Mid-Continent University’s APA Style Guide

This style guide was developed to assist Mid-Continent University (MCU) faculty and students to adhere to the basics of APA formatting within their written assignments. It is not intended as an exhaustive compilation of APA style and formatting, but rather a convenient checklist of the most common formatting standards. When in doubt, the APA Manual, 6th ed. is the definitive authority on APA style.

At times the professor may ask for additional information to be included in an APA formatted paper. Students should adhere to the APA format and the additions required by the professor.

1. Formatting in APA style

   **Typeface** – (see APA Manual, 2009, p. 228) Typeface should be Times New Roman with a 12-point font size.

   **Margins** – (see APA Manual, 2009, p. 229) Leave uniform margins of 1 inch at the top, bottom, left, and right of every page. Most computers are not set for this margin requirement. Students must manually adjust the margins to fit the specific APA format.

   **Title Page** – (see APA Manual, 2009, p. 41) Information on the Title Page should include the title of the paper, the name of the author, the name of the university, and the course name and number. This information should be centered, horizontally and vertically on the Title Page. A Running head is not required except for Psychology students. **All Psychology students** are required to use the Running head as the final page of this document shows. At times a professor may require additional information to be added to the title page. Students must adhere to the APA format and the professor’s requirement for additional information.

   **Spacing** – (see APA Manual, 2009, p. 229) Academic papers are always double-spaced with one double-space between paragraphs.

   **Page Numbers** – (see APA Manual, 2009, p. 230) Pages should be numbered consecutively beginning with the Title Page. The page numbers should be placed in the upper right hand corner of the page as a header.
2. **Body of the paper**

**Introduction** – (see APA Manual, 2009, p. 27) The introductory paragraph should not have a heading labeling it “Introduction.” It should introduce the topic(s) and preview what is to follow in the body (main text) of the paper. The preview should be a short overview of what the author plans to cover in the body (main text) of the paper.

**Body (main text) of the paper** – (for Graduate Students ONLY) Level One Headings (see APA Manual, 2009, p. 62) should be used to identify main topics and Level Two Headings should be used to identify sub-topics. A Level One Heading is a centered, boldface, uppercase and lowercase heading. A Level Two Heading is a flush left, boldface, uppercase and lowercase heading. Citations in the body (main text) should be in accordance with APA citing guidelines. Citations made in the body (main text) of the paper must also be listed on the References page.

**Paragraphs** – (see APA Manual, 2009, p. 229) Indent the first line of every paragraph. For consistency, use the tab key, which should be set at five to seven spaces, or ½ inch. The default settings on most word-processing programs are acceptable. Type the remaining lines in the paragraph to a uniform left-hand margin (left aligned). Do not justify or center the right margin. One double-space between paragraphs.

**Hyphenation** – (see APA Manual, 2009, p. 97) APA follows Webster's Collegiate Dictionary in most cases. Do not hyphenate words at the end of a line. Use no space before or after the hyphen in a hyphenated word (e.g., trial-by-trial analysis).

**Italics** – (see APA Manual, 2009, p. 104) Use italics, not underlining where appropriate throughout the document. Italic font is to be used for the following applications: titles of books, periodicals, films, videos, TV shows, and microfilm publications. See pages 5-14 in this document for some examples.

**Quotations of over 40 words** – (see APA Manual, 2009, p. 92) If the quotation comprises 40 or more words display it in a freestanding block of text and omit the quotation marks. Start such a block quotation on a new line and indent the block a half inch. Do not right align the block. Double-space the entire quotation. At the end of a block quotation, cite the quoted source and the page or paragraph number in parentheses after the final punctuation mark. Do not put a period after the parentheses.

**Spacing** – (see APA Manual, 2009, p. 87) Insert one space after commas, colons, and semicolons; periods that separate parts of a reference citation; and periods of the initials in personal names. Use two spaces after a period that concludes a sentence.

**Numbers in text** – (see APA Manual, 2009, p.111) Use numerals to express numbers 10 and above. Use words to express numbers nine and below, any number that begins a sentence, title, or text heading, common fractions, or universally accepted usage (i.e., The Four Seasons.) Whenever possible, reword the sentence to avoid beginning with a number.
Conclusion - The Conclusion should be a strong summary of the key points made in the body (main text) of the paper.

3. References page information


- The reference list is developed on a separate page.
- Margins should be at least one inch all around (top, bottom, left, and right).
- The reference list for APA should be titled References and centered at the top of the page. Do not bold, underline, or italicize.
- Double-spacing should be used within each citation and between citations.
- The first line of each reference entry should start at the left margin with the following lines being indented one-half inch (hanging indent).
- The references should be listed in alphabetical order by author’s last name. Any reference listed must also appear in the body (main text) of the paper.
- APA papers should have a minimum of two scholarly references. The textbook does not count as one of those although it may be used in addition to other references.
- Personal communications and Scripture references should be cited in the text, but not listed in references. Scripture references within the text may be either abbreviated or spelled-out according to the instructor’s preference.
**Reference Samples**

The first words of the in-text citation should mirror the first words of the source on the References page.

Remember the following

1. Never use the URL (website address) in the in-text citation. It is used in the References page.
2. Never use the first or middle initials of the author(s) in the citation.
3. Always include the year in the citation if there is no date use (n.d.).
4. Always use p. or pp. for page numbers or para. or ¶ (pilcrow) for paragraph numbers with direct quotations.
5. Use the author’s name or title of the work when no author is listed, year, and page or paragraph number (for a direct quotation) within the parentheses.
6. Punctuation goes after the final parenthesis of the citation unless it is a block quote.
7. Follow the rule of capitalization of the first title mentioned within the reference. Titles of books and articles: capitalize the first word, the first word following a colon, and proper nouns.
8. References that have the same author for multiple works see the APA Manual (2009, p. 182).
9. A website that could assist in citations is: http://citationmachine.net/index2.php.

The following examples provide information about how to format in-text citations and the corresponding source on the reference page.

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**A book with one author**

**A book with one author could be formatted in any of the following ways:**

**In-Text Citation**

**Sample 1**

According to Polhill (1999), Paul wanted to speak in Rome.

**Sample 2**

Paul wanted to speak in Rome (Polhill, 1999).

**Sample 3**

Polhill (1999) stated, “Paul’s greatest desire was to witness in the capital city of Rome itself” (p. 378).

[Note: Page or paragraph numbers are always included with the in-text citation when direct quotations are used.]
Reference Page Citation


In-Text Citation

*Sample 4*  
Yancey (1995) noted that many wanted to get rid of Jesus without getting their hands dirty.

*Sample 5*  
Getting rid of Jesus without being guilty of the deed was the intent of many according to Philip Yancey (1995).

*Sample 6*  
“No one seems willing to accept full responsibility for executing Jesus, yet everyone wants him disposed of” (Yancey, 1995, p. 197).

Reference Page Citation


A book with two or more authors

A book with two or more authors could be formatted in any of the following ways:

In-Text Citation

*Sample 1*  
House and Mitchell’s book (2007) points out the necessity of change in Israel’s attitude and actions.

*Sample 2*  
The necessity of Israel’s attitude and action change was evident (House & Mitchell, 2007).

*Sample 3*  
“Isaiah 1-39 constantly warns Israel and Judah to repent or face defeat” (House & Mitchell, 2007, p. 192).

Reference Page Citation

In-Text Citation

Sample 4 Geisler and Turek (2004) compared two well-known people to demonstrate the evidence of absolute morals.

Sample 5 Absolute morals can be demonstrated through the use of two very well-known people when one is noted as good and the other as bad (Geisler & Turek, 2004).

Sample 6 “Hitler liked killing people, and Mother Teresa liked helping them. Unless there’s a standard beyond Hitler and Mother Teresa, then no one is really right or wrong—it’s just one person’s opinion against that of another” (Geisler & Turek, 2004, p. 192).

Reference Page Citation

Geisler, N., & Turek, F. (2004). I don’t have enough faith to be an Atheist. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books.

A book with a group author

A book with a group author could be formatted in any of the following ways:

In-Text Citation

Sample 1 A statement explaining the importance of a discussion section of the paper is necessary (American Psychological Association, 2009).

Sample 2 In the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, explaining the importance of the information should follow the discussion section (American Psychological Association, 2009).

Sample 3 “End the Discussion section with a reasoned and justifiable commentary on the importance of your findings” (American Psychological Association, 2009, p. 36).

Reference Page Citation

DOI (Digital Object Identifier)

The following link is a free service to help find a DOI for Internet journal articles: http://www.crossref.org/guestquery/

A journal article without a DOI (Digital Object Identifier)

A journal article could be formatted in any of the following ways:

In-Text Citation

Sample 1  Scheller (2010) pointed out the necessity of forgiveness since only God can remove the guilt associated with the bad deed.

Sample 2  Forgiveness from the offended individual does not remove the debt of the action requiring it (Scheller, 2010).

Sample 3  “Who am I to say I won’t forgive, when I know forgiveness does not mean to condone others’ actions or to absolve them—since God alone can absolve” (Scheller, 2010, p. 43).

Reference Page Citation

A journal article from an online database with a DOI (Digital Object Identifier)

A journal article from an online database with a DOI could be formatted in any of the following ways:

In-Text Citation

**Sample 1**  Matthysse (1969) noted that faith is more than something a person states.

**Sample 2**  Faith is more than something a person states (Matthysse, 1969).

**Sample 3**  “Faith turns out not to be a simple state at all, but is composed of three distinct elements. The first element is an intuition that what is proposed for belief is true, which is accompanied by hesitation and fear of error. The second element is the infusion of a doubt-free state, in which doubts, while not resolved, are removed to the periphery of consciousness, and lose their power to cause anxiety. The third element is an intuition which makes the believer certain that he is morally required to allow this state to continue” (Matthysse, 1969, ¶ 1).

[Note: No page number was listed in this particular article because of the way the article is written. When no page number is available, count the paragraphs and use the paragraph number, as above. In long documents, you can count the paragraphs of a particular section and indicate that within the citation: (Matthysse, 1969, Praying section, para. 1).]

Reference Page Citation


10.1017/S0034412500003644
A journal article from an online database without DOI (Digital Object Identifier)

A journal article from an online database could be formatted in any of the following ways:

In-Text Citation

Sample 1  Guenther (2008) noted that Jesus gave a spatial time for the kingdom of God.

Sample 2  Jesus explained when the kingdom of God would be (Guenther, 2008).

Sample 3  “Jesus reminds us that the kingdom is both coming and already here. He reminds us that the power of God can be and is working in us if we let ourselves be open to it and take it into ourselves” (Guenther, 2008, ¶ 4).

[Note: No page number was listed in this particular article because of the way the article is written. When no page number is available, count the paragraphs and use the paragraph number, as above. In long documents, you can count the paragraphs of a particular section and indicate that within the citation: (Guenther, 2004, Praying section, para. 4).

Reference Page Citation

A journal article from an online database—anonymous author without DOI

An anonymous journal article from an online database could be formatted in any of the following ways:

In-Text Citation

Sample 1  In “Hunting Bountiful” (2004), Economist magazine pointed out an area in Canada that does not believe in monogamous relationships.

Sample 2  Some Canadians do not hold to a monogamous relationship (“Hunting Bountiful,” 2004).

Reference Page Citation


A newspaper article

A newspaper article could be formatted in any of the following ways:

In-Text Citation

Sample 1  Richard Land stated that there is a need for sustained prayer by believers (Hastings, 2010).

Sample 2  In Hastings (2010) article Richard Land insisted on prayer.

Sample 3  “A great movement of the Holy Spirit will not happen without sustained prayer from God’s people, Land added” (Hastings, 2010, p. 2).

Reference Page Citation

A Web site with no author

A Web site with no author could be formatted in any of the following ways:

In-Text Citation

Sample 1 The Web site for Lifeway (2004) has many resources to help people and institutions grow spiritually.

Sample 2 Spiritual growth can be gained through many biblical resources (Lifeway, n.d.).

Sample 3 “We will help people and churches know Jesus Christ and seek His Kingdom by providing biblical solutions that spiritually transform individuals and cultures” (Lifeway, n.d., Vision section, para. 1).

Reference Page Citation


In-Text Citation

Sample 4 The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (2010) seeks to educate ministers with the guidance of God’s Word.

Sample 5 With God’s Word as a guide, there is a seminary that seeks to prepare ministers for service (The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2010).

Sample 6 “Under the lordship of Jesus Christ, the mission of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary is to be totally committed to the Bible as the Word of God, to the Great Commission as our mandate, and to be a servant of the churches of the Southern Baptist Convention by training, educating, and preparing ministers of the gospel for more faithful service” (The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, ¶ 1).

Reference Page Citation

A Web site with an author

A Web site with an author could be formatted in any of the following ways:

In-Text Citation

Sample 1  According to Sproul (n.d.), many believers have difficulty understanding the man of Jesus.

Sample 2  Jesus in human form is a difficult concept for many believers (Sproul, n.d.).

Sample 3  “One of the great crises in evangelical Christianity today is a lack of understanding about the person of Christ” (Sproul, n.d., ¶ 1).

[In a long online document with no page numbers, you can list the title of the section and the paragraph number within that section (see above).]

Reference Page Citation


In-Text Citation

Sample 4  According to Hastings (n.d.), there are other religions with some of the same beliefs as Christianity.

Sample 5  Christianity holds beliefs that other religions believe in also (Hastings, n.d.).

Sample 6  “Christianity shares a number of beliefs and practices with other religions, particularly Judaism and Islam” (Hastings, n.d., Major beliefs section. para. 4).

Reference Page Citation

Mid-Continent University e-text authored by individuals

A Mid-Continent University e-text authored by individuals could be formatted in any of the following ways:

In-Text Citation

Sample 1  Anderson (1991) noted a correlation between the decline in the family and the decline in a nation.

Sample 2  The decline of the family assists in the decline of a nation (Anderson, 1991).

Sample 3  Anderson (1991) stated, “Nations most often fall from within, and this fall is usually due to a decline in the moral and spiritual values in the family” (Chap. 3 handout, p. 2).

[Note: In the e-text, you may need to include the chapter or week to clarify the source.]

Reference Page Citation


Retrieved from Mid-Continent University, Moodle Web site.

Software

[Note: Reference entries are not needed for off-the-shelf software and programming languages. In text, give the proper name of the software and the version number.]  
Do provide reference entries for specialized software or computer programs with limited distribution.

Software could be formatted in any of the following ways:

In-Text Citation

Sample 1  According to the Wycliffe Bible Commentary (Biblesoft), believers have no worries after death.

Sample 2  Because of the price that was paid, believers have no problems according to the Wycliffe Bible Commentary (Biblesoft).
Sample 3  “The believer in Christ does not come into judgment for his sins either now or in the future” (Biblesoft, *Wycliffe Bible Commentary*).

Reference Page Citation


Television Series

A television series could be formatted in any of the following ways:

In-Text Citation

Sample 1  The 7th *Heaven* series (Hampton, 1996) presented a behind the scenes look at events possibly found in a minister’s life, family and home.

Sample 2  A minister’s life if viewed objectively could give some people a different understanding of what it could be like (Hampton, 1996).

Sample 3  “From Spelling Television and Brenda Hampton comes 7th *Heaven*, a critically acclaimed family drama about a minister and his wife sharing love, laughter, and life with their seven children” (Hampton, 1996).

Reference Page Citation


4. **Important information to consider for an APA formatted paper.**

Reducing Bias in Language  – (see APA Manual, 2010, p. 70) Avoid perpetuating demeaning attitudes and biased assumptions about people in your writing. Constructions that might imply bias against persons on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, racial or ethnic group, disability, or age are unacceptable.

Avoiding Plagiarism  – (see APA Manual, 2010, p. 170) Plagiarism can be easily avoided if the writer provides appropriate credit when borrowing ideas or citing from another individual’s work. When paraphrasing (rewording) from another author, the writer must give credit to the person who developed the original work. When citing verbatim, the borrowed material must be placed in quotations and appropriately cited.

Wikipedia or similar sites  – These sources may not be used as a reference in any work submitted at any level of study at Mid-Continent University.
**Word-Processing Instructions** – Search the Mid-Continent University website for APA Tutorial. Illustrated examples with step-by-step instructions are in the appendices.  
http://www.midcontinent.edu/apa-writing-style
New Computer Users

Joe Christian

Mid-Continent University

MCU 1001
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