difficulty using APA style“ (Jones, 1998, p. 199), but she did not offer an explanation as to why.

- The key to APA citation is the citation comes immediately after the quoted material. If the author’s name is not mentioned, as in the second example, the name and date of publication must be included in the citation.

- When the parenthetical citation includes two or more works, order them in the same way they appear in the reference list—the author’s name, the year of publication—separated by a semi-colon, i.e. (Kachru, 2005; Smith, 2008)

- When citing a work with two authors, use “and” in between authors’ name in the signal phrase yet “&” between their names in parenthesis. For example,
According to feminist researchers Raitt and Tate (1997), “It is no longer true to claim that women's responses to the war have been ignored” (p. 2). Some feminists researchers question that “women's responses to the war have been ignored” (Raitt & Tate, 1997, p. 2).

- When citing a work of unknown author, use the source’s full title in the signal phrase and cite the first word of the title followed by the year of publication in parenthesis. Put titles of articles and chapters in quotation marks; italicize titles of books and reports. For Example,

According to “Indiana Joins Federal Accountability System” (2008), ... Or, (“Indiana,” 2008)

REFERENCE PAGE

APA is a complex system of citation. When compiling the reference list, the strategy below might be useful:

1. Identify the type of source: Is it a book? A journal article? A webpage?
2. Find a sample of citing this type of source in sample References page
3. “Mirror” the sample

Formatting the Reference Page

- Center the title (References) at the top of the page.
- Double-space reference entries.
- Flush left the first line of the entry and indent each subsequent line.
- Order entries alphabetically by author’s surnames. Author’s names should be inverted (last name first followed by initials: “Smith, J.Q.”)
- **Note:** in your references list, only the first word of a title will be capitalized: *Writing new media*

FOR EXAMPLE

References


COMMON CONCERNS

- If writing an essay that uses very few numbers, you may write out numbers that consist of less than three words, e.g. one, twenty-three, etc.
- Numbers used with abbreviations or symbols (e.g. 6 p.m., 10%) must use numerals.
- To form the possessive of a singular proper noun ending in s, add an apostrophe and an s, e.g. Venus’s beauty, Dickens’s reputation.
- To form the possessive of a plural noun ending in s, add only an apostrophe, e.g. firefighters’ trucks.
- Use a hyphen with all compound adjectives that precede a noun, except when the compound adjective begins with an adverb ending in –ly or with too, very, or much, e.g. thoughtfully presented thesis, too hasty judgment, our much loved teacher.
- Do not use a hyphen in a pair of nouns in which the first noun modifies the second, e.g. gender appropriate, father figure.
- In general, do not use hyphens after prefixes (e.g., anti, co, multi, non, over, post, pre, re, semi, sub, un, under), e.g. antiwar, overpay, semiretired, etc.
- But use hyphens with the prefixes ex- (meaning former), self-, and all-.
- The first word of a quotation does not have to be capitalized if the quotation is used as an integral part of the sentence structure, e.g.

  Shelley thought poets “the unacknowledged legislators of the world.”

  He claimed he could provide “hundreds of examples [of court decisions] to illustrate the historical tension between church and state.”
• Quoted material is usually preceded by a colon if the quotation is formally introduced and by a comma or no punctuation if the quotation is an integral part of the sentence structure.
• If a quotation runs more than four lines, set it off from the text by beginning a new line, indenting one inch from the left margin, and typing it double-spaced.
• Italicize the names of books, plays, poems published as books, pamphlets, periodicals (newspapers, magazines, and journals), Web sites, online databases, films, television and radio broadcasts, compact discs, musical recordings, dance performances, operas and other long musical compositions, works of visual art, ships, aircraft, and spacecraft.
• In order to use a dash, type two hyphens, with no space before, between, or after, Microsoft Word should convert the too hyphens into a dash—like this.
• Periods are placed inside a parenthetical if it is a complete sentence, i.e. The computer was missing (perhaps forever). (Because “perhaps forever” is not a complete sentence, the period would be outside the parentheses.)
• Use a comma before a coordinating conjunction (and, but, for, nor, or, so, or yet) joining independent clauses in a sentence, e.g. Congress passed the bill, and the president signed it into law.