

APA Basics for Professional Writing in Social Work

Basic Formatting and Page Set-Up (APA Manual, Chapter 8, pp. 228 – 231)

- Font: Times New Roman
- Font Size: 12-point
- Margins: 1” around page
- Line Spacing: double space all text
- Alignment: flush-left style with the first line of every paragraph indented

Title Page (APA Manual, Chapter 8, pp. 228 – 231)

- Includes four components:
 - *Running head* – abbreviated title that is at the top of each page, flush-left style, a maximum of 50 characters, and appears in the headings portion of the page (you insert a “Header” and do not type it in on each page)
 - On the title page, the running head is formatted as:
Running head: APA BASICS
 - On subsequent pages, the running head should be formatted as:
APA BASICS
 - *Title, Author Byline, Institutional Affiliation*
 - The title, author byline, and institutional affiliation are centered and double spaced
 - NOTE: The APA Manual also stipulates a fifth component be included, an Author Note, but this is not required
- Page numbers begin with the title page, flush-right, and continue on subsequent pages
- All components listed above are in regular text, they are not bold or italicized

Headings & Subheadings (APA Manual, Chapter 3, pp. 62 – 63)

There are five levels of headings:

| Level of Heading | Format |
|------------------|--|
| 1 | Centered, Boldface, Uppercase and Lowercase Heading |
| 2 | Flush Left, Boldface, Uppercase and Lowercase Heading |
| 3 | Indented, boldface, lowercase paragraph heading ending with a period. |
| 4 | <i>Indented, boldface, italicized, lowercase paragraph heading ending with a period.</i> |
| 5 | <i>Indented, italicized, lowercase paragraph heading ending with a period.</i> |

For example:

The Importance of Professional Writing in Social Work

This is a level 1 heading because it is a main section of the document, meaning that it is something you want the reader to immediately be able to identify. Only use subsequent level 1 headings when you are introducing a change in the focus of information presented.

APA Basics

“APA Basics” is a level 2 heading. This means that while it is an important section that you want the reader to immediately be able to locate, it ties with the “The Importance of Professional Writing in Social Work” main heading, and the information given on “APA Basics” helps to further illustrate “The Importance of Professional Writing in Social Work”.

Common mistakes. This is a level 3 heading. It is a subheading of “APA Basics”, meaning that while this is once again an important bit of information that the reader needs to take notice of, it supports the information presented in the “APA Basics” section, which in turn informs “The Importance of Professional Writing in Social Work”.

In-Text Citations

- Use in-text citations whenever you are using ideas or research from other people to inform your work; if you don't cite it is plagiarism.
- If using a direct quote, you cite the author(s) and date of the article as well as the specific page number where you found the quote, i.e., “Evidence-based practice is a process in which practitioners make practice decisions in light of the best research evidence available” (Rubin & Babbie, 2008, p. 23).
 - If a quote is 40 words or more, it must be formatted as a block quote (APA Manual, p. 171)
- If you have multiple citations in one parentheses, put them in alphabetical order and separate out each citation with a semicolon; i.e., (Apple, 2008; Smith & Barney, 2007)
- Citation format depends on the number of authors listed on the article (APA Manual, Chapter 6, p. 177):

| Type of citation | First citation in text | Subsequent citations in text | Parenthetical format, first citation in text | Parenthetical format, subsequent citations in text |
|---|--|---------------------------------|--|--|
| One work by one author | Walker (2007) | Walker (2007) | (Walker, 2007) | (Walker, 2007) |
| One work by two authors | Walker and Allen (2004) | Walker and Allen (2004) | (Walker & Allen, 2004) | (Walker & Allen, 2004) |
| One work by three authors | Bradley, Ramirez, and Soo (1999) | Bradley et al. (1999) | (Bradley, Ramirez, & Soo, 1999) | (Bradley et al., 1999) |
| One work by four authors | Bradley, Ramirez, Soo, and Walsh (2006) | Bradley et al. (2006) | (Bradley, Ramirez, Soo, & Walsh, 2006) | (Bradley et al., 2006) |
| One work by five authors | Walker, Allen, Bradley, Ramirez, and Soo (2008) | Walker et al. (2008) | (Walker, Allen, Bradley, Ramirez, & Soo, 2008) | (Walker et al., 2008) |
| One work by six or more authors | Wasserstein et al. (2005) | Wasserstein et al. (2005) | (Wasserstein et al., 2005) | (Wasserstein et al., 2005) |
| Groups (readily identified through abbreviations) | National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH, 2003) | NIMH (2003) | (National Institute of Mental Health [NIMH], 2003) | (NIMH, 2003) |
| Groups (no abbreviation) | University of Pittsburgh (2005) | University of Pittsburgh (2005) | (University of Pittsburgh, 2005) | (University of Pittsburgh, 2005) |

References List (APA Manual, Chapter 7, pp. 193 – 224)

- List **all** sources used in alphabetical order based on the last name of the author
 - All authors should be listed in the reference list; this means that if an article has seven authors, all seven names should be included
- Reference Examples
 - Entire books (print version):
Rubin, A., & Babbie, E. (2008). *Research methods for social work* (6th ed.). Belmont, CA: Thompson Brooks/Cole.
 - Book chapters (print version):
Gilbert, M. C. (2004). Childhood depression: A risk factor perspective. In M. W. Fraser (Ed.), *Risk and resilience in childhood: An ecological perspective* (2nd ed.) (pp. 315-346). Washington, DC: NASW Press.
- Journal articles:
 - Journal articles found online:
Rockafellow, B. D., & Saules, K. K. (2006). Substance use by college students:

The role of intrinsic versus extrinsic motivation for athletic involvement.
Psychology of Addictive Behaviors, 20, 279-287. doi: 10.1037/0893-164X.20.3.279

- Journal articles found in the physical journal:
Rockafellow, B. D., & Saules, K. K. (2006). Substance use by college students: The role of intrinsic versus extrinsic motivation for athletic involvement. *Psychology of Addictive Behaviors*, 20(3), 279-287.
- Websites:
 - Websites (with date listed on the site)
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2009). *Spring break health and safety tips*. Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/family/springbreak/>
 - Websites (with no date listed on the site)
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (n.d.). *Spring break health and safety tips*. Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/family/springbreak/>

Other Important Formatting Standards

- Numbers below 10 are expressed in words and numbers above 10 are expressed in numerals; for example: “There are six topics in this chapter and 17 topics in the next chapter.”
- Do not begin a sentence with a number. Instead of “25 people participated...” begin with “Twenty-five people participated...”
- When using abbreviations, first spell out the full meaning of the abbreviation followed by the abbreviation in parentheses; i.e., Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI); then you can use the abbreviation for all future references

Resources for Formatting Your Paper Using Microsoft Word