Citing references in APA style

Here are some common citation forms from the APA (American Psychological Association) style sheet that you can use as for your paper. This style is used for academic writing in the social sciences and education fields, including linguistics. 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 (inside a final period, that is, the period comes after the closing parenthesis of the citation). Multiple references are separated by semi-colons inside the parentheses. In the example below, the names and years can all be inside parentheses, or if the name is directly used in the sentence, then the year immediately follows in parentheses.

Such widely skewed distributions have been noted by several recent surveys (Wolfson, 1998; Johns et al.; 2001; Manatee, 2004), with some like Wolfson (1998) arguing for a best fit from a logistic distribution, while others (Johns et al., 2001) arguing for a binomial distribution.

In the end references section at the end of a paper or article you’ll see the full bibliographic information for these citations. Notice that the year appears in parentheses in the final bibliographic citation, in strict APA in formal publications. Titles of books, magazines, and scholarly journals are italicized, followed by the volume number (for journals or other periodicals) and the page numbers. Titles of articles or chapters are not italicized. Note: when the citation is longer than one line, the second line is indented five spaces or one tab – a hanging indentation format, like below. End references can be single-spaced.

1. A book by one author


Cite this work in your paper as “...(Wolfe, 1991)...”, or with the author’s name mentioned directly in the sentence with the date in parenthesis, e.g., “...Wolf (1991) has argued that...”.

2. An article by one author


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1 Some linguists and linguistics journals use modified forms of APA, so you may not see parentheses around years in the end references, and other minor differences.
This would be cited within the paper as “...Lauterberg, 1983...” or, e.g., “…Lauterberg (1983) noted that…”

3. A book or article by two or more authors.


Two authors: Cite this in your paper as “...(Arkin & Colton, 1963)...”, or, e.g., “Arkin and Colton (1963) found that...”.


More than two authors: Cite the first 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)...” or “Monroe et al. (1977) reported that...”.

4. Article from a journal paginated by volume


For such journals, page numbering goes continuously through all issues of the same volume (e.g., if issue 1 ends at page 200, then issue 2 starts at p. 201, and so on). Cite this journal article in your paper as (Lauterberg, 1983).

5. Article from a journal paginated by issue


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).

6. Articles from a book with an editor


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.

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2 In psychology papers, and in the official, current APA style, the rule for in-text citations is now for ‘et al.’ to be used for six or more authors, and for five or less, all names are written out, e.g., “...(Smith, Morrow, Jones, Johnson, & Ng, 1999)...”; however, in linguistics and related fields, we usually use ‘et al.’ for three or more names.
7. Article from a popular periodical.


Cite this article in your paper as (Springen, 1990), or, e.g., “...Springen (1990) has noted that...”. However, popular media sources are not usually cited in academic papers. For more on informal, popular or non-academic sources and materials, search for APA guides at owl.english.purdue.edu.

8. Direct quotations (also, cited data, reproduced tables or graphs)

One usually reports the ideas, findings, or work of others by paraphrasing and summarizing the relevant information, in one’s own words. Occasionally, one might want to provide a direct quotation – though in linguistics and psychology, this is not very commonly done; it is done mainly if the way the original writer stated it is particularly important or noteworthy. In the in-text citation, the page number from which the quotation comes is given after the year, e.g., “…(Marion, 1997:34)…” for a quotation from page 34, or “…(Marion, 1997:34-35)…” for pages 34-35. The end reference will be as usual – page numbers for citations are given in the in-text citation, not in the end references. Shorter quotations can be included in a regular paragraph, but if a quotation would run three lines or more, it is placed in a separate block-indented paragraph (keep in mind that this example is fictitious), with the citation at the end of the quotation, as shown here, or before the quotation in the preceding paragraph:

Such widely skewed distributions have been noted by several recent surveys (Wolfson, 1998; Johns et al., 2001; Manatee, 2004), with some like Wolfson (1998) arguing for a best fit from a logistic distribution, while others (Johns et al., 2001) arguing for a binomial distribution. Regarding this phenomenon, After surveying the previous studies, we concluded the following, as stated in our previous report:


Likewise, if you directly copy any charts, pictures, graphics, figures, or tables another source into your paper should cite the page number in the in-text citation, just as for direct quotations. These could appear in the text of a paragraph, or in a caption below a figure.

9. Electronic and informal sources

The following are not common in academic papers, as they are not peer reviewed sources. For more on electronic and informal sources, as well as popular or non-academic materials, search for APA guides at owl.english.purdue.edu.

(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 or other personal communication (e.g., from a reputable or authoritative person) should be cited as “personal communication” or “p.c.” in the text; no end reference is given (APA Manual, section 3.102); e.g., “...according to Hack (p.c.), Silurians use this pronoun commonly...”. In less formal papers like term papers, you might likewise cite someone’s lecture notes in the same way as “...Hack (lecture notes)...”.

In the references section, items like “retrieved from” or the date retrieved or downloaded can sometimes be omitted, especially when APA is followed less strictly.

10. Multiple sources by the same author

Sources by the same author are still separated by semi-colons in the in-text citation, e.g., “... (Zhou, 2003; Zhou, 2004). 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).


11. Multiple sources by the same author in the same year


These are ordered alphabetically by title. These would be cited in the text as “(Zhou, 2004a)” and “(Zhou, 2004b)”.

12. Conference papers or proceedings


In-text citation as “...Deci and Ryan (1991)...” or “...(Deci & Ryan, 1991)”. This is for papers presented at conferences, which are then published in a collection of conference papers known as conference proceedings. Conference proceedings often represent informal or preliminary reports of someone’s research, and are not screened with as much scrutiny as journal articles, so scholarly articles or books are preferred when possible. For some conferences, presenters do not submit an actual paper that is publish, but mere give an informal or preliminary report of their research. In that case, the format may look like so, though this may vary:
13. Secondary citations

Sometimes you will find a good piece of information that someone else cites, but you can’t find the source that s/he cited. For example, you read of an interesting finding or piece of data discovered by Smith (2002), but the Smith article is not available online or at your library; you only know if it because it is cited by someone else like Jones (2004). This is an indirect or secondary source, and would be cited as a secondary citation in your paper, as below. Both the primary and secondary source information would appear in the end references section.

An older study found that 80% of stressed words in a corpus were nouns, followed by 12% verbs, and 8% other word classes (Smith, 2002, as cited in Jones, 2004).

or

… (Jones, 2004, citing Smith, 2002)

When a number of secondary sources are involved, it may not be worth the effort to list all the secondary citations, as one one author cites a number of other authors for relevant information. In that case, something like this will do:

...(Jones, 2004, and references therein)

or

...(see Jones, 2004 for further references)

Notes:

In research papers and journals, unofficial variations on the APA format are common. For example, the comma in in-text citations is sometimes dropped, as in (Plax 1982); and parentheses are not used around the years in the end references section. Often the authors’ full first names are given in the references section, especially in linguistics journals and papers.

For more details on official APA style or other documentation styles, go 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 [http://www.apastyle.org/index.html].