

APA Style Guide

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Introduction

This document provides guidance for preparing documents in APA style for The University of Edinburgh Psychology students.

APA formatting stipulates four major things¹:

1. The format of citations and the format of the Reference section.
2. The way the document is laid out, including headings, subheadings, etc.
3. The way figures and tables are laid out.
4. Some rules for language use, including choices of words and punctuation.

The APA formatting guidelines make it easy for researchers to easily understand the work from people across multiple fields of Psychology (and general guidelines allow communication of science across completely different fields). As a student, it is vital that you get (1) right, highly desirably that you get (2) right, and good practice to get (3) and (4) right. As well as ensuring that your marker(s) can easily read and understand your work, writing according to specific formatting guidelines is an important skill for both academic and non-academic career paths.

The rest of this document gives brief examples correct formatting. Further resources can be found online at www.apastyle.org. The most comprehensive source of information for formatting in APA style is the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (6th Ed)*, which is available in the Psychology library.

¹This numbered list is in APA format, as is this footnote.

Sections, Subsections, and Sub-Subsections

Sections, Subsections, and Sub-Subsections can be useful for breaking up your document and improving flow. When preparing a document in APA Style sections and subsections should *not* be numbered. Sections, subsections and sub-subsections are formatted differently so that a reader can easily understand the hierarchy of the document.

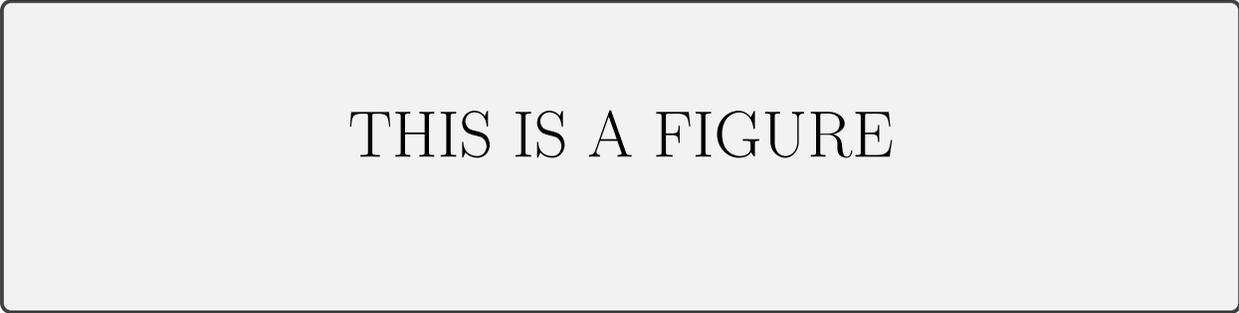
Sections titles are centered and written in bold. Examples of common sections in a Psychology document would be ‘Introduction’, ‘Method’, ‘Results’, ‘Discussion’.

Subsection Titles

Subsection titles are written in bold but are flush with the left side of the page. The text in subsections is on a new line, and the first line is indented.

Sub-Subsection Titles. Sub-subsection titles are written in bold and are indented, but the subsection text is not written on a new line.

Figures and Tables



THIS IS A FIGURE

Figure 1. Figure captions are written below the figure content. Figures are numbered.

Table 1

Tables are numbered separately from Figures, and captions go at the top. APA Style tables do not have any vertical lines

	Column A	Column B
This	123	456
is	789	123
a	456	789
table*	123	456

*Table notes go below the table

Referencing

There are detailed guidelines for referencing in APA Style in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (6th Ed)*. Some examples of the most common citation types are detailed below. Please refer to the References section of this document to see how the reference list is formatted.

Journal Articles

Single and two-author Journal articles are can be cited in the following ways:

“Baddeley (2012) describes a multiple-component model of working memory.”

“Processing and storage have been said to be separable processes in working memory (Duff & Logie, 1999).”

For two-author papers both names are always written in the main text. For three- to five-author papers all authors' names are written the first time, and 'et al.' is used thereafter. For example:

“The Time-Based Resource-Sharing Model proposes that attention is rapidly switched between concurrent tasks (Barrouillet, Bernardin, & Camos, 2004) . . . The higher the demand of a concurrent processing task the more opportunity memory traces have to decay since they cannot be ‘refreshed’ by attention (Barrouillet et al., 2004).”

'Et al.' is used for all six- and seven-author in-text citations, but the full author list is still reported in the References section. For papers with eight or more authors, 'et al' is again used for all in-text citations but only the first six authors names followed by '...' then the last authors name are included in the reference list. An example of a paper with more than eight authors is Wang et al. (2011).

Please refer to the References section of this document to see how the above citations

are listed.

Books and Book Chapters

The rules for author names for books and book chapters for in-text citations are the same as for journal articles, however the references are listed differently in order to acknowledge both author(s) and editor(s). For example:

“‘Models of Working Memory: Mechanisms of Active Maintenance and Executive Control’ (Miyake & Shah, 1999) provides a summary of different models of working memory. In the introduction to the book, the editors describe the importance of comparing and contrasting different models of working memory (Shah & Miyake, 1999) . . . The Multiple Component Model is summarised in Chapter 2 (Baddeley & Hitch, 1999).”

Note that the publisher and publisher’s city are included in the References section (if the publisher is from the USA the state is also included, e.g. “Lansing, MI”).

Websites

The APA guidelines for citing web pages vary considerably depending on whether the website has named authors, whether it is a wiki, whether it is an organisations’ website or an individual’s, whether it is a blog or video content etc. For guidelines on how to cite a specific type of webpage, please refer to the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (6th Ed)*, or search the web for online guides.

References

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