

APA Documentation: Overview



Your “paper is a collaboration between you and your sources. To be fair and ethical, you must acknowledge your debt to the writers of those sources. If you don't, you are guilty of plagiarism, a serious academic offence” (Hacker, 2003, p. 383).

Hacker, D. (2003). *A writer's reference*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's.

Social sciences such as psychology, sociology, education, and social work tend to prefer the APA style of documentation. APA uses **in-text citations** in an author-date style and a **list of references**.

In-Text Citations

- Provide the author(s) and date of the work you are citing.

Bromley and Edwards (1997) have shown that incoming students see counselors more often than upper-class students.

Research has shown (Bromley & Edwards, 1997) that incoming students see counselors more often than upper-class students.

- Introduce a quotation with a signal phrase that includes the author's last name and year of publication in parentheses. Put the page number (“p.”) in parentheses after the quotation. If you use an electronic document without page numbers, cite the appropriate heading and indicate which paragraph under that heading you are referring to.

According to Jones (2005), “adult learners balanced multiple roles in their lives” (Multiple Roles section, para. 6).

- Cite all the names (up to five authors) the first time you mention their work.

Bromley, Edwards, Peterson, Alvarez, and Yurewicz (2001) demonstrated that...

- In subsequent citations, use “et al.” after the first author's name.

Bromley et al. (2001) or (Bromley et al., 2001)

- If a work has six or more authors, cite the first author's name followed by “et al.” in the signal phrase or the parentheses.

- To cite a website or work *without an author*, use the first few words of the title in place of an author.

Many adolescent boys experience feelings of depression during the year following a divorce (“Divorce and Adolescents,” 2001).

- Whenever possible, attempt to summarize or paraphrase other writers, attributing credit by citing the author and date. Only quote when there is a clear need to use the exact language of the original. Limit the quote itself to as few words as possible.

Research has shown (Bromley & Edwards, 1997) that first year students “use campus counseling services twice as frequently as second and third year students” (p. 106).

- Set off long quotations (40 or more words) from a paragraph by indenting one-half inch from the left margin. Double space the quotation. Do not use quotation marks. Cite author, date, and page numbers at the end of the block quote.
- To cite an indirect source (one you didn’t read yourself but are citing from another writer’s work), use the phrase “as cited in.” **NOTE:** In your list of references, you can only include the original source because that is the only source you’ve read first hand.

Smith and Brown (as cited in Cousins et al., 2000) proposed that mature learners . . .

References

- Title your list References – center of page. Do not bold, underline, or enlarge font.
- Include only sources that you refer to in your paper, not everything you’ve read.
- Arrange your reference list alphabetically by author’s last name.
- Double space throughout the list.
- Use a hanging indent so that the second (and more) lines of each entry are indented by ½ inch.

Here are some common entries in a list of references. For more models and variations, consult a writer’s handbook such as *LB Brief* (go to the gray section for APA) or go to <http://www.dianahacker.com/resdoc/>

1. Book

Leakey, R., & Lewin, R. (1992). *Origins reconsidered: In search of what makes us human*. New York: Doubleday.

2. Journal Article

Marx, J. L. (1980). Ape language controversy flares up. *Science*, 207(2), 130-33.

3. Newspaper/Magazine

Smith, P. (2006, June 15). Ambition: Why some people succeed more than others. *Time*, 166, 48-52.

4. Internet Site/Database

Linder, D. (2005). A brief history of witchcraft persecutions before Salem. Retrieved November 4, 2005, from <http://www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/salem/witchhistory.html>

Other pointers for APA:

- When citing electronic texts, try to use pdf (they include page numbers) rather than html files.
- Use the past or present perfect when discussing a researcher’s work.
- Use the active voice.
- Refer to authors by last name.
- For style tips such as removing bias in language, go to <http://www.apastyle.org/styletips.html>