

Running head: USING APA STYLE

Writing a Successful Paper: Using APA Style

Your Name Here

Arizona State University

Abstract

The second page usually contains your abstract, which is a summary of your paper. The abstract should include your topic, purpose/thesis, sources, and conclusions. Some instructors may tell you not to include an abstract for a short paper. Unless the instructor tells you to omit this section, go ahead and include it. The abstract should be no more than 120 words and is simply one paragraph, with no indentation (i.e., “block” style).

Note that the title “Abstract” is on the first line of this page and is not bolded, underlined, or italicized. Also note that the running head is at the top of the page along with the page number. Everything is evenly spaced (double spaced). There is no extra space between the word “abstract” and your text.

In terms of margins, you should set your margins for 1 inch all around and you should use 12 or 10 point font (depending on how long you want your paper!). If you are going to bind your paper on the left, you may use a 1 ½ inch margin on the left. By the way, this page contains 195 words – way too long for an abstract!

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This is where you start the text of your paper. Notice that the **title is on the first line** of this page and that everything is evenly spaced (**double spaced**) thereafter. There is no extra line between the title and the first paragraph. Also note that the title is **not bolded** or italicized or underlined. It is in the same font as the rest of the text.

Do you have questions about the **title page**? Sometimes students don't understand the difference between the "Running head" and the "Header." The **header** is at the top right of your paper along with the page number. It should be ½ inch from the top of the paper, with the text of the paper ½ inch below the header...making the text 1 inch from the top of the paper. The purpose of the header is to let the reader know which pages go where in case the reader drops everything! Of course, being a college teacher and carrying 100 papers to my car...I have never dropped anything, nor have I ever had to reassemble papers ☺! Your header should be the first two words of your title; it does NOT have to be the same as the running head. Make sure you use your MS Word autoformat and click "header"...it automatically places the header on all the pages and has the correct number on your pages when you click the # sign and insert it in the header. How do you use this?? Simply click "View," in your top toolbar. Then click "Header and Footer." You will automatically be placed in the header. Use the pop-up toolbar to insert your page number.

The "**Running head**" is designed to tell the editor what you would like to see on the top of the journal (magazine) pages of your article. Open up a journal and you will see the authors' names at the top of the page on one side of the journal; on the other side (at the top) is the running head. This makes it easy to find articles as you flip through a journal or magazine. The running head is simply an abbreviated title. If the title of your paper is short, the running head

may be exactly the same as the title. Sometimes, the running head, the title, and the header are all the same; sometimes, each is different. Note that the “h” in “Running head” is not capitalized.

Finally, let me say a few words about **citing articles** within your paper. Many students plagiarize without know it. Students believe that if they cite the author’s name, they have not plagiarized. However, often they are wrong, and they have plagiarized! What’s up with that?!

Okay...let’s see if I can help you avoid this problem. First, you may use direct quotes in your paper. If you use a direct quote, make sure you put quotation marks around it. For example: According to Bodman (2000), “students believe that if they cite the author’s name, they have not plagiarized. However, often they are wrong, and they have plagiarized!” (p. 3-4). When using a direct quote, make sure you use page numbers.

Avoid simply plopping a quote in the middle of a paper without introducing it. For example: “Students believe that if they cite the author’s name, they have not plagiarized. However, often they are wrong, and they have plagiarized!” (Bodman, 2000, p. 3-4). This is not good form. If a professor allows you to use direct quotes, a good rule of thumb is limit the number of direct quotes to only one per page; everything else should be paraphrased or your own writing. Also, only use quotes that are so eloquent and well-written or unique that you must quote it directly. Avoid quoting something like: According to Doe (1992), “275,000,000 people live in the United States of America.” You can provide the same information in your own words and cite Doe. His statement was not particularly eloquent or unique!

Next...any idea that you get from an article must be cited. You might say to yourself, “Hey, self! I know that there are three types of parenting styles...authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive. I’ve known this for a long time because I learned it in lots of classes.” If you

decide to talk about any of these parenting styles in your paper, you MUST cite a good source.

You can only discuss them without citing if YOU YOURSELF MADE UP THE TERMS/IDEAS! If you are discussing something you did not invent or make up, go to the source or at the very least go to one of your old textbooks that discussed it and cite that.

Any information that you learned from an article and are including in your paper must be cited. Some students say, “If I did that, I would be citing every line!” In truth, sometimes that is what you have to do. When citing an author, try to remember “framing” and cite with the first sentence that contains information from the article (i.e., don’t wait until the end of the paragraph to cite the author). For example...

Smith and Wesson (1995) state that parents who read to their children are preparing their children to be excellent readers in the future. According to their research, children of parents who read to them in infancy score higher on reading achievement tests in the 3rd grade. Furthermore, they found these children to do better in all language arts classes (Smith & Wesson, 1995).

Do you see how I *framed* the paragraph? I immediately told the reader where the following information was going to come from and then cited at the end of the information from the same fictional article. The reader then assumes that everything between those citations is from that article (and you don’t have to put in those stupid parentheses after every sentence!).

Suppose the information in the last sentence of the example above actually came from someone else? Then, you’d cite as follows...

Smith and Wesson (1995) state that parents who read to their children are preparing their children to be excellent readers in the future. According to their research, children of parents who read to them in infancy score higher on reading achievement tests in the 3rd grade. In

another study, Johnson and Johnson (1999) found that children of reading parents to do better in all language arts classes. Thus, it appears that reading to children is important for intellectual growth.

It's really important that you don't plagiarize. Use your own words to state what the author says. Sometimes it helps to read the information, then look up and explain what you read in your own words. Do not make the mistake of taking the author's words and simply changing a few words. For example, suppose you read in Berger (1998): "Even in today's changing world, mothers and fathers together are more likely to meet all their infant's needs – biological, cognitive, and social – than either one alone." Do **NOT** do the following:

Even in today's world, parents together are more likely to meet all their infant's needs than one parent alone (Berger, 1998).

This is still plagiarism! You have changed a few words, but most of the words are still Berger's! It is your job to tell the reader what Berger's ideas are, but do so in your own words, such as: It is difficult for one parent alone to meet the myriad of needs children have (Berger, 1998).

Check out the links related to plagiarism, as well as the FAS/CDE Student Handbook. You will find some excellent examples. At first, learning to restate others' ideas will seem difficult; after awhile, however, it will become second nature.

One final thought. According to APA V, all direct quotes **MUST** have page numbers. However, when you cite an author without using a direct quote, you **MAY** include the page number where you found the idea. A lot of readers appreciate knowing exactly where to look up the information.

References

- Berger, K. S. (1998). *The developing person through the life span* (4th ed.). NY: Worth Publishers.
- Bodman, D. A. (2000). Writing term papers. *Important Journal*, 123, 2-10.
- Doe, J. (1992). Population statistics. *Another Important Journal*, 25, 321-329.
- Johnson, A. R. & Johnson, J. (1998). Predictors of success in language arts classes. *Some Education Journal*, 38, 722-726.
- Smith, A. B. & Wesson, C. D. (1999). Teaching Johnny to read. In A. B. James & C. R. Robbins (Eds.), *Handbook of reading education* (pp.12-34). Place, AZ: Publisher.

[NOTE: Only use issue numbers (which should appear in parentheses after the volume number) if each issue starts with page 1. If the issue starts with some other number (for example, 350), then you don't need the issue number. Researchers can find the issue number simply by page number.]