

APA Writing Guide and Paper Requirements

The following is a list of guidelines and suggestions which should help students in the research process in the program. The process of researching and presenting findings is a foundation of our academic discipline and these fundamental skills and abilities are expected of students holding academic degrees.

- All papers must conform to American Psychological Association (A.P.A.) Writing Style. All students are required to use this writing manual style. Currently, the department uses the following style manual:

American Psychological Association. (2010). *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (6th.ed.)*. Washington, DC: author

- All papers submitted for course work may be submitted to various electronic *plagiarism evaluation* software. Papers with text representing over 35% citations are considered plagiarism, whether cited or not, and could lead to students failing the course.
- Students must use 12 point and Times-New Roman font.
- Standard 1 inch margins are required on both sides. Double space all pages. Use a ragged (unjustified) paragraph.
- Do not over-space or add clip art or unnecessary graphic images
- Professional and refereed journals are required in all assignments. Students are provided with several avenues of availability in the West Virginia State University online library (see <http://library.wvstateu.edu/>).
- Newspaper articles or News magazines do not count as scholarly journals.
- All papers must meet the minimum guidelines for paper length and required references. See Following Table:

Minimum Guideline Requirements by Year

Course Level	Minimum Page Requirements	Minimum Total References	Scholarly-Refereed Journals	Secondary Sources	Other
500 Level	10-15	15	10	2-3	2-3
400 Level	8-12	10	5	1-3	1-3
300 Level	8-10	8	3	1-3	1-3
200 Level	5-8	5	2	1-2	1-2
100 Level	5-8	3-5	1-2	1-2	1-2
Note* Minimum guidelines represent expected work, i.e. C.					

Before beginning your paper, Students should complete the *Basics of APA Style Tutorial* found at (<http://www.apastyle.org/learn/>). It is recommended students complete this tutorial at the beginning of each course.

All students are required to have access to the American Psychological Association (A.P.A.) Publication manual. The A.P.A. writing style is the only style accepted. Any other writing style or failure to comply with A.P.A. standards will result in an F (0 points) for this assignment. The following table illustrates helpful sections in the Sixth Edition.

Sixth Edition APA Quick Reference	
Section/Page	Topic
Sec 2. Figure 2.1/41-53	A sample paper
Sec 2.01-2.03/23-24	Title page
Sec. 204/25	Abstract
Sec. 2.05/27	Introduction
Sec. 2.08/35	Discussion
Sec. 2.11/37	References
Sec. 6.	Uses of Quotations in Text
Sec. 6 Table 6.1/177	Reference Citations in Text
Sec. 7	Reference Page (various types of works)

Paper Requirements

Use the following headings in your paper. It is best to view the sample paper first found on pages 41-53 (Sec. 2 Figure 2.1).

Title Page: Correctly numbered, running head, title (8-12 words), name of author, University affiliation. Most students find difficulty with the page numbering system, so pay attention to the running head/page numbering system and note that the title page is considered page one.

Abstract: Must be on a single page. Specify the problem under investigation (Problem Statement and Purpose Statement), the findings and conclusions. In short, the abstract should stand alone and summarize the entire paper. The abstract should be about 100 -120 words long. Do not put citations in this section.

Introduction: Here, students will start a new page, Instead of writing the word *Introduction* for this section, copy and paste the title here; the word *introduction* is not used in A.P.A. style, even though this is considered your introductory section. In this section, discuss the problem or topic under investigation (problem statement) and the purpose or goal of your paper. In some courses you will be asked to include a literature review (under a subheading), which at minimum, addresses all cited professional and scholarly journal articles. Use the Author/Date in-text citation method as required in APA. In short, tell me what your paper is about.

Method: [if applicable, only in experiment papers]. The Method Section describes in detail how the study was conducted and enables your readers to evaluate the appropriateness of your methods and the reliability and validity of your results. It also permits experienced investigators to replicate the study if they desire. Subheadings include participants (subjects), the apparatus (or materials), and procedure.

Results: [if applicable, only in experiment papers].The Results Section summarizes the data collected and the statistical or data analytic treatment used. Report the data in sufficient detail to justify the conclusions. Do Not discuss the implications of the results in this section.

Discussion: Here is where students discuss the research problem and their contribution or purpose of the paper. The Discussion section should be the main body of the entire paper. In short, tell me what you researched. Continue to use the Author/Date in-text citation method as required in APA., especially if you reference other author's work or ideas to make or support your argument. Use both direct quotes and paraphrases. Use subheadings of your choice to logically arrange your discussion. This section should be about 2/3 of the entire paper. Do not start a new page for next section.

Conclusion: This section is similar to the introduction, but here students summarize what they have said. (Tell me what you told me). Here, summarize both your problem statement and purpose statement in addition to your overall findings or ideas. Students may also make suggestions for future research or predictions for possible new dilemmas, etc. However, since this is a summary of the discussion section, do not discuss or introduce new ideas in this section if they are better served in the discussion section. Again, do not start a new page.

Reference: Here students will start a new page. This is not a *bibliography* or *work cited* page; these words are not used in APA. Students must use proper APA citations, and authors are listed in alphabetical order, not chronological order. Notice how the first names or titles of authors are not used, only initials. Students must meet the minimum required sources. All cited references must be mentioned in text, i.e., don't add references you didn't mention or discuss in the written portion of your paper. All sources cited in text must be on the reference page. This is known as in-text/reference page agreement. All references must not be more than seven years old unless it is a classic or original work.

Appendix: If required, it must be referenced in text [see Appendix] and does not count toward your page number requirements.

Overall: Avoid slang. Have another person proofread your papers before submission or read them aloud to yourself. Acronyms are fine if introduced first and once in text. For example, The Federal Bureau of Investigation (F.B.I.) reported... The F.B.I. is the single-most collection agency of statistical data. Use proper grammar and politically correct words and phrases.

Final Thoughts: Writing a research paper may at first appear cumbersome and boring. However, as you write this paper and further papers, you will find that it becomes more enjoyable and the process itself is quite a learning experience. The more you write, the more your writing skills will develop. Research and presentation is a necessary skill and a trademark of a scholar. But appreciate; writing is not only a *skill*, but it is an *art* as well. Students are allowed to express opinions and please enjoy the craft of word-smithing. Demonstrate your ability or skill by following these guidelines, but view your work as scholarly self-expression.