

## What is A.P.A. Style?

A.P.A. style was created by the American Psychological Association to establish a set of standards for formatting scientific and research papers. It includes guidelines for citing references and formatting your paper. While this handout gives an overview of the guidelines of A.P.A. style, more information can be found in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*.

All papers formatted using A.P.A. style *must* include in-text citations, a reference list, and specific formatting.

## How to Incorporate Research

After all your research is done, how do you include it in your paper? There are three ways to do this: quoting, paraphrasing, and summarizing. All three are discussed below, and all of them must be referenced (see “How to Use In-Text Citations” below).

### Direct Quotations

Direct quotations are taken word by word from the original and copied into your paper. This type of quote should be used only for one of two reasons:

1. The author expressed an idea in a unique way.

**Example:** *Mitchener described war as a “failure of the imagination.”*

2. If you are trying to prove something that most readers would find hard to believe, it’s good to show a reputable source has said the same thing. This technique helps establish your credibility.

**Example:** *According to the World Health Organization, “a second implication for human health, of far greater concern, is the risk that the H5N1 virus – if given enough opportunities – will develop the characteristics it needs to start another influenza.”*

When using direct quotations, make sure they are not isolated in your text. You should introduce the quote in your own words and comment on it afterwards. Make sure your reader will be able to clearly understand why you put the quote in your paper and how it proves the point you are trying to make.

### Paraphrasing

Paraphrasing is used to rephrase another person’s idea in your own words. It is generally similar in length to the original, but must be reworded enough that it will not count as plagiarism.

### Summarizing

Summaries are also in your own words, but are much shorter in length than the original. They take the main idea or thesis of a paragraph and give the reader a brief overview of how these ideas tie into your own paper.

## How to Use In-Text Citations

The purpose of using in-text citations is to let your readers know that your ideas originally came from someone else. Whether you are taking a quote directly from the original source or putting information into your own words, it is essential that you cite your sources. Using someone's original idea or research without giving them credit is the same as stealing. Plagiarism has serious consequences and is easy to avoid, so don't do it!

There are two ways to reference information: direct or indirect quotations (including paraphrasing and summarizing), as discussed above. More information on in-text citations can be found in the *Publication Manual* starting on page 207 (section 3.94).

## Citing Direct Quotations

To cite a direct quotation in your text, you must include the author's name, the year the work was published, and the page number in which the quote was extracted. Examples of citations for direct quotations are as follows:

### *General Notes:*

- The **specific source** must be given – the author's name, the year, and the **page number** (for a print source) or the **paragraph number** or **heading name** (for an electronic source).
  - **Periods** or **commas** should be typed inside the quotation marks.
  - Other punctuation (**colon, semicolon, question mark**, etc.) should be typed outside the quotation marks.
  - Ellipses (...) are used to indicate you took words out of the original quote.
1. **Short quote:** A short quotation is fewer than 40 words and is included in the text using quotation marks. Your sentence starts at your left margin and is not indented.

**Example:** According to the author, "the quote goes here" and some more of your own words follow in the same sentence (Smith, 1999, p. 27).

**Or**

According to the author, "the quote goes here" (Smith, 1999, p. 27).

2. **Long quote:** Quotations of more than 40 words are not included within the body of the text and have **no quotation marks**. These quotations need to start on a new line within the text. They are still **double-spaced**, but they are **indented an extra ½ inch**.

**Example:** Your long quote is indented and contains more than 40 words. The rest of the quote, i.e. the whole paragraph, is indented as your first sentence. If you do not follow these rules, the format

will be wrong and you could lose marks. It is silly to lose marks on something so minor. (Smith, 1999, pp. 27 – 28).

## Citing Paraphrased or Summarized Information

Citing paraphrased or summarized information is similar to direct quotations; however, the page number is not needed.

### *General Notes:*

The **author's name** and **year of publication** are critical pieces of information. They can be written in **parenthetical brackets** after your text, or as part of a **signal phrase** to introduce the information.

The year does not need to be included when citing a source you have already cited in the **same paragraph**; however, the name should be included (or names if there is more than one author).

If there is more than one author with the same last name, include their first initials to tell them apart (e.g. Smith, K., and Smith, J.).

## Reference List

The reference list is similar to what is commonly known as a bibliography, but includes only the works specifically used in your paper (those which you also cited with in-text citations). Everything you cited in your paper also needs to be included in the reference list (the only exception is personal communications, which are cited with in-text citations only).

While the in-text citations give the reader enough information to know you used another source, the reference list gives the reader the information needed to find the same book, website, or article you used. When doing your research, it is a good idea to write down as much information as you can from each source regarding the author, date, title, and page numbers.

For more information on the reference list, see the *Publication of the American Psychological Association*.

### Quick Tips!

- Create your reference list on its own page after your last page of text.
- Centre the title "References" one inch from the top of the page.
- Double space.
- Alphabetize the list of references by the last name of the author(s).
- If the work has no author, alphabetize by the first letter of the title (excluding A, An, or The).