Citing References in APA

Here are some common citation forms from the APA (American Psychological Association) style sheet that you can use as for your paper. As you use information and sources in the text of your essay, you cite the author or source in the text, with the author's name and publication year in parentheses – the so-called in-text or parenthetical citation. At the end of your paper, you put the full bibliographic information in a ‘works cited’ or ‘references’ section.

The in-text citation goes inside the sentence, and if it comes at the end, it still is placed before final punctuation; multiple references are separated by semi-colons).

Such distributions have been noted by several recent surveys (Wolfson, 1998; Johns et al., 2001).

In the references section you’ll see the full bibliographic information for these citations, e.g.,


Notice that the year appears in parentheses, in strict APA in formal publications. For your papers in a writing course, this is not necessary (but you would do this in a formal paper or dissertation). The titles of books, magazines, and scholarly journals are italicized, followed by the volume number (for journals or other periodicals) and the page numbers. A hanging indentation format is typically used, and references can be single-spaced.

1. A book by one author


Cite this work in your paper as (Wolfe, 1991), or with a quotation (Wolfe, 1991, page number), e.g., as (Wolfe, 1991:29). Or you can include the author directly in the sentence with the date in parenthesis, e.g., “...Wolf (1991) has argued that...”.

2. A book by two or three authors.


Note: when the citation is longer than one line, the second line is indented five spaces or one tab. Cite this book in your paper as (Arkin & Colton, 1963), or e.g., “Arkin and Colton (1963) found that...”.


Cite this book in your paper as (Monroe, Meredith & Fisher, 1977). For three or more authors, the in-text citation often gives the first author followed by ‘et al.’ (Latin: et alia = ‘and others’), e.g., (Monroe et al., 1977).
3. Article from a journal paginated by volume


Cite this journal article in your paper as (Sauerberg, 1983).

4. Article from a journal paginated by issue (which means each issue begins with page 1).


The 28 refers to the volume number, and (1) is the issue number – but issue numbers are not required. Cite this article in your paper as (Plax, 1982).

5. Article from a weekly or biweekly periodical.


Cite this article in your paper as (Springen, 1990), or, e.g., “...Springen (1990) has noted that...”.


(a) No date or author – Cite the web page name in the in-text citation. No periods follow after the URL.


(b) Daily newspaper article, electronic version.


(c) Message from an online discussion group (p. 278)


Email (e.g., from a reputable or authoritative person) should be cited as a form of personal communication. (APA Manual, section 3.102). In the references section, parts like “retrieved from” or the date retrieved or downloaded can sometimes be omitted, especially when APA is followed less strictly.

7. Sources by the same author are still separated by semi-colons in the in-text citation. In the references section, they are listed in reverse chronological order, i.e., starting from the most recent works to earlier works. Hence, in-text: (Zhou, 2004; 2003).


The page numbers follow after the book title (also: p. 245-299 or pp. 245-299). The editor (Ed.) or editors (Eds.) are listed by name.

Notes: In research papers and journals, variations on the APA format are common. For example, the comma in in-text citations is sometimes dropped, as in (Plax 1982). And often the authors’ full first names are given in the references section. For more details on APA style or other documentation styles, point your web browser to the Purdue Owl site [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/]. See also other sites like the UNC APA style guide, or the official APA site.

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**MLA format**

In MLA, a similar in-text citation form is used, except without commas; hence, e.g., “(Burke 1999)”. The references at the end will look like the following. (Examples from the Purdue Owl MLA style guide, [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/557/01/]). Names of books and periodicals may be underlined or italicized.


2. Sources by the same author.


3. Articles in a book or anthology.


4. Articles in journals or magazines.


5. Articles in newspapers.


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**Other systems.**


ASA (American Sociological Association): [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/583/01/](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/583/01/)

Footnotes & endnote system: Use footnotes or endnotes to cite sources instead of in-text citation, adapting MLA style in footnotes.