American Psychological Association (APA) Style

In APA, the way we cite is designed to situate our argument in a larger body of work. We are using sources to assert our argument as a viable option to consider. This style is popular in:

- Computer science and information management
- Education
- Environmental and physical sciences
- Human, behavioral, social, and political sciences
- Linguistics

Most APA papers are formatted using double-spacing, so all examples in this handout will be double-spaced.

What Should Citing in APA Look Like?

In APA, your in-text citations will usually follow the (Author Publication, Year) format for quotes and paraphrases that lack an introduction that uses the author’s name. In all APA citations, APA places the year right after the author. The reason for this is because in APA, having the most up-to-date information is paramount—which is why we see this citation style commonly used in research fields like the sciences. If the quote or paraphrase is introduced by the author’s name, your in-text citations will usually follow the (Publication Year) format. For examples, see the sections below.

Paraphrasing

When you paraphrase, you are taking someone else’s words and summarizing what they said using your own words. By paraphrasing, you are not focused on exact wording of your source but are using your own interpretation of your source to bolster your argument. In APA, paraphrasing is the preferred method of incorporating sources.

Without the Author’s Name Introducing the Paraphrase

Using tree rings to date live oak trees can be difficult. Because live oaks are evergreen and live in regions that rarely see extreme winter temperatures, tree rings in live oaks need to be carefully assessed due to distinguish individual growth rings. (Bartens et al., 2011, p. 20).
With the Author's Name Introducing the Paraphrase
According to Bartens et al. (2011), using tree rings to date live oak trees can be difficult. Because live oaks are evergreen and live in regions that rarely see extreme winter temperatures, tree rings in live oaks need to be carefully assessed due to distinguish individual growth rings (p. 20)

Quoting
You will almost never quote when using APA. The reason is to give a focus on the existing research and how your work fits into or rebels against the existing work; however, it is possible you will quote, so this handout will include examples. Check with your instructor before including quotes.

When you quote, you do so because you need the exact language the author used to further your argument.

Without the Author’s Name Introducing the Quote
Using tree rings to date live oak trees can be difficult because “live oak rings are often faint” (Bartens et al., 2011, p. 20).

With the Author’s Name Introducing the Quote
In a 2011 study, Bartens et al. found that using tree rings to date live oak trees can be difficult because “live oak rings are often faint” (p. 20).
References Page
In APA, your final section will be “References.” This page is a list of all the sources you chose to use in your paper. Your sources will be listed alphabetically with a hanging indent. Depending on the source, the citation format will slightly change. Below is a series of examples of the most common types of sources.

Publications with a Single Author
Author’s Last Name, Author’s First Initial. (Publication Year). Publication Title. Publisher.


Publications with Two to Twenty Authors
First Author’s Last Name, First Author’s First Initial., Second Author’s Last Name, Second Author’s First Initial., *… (Publication Year). Publication Title. City of Publication: Publisher.


*Continue listing all authors*

Publication by Editor(s)
Editor Last Name, Editor First Initial(s). (Ed.) (Publication Year). Publication Title. Publisher.


Publication Edition Other Than First
Author’s Last Name, Author’s First Initial(s). (Publication Year). Publication Title (Edition).

**E-Book**
Author’s Last Name, Author’s First Initial(s). (Publication Year). *Book Title*. Publisher. DOI or URL if applicable.


**Article in a Journal**
Author’s Last Name, First Initials. (Publication Year). Article Title. *Journal Title, Volume Issue* (Edition Number), Page Number(s). doi or URL.

Abstract
Author’s Last Name, Author’s First Initials. (Publication Year). Title of Abstract [Abstract].

Journal Title, Page Number. doi or URL.

doi.org/10.1002/ece3.4393.

Organization or Company as an Author
Organization/Company Name. (Publication Year). Publication Title (Edition).


Wiki
Searched Term. (Year, Month Day Last Updated). In Wikipedia. URL.


Web Source—Entire Website
In APA, entire websites that are only cited in-text are not included on References pages. When you cite in-text, you will use the name of the website and include the URL. For example:

National Geographic.com has many articles about trending and cutting-edge science topics.

Web Source with an Author
Author’s Last Name, First (and Second) Initial(s). (Publishing Year, Publishing Month).
Blakemore, E. (2019, July). *How are tree rings used to help date an archaeological site?* National Geographic.


**Podcast**

Host Last Name, Host First Initial(s). (Host). (Year, Month Day of Publication). Podcast Title [Audio podcast episode]. In Podcast Name. Publisher. URL if Available.


**Video (Online)**

Video Publisher. (Year, Month Day of Publication). Video Title [Video]. Online Video Host. URL.

Film
Director Last Name, Director First Initial(s). (Release Year). Film Title [Film]. Film Studio.


Social Media Post
Account Name [Account Handle if Applicable]. (Year, Month Day of Publication). First 20 Words, Hashtags, and Emojis of Post Caption [Description of Attachment to Caption]. Social Media Name. URL.

National Aeronautics and Space Administration [@nasa]. (2022, July 18). Is there a pair more iconic than Saturn and its rings? But there was a time where the majestic gas [photograph]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/CgK2ftQpCCy/.

APA Style Resources
For further information about APA and APA citation, check out these resources:
- The UNT Writing Center
- A Writer's Reference by Diana Hacker
- APAStyle.APA.org
- Owl.Purdue.edu/Owl/Research_And_Citation/APA_Style/APA_Formatting_And_Style_Guide/General_Format.html

Keep in mind websites like CitationGenerator or EasyBib can make citing easy; however, these generators are not perfect, so always double-check their work.
References


