

APA Style: The Basics

This handout is designed to provide an overview of **APA 7th edition**. It will address the essential elements of an APA paper, such as the title page, References, and in-text citations. This handout should **not** be considered a substitute for more complex or thorough style guides, but rather as an overview of the most basic features of APA.

All information is adapted from the Purdue OWL APA style guide.

Title Page

A paper written in APA style needs a **title page**. The title page will contain six pieces of information:

1. A bolded title
2. Your name
3. The department and institution
4. The course name and number
5. Your professor's name
6. The date (ideally, the day the assignment is due)

This information will be centered and start around 2-3 lines from the top of the page.

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Reflections, Revisions, & Rationale on Evolving Understandings of Multicultural Literature and Teaching Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar*

3. department and institution Emiliann Williams ← 2. name
Department of English, The University of North Carolina at Charlotte

4. course name and number ENGL 4201-D90: Teaching of Multi-Ethnic Lit

5. professor's name Dr. Jane Doe

6. date 7 December 2022

Title Page Example

Formatting Best Practices:

- 10-12 pt. readable font (generally, the specifics of this will be set by your professor)
- double-spaced text
- 1" margins

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References Page

The **References Page** is where you will compile all your cited works. Like the Works Cited Page in MLA, the References page seeks to both properly attribute the sources you used in your paper, and also serves as a repository that readers can refer to for further reading.

General Formatting

- Title the page “References.” Center the title at the top of the page. Do **not** bold or underline it.
- Format your sources alphabetically according to authors’ last names.
- Format each entry with a **hanging indent**: each entry on the page is flush with the left margin, but subsequent lines will be indented a half-inch from the page.
- Format each entry with the author’s last name first. Their first and middle initial (if applicable) follows their last name. Use their first and middle **initial only**.
- Use an ampersand (&) to set apart the name of the last author if your source has multiple.
- Place the source’s publication year in parentheses immediately after cited authors.
- Italicize book titles in APA. Do **not** italicize journal article titles.
- Do **not** capitalize the first letter of each word in the titles of books and journals.

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References

Beach, R., Appleman, D., Fecho, B., & Simon, R. (2021). *Teaching literature to adolescents*. (4th ed.). Routledge.

Connors, S. P., & Rish, R. M. (2015). Troubling ideologies: Creating opportunities for students to interrogate cultural models in YA literature. *The ALAN Review*, 22-34.

Crawley, S. A., & Donovan, S. J. (2020). Creating a lifeline: Strategies for LGBTQ+ inclusive-affirming practices across grades. *English Journal*, 110(1), 54-62.

Plath, S. (1963). *The bell jar*. Heinemann

Saldaña, R. (2020). (Mis)understanding culture: Literacy through lived experiences. *English Journal*, 109(3), 50-53.

Thomas, E. E. (2016). Is Huck Finn still relevant? Revisiting “The Case for Conflict.” *English Journal*, 106(2), 85-87.

References Page Example

Entry Example

Beach, R., Appleman, D., Fecho, B., & Simon, R. (2021). *Teaching literature to adolescents*. (4th ed.). Routledge.

Here is an example of a book source entry in APA. Note how the authors’ names are formatted, as well as where the publication date is placed, and how every word of the title is lowercase following the initial uppercase.

Thomas, E. E. (2016). Is Huck Finn still relevant? Revisiting “The Case for Conflict.” *English Journal*, 106(2), 85-87.

This journal entry example is important for two reasons. First, note the capitalization in the journal article title. We retain capitalization for proper nouns. Also, note how volume and issue are formatted. We put the issue number (2) in parentheses and flush against the volume number (106).

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In-Text Citations

APA is primarily used in the sciences and other empirical, research-based fields (i.e, Pedagogy and Linguistics). As a result, the emphasis when using in-text citations is on **who** did the research, **when** it was conducted, and **where** in the text the information can be found.

The most common in-text citation in APA follows this **Author, Year, Page Number** format.

Example 1

Discussions of the problematic aspects of *The Bell Jar* allows us to “[negotiate] solidarity across differences through discourse (talk) and narrative (stories). As we tell stories, and truly listen to one another, our divergent experiences meet in the space between us” (Thomas, 2016, p. 86).

Example 2

In particular, **Crawley and Donovan (2020)** distinguish between two specific strategies and how the goals and aims of each differ and impact our work in the classroom: “texts can be integrated in any unit of instruction without being a designated focus...students need space to explore or inquire into...lives if we are to disrupt bias. Teachers must choose to act and advocate for equality” (p. 57).

Both of these examples follow the **Author, Year, Page Number** format. The only difference is *where* you can find this information in each example. Example 1 provides a more standard example, as all of the relevant information is contained in a parenthetical at the end of the sentence. Example 2, however, uses the author’s names directly in the sentence. **When you invoke an author’s name in your sentence, you place the source’s publication year in parentheses directly following their name.** Then you put the page number at the end of the sentence as usual.

In-Text Citations: Quick Facts and Best Practices

- If you are citing just one page number, you use the abbreviation “p.” in your citation. If you are citing more than one, use “pp.”
- If your source does not contain page numbers, it is best practice to refer to where you found it in another logical, organized way. For example, it is common for some to use “para.” to refer to the paragraph number you found it in.
- If your source does not have a date, use “n.d.” (no date) in the in-text citation.
- When citing three or more authors in the text, use “et al.” (Latin for “and others.”).
- Use an ampersand to separate two authors in the in-text citation.