

Running head: Everything You Wanted to Know

APA Style Guidelines for Social Work Students

Department of Social Work

Southeast Missouri State University

Fall 2013

Revised Fall 2014

Abstract

This paper presents a summary of key elements of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th edition, 2010). It is the required writing style for all social work courses at Southeast. This paper both discusses and exemplifies key components of the APA Writing Style that the Social Work Faculty has set as the minimum expectation for all social work majors and non-majors taking social work courses. It is hoped that this paper assists every student to excel in their professional writing activities. **Note that in order to conserve paper and because none of the assignments are meant for publication, abstracts, running heads, and title pages at Southeast Missouri State University Department of Social Work are required only if specifically assigned.**

APA Style Guidelines for Social Work Students

These guidelines clarify the faculty's expectations related to professional writing and provide a basic template for all writing assignments in courses offered by the Department of Social Work. These guidelines also represent the minimum writing standard for using the APA style across the social work curriculum. They do not replace consulting the *APA Publication Manual* (2010), nor do they pre-empt individual faculty members from modifying the style. These guidelines provide a simplified guide for the professional writing style endorsed by the Social Work faculty. These guidelines have been adapted from Voss, R.W. (2009) *Everything You Wanted to Know About APA Style but Were Afraid to Ask* from West Chester University of Pennsylvania and the sixth edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (2010).

Why use APA Documentation Styles?

The acronym APA stands for American Psychological Association, and its *Publication Manual* sets the standard for documentation style, for the behavioral and social sciences and professional disciplines. The APA documentation style promotes a standardized way of writing to help professionals communicate effectively by establishing a uniform and consistent writing convention so that information is clear, easy to verify, and easy to read.

Beginning Consideration: Academic Honesty and Ethics in Writing

One of the first considerations in writing a formal paper is a review of basic ethics related to writing. Whenever we write a scholarly paper, we rely on other colleagues' research and findings to guide and develop our own thinking and ideas. Whenever we paraphrase another person's work, credit must be given or we risk committing an ethical

violation called *plagiarism*. Szuchman & Thomlison describe plagiarism as “taking ideas and writings from others and passing them off as one’s own.” (2000, p. 7)

The ethics of crediting sources used in research applies to both direct quotations as well as indirect references, for example, when we cite another’s ideas, innovations, or approaches. Failure to properly cite one’s sources in a formal paper is a serious matter and may result in a failing grade for the assignment and warrant further disciplinary action (see the University’s Academic Dishonesty policy). If a student has any question about the need for a citation, he or she should ask their respective instructor for clarification. Students should be aware that *Turnitin*, a program that identifies originality of a student’s work, is now available on Moodle papers. This program allows students to identify when their work is not original and learn how to write and cite sources appropriately. This also tells the professor whether you are inappropriately using another’s work. In the long run, taking, purchasing or otherwise using someone else’s work or ideas violates both departmental and university standards. It also prevents the student from learning one of the most basic skills of a professional—the ability to write competently. From the outset, students are encouraged to utilize university resources to support their excellence in writing, including the University’s Center for Writing Excellence and individual or group consults with your instructors.

Some Basic Expectations

Formatting

Format refers to the basic layout, style, overall look, and structure of your paper.

Formatting makes your paper easier to read, easier to organize, and easier to revise.

Proper formatting makes your paper look professional and makes your point clear and compelling.

Organization

All written work is to be organized into clear, logical sections. Within the sections, ideas are organized into clear paragraphs. An individual paragraph focuses on one idea (generally stated close to the beginning). Subsequent sentences within the paragraph should all be related to that idea. Paragraphs typically end with a conclusion or summary sentence related to the original idea and/or a transitional sentence introducing the subject of the next paragraph. Overly long or very short paragraphs are to be avoided. Professors will instruct you on how you are to format paragraphs with numbers or subheadings.

Flow of Thought

Sentences must be organized so that they sustain a consistent flow of thought. Sentences within paragraphs should flow into each other in a way that provides continuity of thought and enhances readability. It may be helpful to read your paper aloud so that you can listen for the continuity of thought.

Grammar

Papers are to be completely free of spelling mistakes and grammatical errors. This includes sentence fragments, run-on sentences, subject/verb agreement problems, verb/object agreement problems, missing articles, vague pronoun references, improper or missing punctuation, and so forth. Most word processing programs indicate obvious errors on the page—use it and make the corrections.

Economy of Language

In general, students should strive to write with a minimum of words. Consider combining short sentences in ways that enhance readability and use less space. (At the same time, however, avoid overly long and complex sentences.) Consider eliminating sentences that may be redundant or unnecessary. Consider word choice very carefully, and work toward building a stronger vocabulary.

Title Page (page 1)

The title is centered on the first page of your paper. Underneath the title, include your name and organizational affiliation. For class assignments, include the course name and section (SW342-01) for which you are writing the paper, and underneath the course name and section include the date. Use uppercase and lowercase text, centered throughout.

Abstract (page 2) (if specifically assigned)

The abstract is a one-paragraph summary of the most important points of your paper. Use the heading, Abstract, centered on the first line. The abstract should give a concise overview of the project, summarizing key points as well as the overall purpose of the project. **Abstracts are only used at Southeast Department of Social Work if specifically assigned.**

Introduction (page 3)

The introduction begins on the line following the paper title, if a title is used. If no title is used on the first page of the narrative, begin on the first line. “Because the introduction is clearly identified by its position in the manuscript, it does not carry a heading labeling it the introduction.” (APA, 2010, p. 27) Make sure to orient your reader

to your writing project, describing the purpose of your report, etc. Some redundancy with your abstract is expected here.

Body

The body of the paper is to be written using the guidelines described in the section below labeled **General Document Guidelines**.

Reference Page

Type the word **References** (not Bibliography) at the top of a new page, centered. All references are double-spaced. APA requires a hanging indent for all references. The first line of the reference is flush left. This allows your reader to visually identify the authors or titles of your sources. Remember that all of the references on the Reference page are listed in alphabetical order. The names of the authors in each reference cited are listed exactly the way they are listed in the article, which is ordered related to the weight of their contribution to the article or study. The first author is usually the primary investigator (PI) and his or her name goes first and would be listed accordingly in the in-text citation.

General Document Guidelines

Page Numbering and Running Headers

Pages are numbered and the numbering is placed in the upper right hand corner of the page. The page number is suppressed on the first page, then begins with the number 2 on the next page. This numbering system always is followed, even if a title page and abstract are used—the top page is considered to be page 1.

Do not use Running Headers unless specifically assigned by the instructor.

Margins

Margins are set one inch on both sides and top and bottom of the page. Justify only on the left side of the paper. The right side of the paper should have ragged edges.

Spacing

The paper is double-spaced throughout. Do not use single or triple spacing. The Word default using the paragraph link must be changed in order to do this correctly.

Indentation

All paragraphs and block quotations are indented 5 spaces (tab).

Font

Times New Roman of 12 points (illustrated here) is the only acceptable font style for APA papers. Fonts smaller than 12 point are difficult to read. Neither smaller nor larger fonts comply with APA standards and are not used.

Headings

Headings show the reader how the paper is organized by labeling the main sections of your paper. Use headings only if required by your Professor. When used, they follow the following format:

Level One heading is used for major sections of papers. They are centered in **boldface** with all major words capitalized. There is no punctuation after a Level One heading. Level two headings are used for subsections of Level One sections. The heading is flush left, in **boldface**, with all major words capitalized. There is no punctuation after a Level Two heading. Level Three headings are subsections of Level Two sections. Level Three headings start indented five spaces, like a new paragraph, in **boldface**. Only the first word of the heading and proper nouns are capitalized. Level Three headings end with a period. Examples follow:

Level One Headings are Centered and Capitalize All Words

Level Two Headings are Subsections of Level One and are Flush Left

Level three headings are indented with only the first word capitalized and a period at the end. The paragraph starts immediately after the heading in regular text.

Do not label headings with numbers or letters, unless instructed to do so.

Usage and Style

Acronyms and abbreviations must be spelled out completely on initial appearance in the text. Use only if an abbreviation is conventional and apt to be familiar. Avoid beginning a sentence with an acronym or abbreviation. If a number is the first word of a sentence, it must be spelled out.

Capitalization

Capitalize the first word of a sentence or title and all subsequent words of four letters or more in titles of books and articles in text. Capitalize the first word after a colon (:), or dash (-) in a title and after a colon beginning a complete sentence in the text. Do not capitalize names of laws, theories, and hypotheses except for proper nouns.

Citations and References

APA style includes two elements for citing outside sources: parenthetical (in text) citation and a list of references. The in-text citation is a shortened form of the full reference information from which the material was obtained. The full reference information is found on the list of references at the end of the paper. Together these elements enable the reader to access the sources consulted. With the exceptions below, **all in-text citations must have a complete reference on the reference list, and all references on the reference list must have at least one in-text citation.** The exceptions

to this two-pronged method of referencing include personal communications with oral sources where there is no written or electronic record. In this case, only the parenthetical citation is used, e.g., (Wizard of Oz, personal communication, January 21, 2009). The other exception is where a website is being cited in the text as an illustration, where only the URL address is used in the text.

Indirect quotations. In-text paraphrasing does not require quotation marks or page numbers.

Example: In “Racial Formations”, the presentation of the case of Susie Guillory Phipps illustrates an example of the concept of hypo-descent (Omi & Winant, 1986).

Direct quotations. Quotation marks around the quote and page numbers are required.

Example: Omi and Winant (1986) point out that “Race is indeed a pre-eminently *sociohistorical* concept” (p. 21).

Long quotations. Direct quotes of 40 or more words must be in block form and indented five spaces from the left margin. Block quotes are often introduced with a colon. When using the block quote, do not use quotation marks unless the source you are quoting uses quotation marks, include them “as they appear in the original.” Cited information (such as author, date and page numbers) is listed in parentheses after the last punctuation of the quote. There is no punctuation following the parentheses. “Double space the entire quotation.” (APA, 2010, p. 171)

Example: Friedman (2006) draws connections between two seemingly disparate events: November 9 (dismantling of the Berlin Wall) and September 11 (attack on the World Trade Center). He believes:

these two dates represent the two competing forms of imagination at work in the world today: the creative imagination of 11/9 and the destruction imagination of 9/11. One brought down a wall and opened the windows of the world ... [the other] putting up new invisible and concrete wall among people. (p. 543)

Three options for in-text citations. Place citations within sentences and paragraphs so that it is clear which material has come from which sources. Use pronouns and transitions to help indicate whether several sentences contain material from the same source or from different sources.

1. Place the author(s) and date(s) within parentheses at an appropriate place within or at the end of a sentence:

Example: Researchers have pointed out that the lack of trained staff is a common barrier to providing adequate health education (Polack, 2008).

2. Place only the date within parentheses:

Example: Paquin (2008) recommended that baccalaureate social work educators should take a leadership role in their respective universities, clearly linking the social work sequence with the general education curriculum.

3. Integrate both the author and date into your sentence:

Example: In 2007, Parker, et al., proposed integrating tribal and shamanic values and knowledge into social work practice not only with traditional American Indian people, but across the curriculum, challenging Eurocentric assumptions embedded in social work practice.

Additional examples of citations. The student is encouraged to look at the APA citation examples at the University of Southern Mississippi Libraries website,

<http://www.apastyle.org/electref.html> or Purdue University's Online Writing Lab, <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/> The preceding citations are examples of how to cite a direct reference to a website in your paper. However, if you are citing a document from a website, cite the author or title and date, e.g., (Crunkilton, Hornby, & Stokes, 2006).

Sometimes we will not have access to the primary source and will need to cite a primary source from a secondary source (e.g., a textbook). In this case, the following should be used for the in-text citation: (Stokes, 1978, as cited in Polack & Parker, 2004). The reference on the Reference page would list Polack & Parker, since this is the source of the Stokes reference.

References. The current edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (APA, 2010) includes guidelines for referencing electronic sources. In light of the variability of online sources whose URLs may change, a new identifier has been developed by scholarly publishers to track online sources. This identifier is called the Digital Object Identifier (DOI) which is a standardized identifier for online scholarly sources (APA, 2010). However, not every publication has been assigned a doi, in which case the URL address is cited.

The reference citation is constructed using the author's name if known, title of writing, journal issue name, number name of the website or webpage, date if known, and the digital object identifier (DOI), which often is listed on the upper right hand corner of the article above the copyright. If no DOI is given, the URL address should be cited (APA, 2010, p. 189). The period (.) is not used following the URL address to avoid confusion in retrieval, where a period may interfere with accurate retrieval, unless it is part of the URL address.

If known, the digital object identifiers (DOI) should be included in the citation listed on the reference page, otherwise the full uniform resource locator (URL) address is listed in the citation on your reference page. Since many URLs are very long, it is recommended to use the cut and paste function to ensure accuracy in citing the electronic source. Note that retrieval dates are used only when the source material is expected to change over time, such as with Wikis. (APA, 2010, p.192) In this case, the reference on the reference page would read as follows:

Voss, R.W., Klein, S. L., & Quigley, I., (2003). Crime and Justice: A traditional Sicangu (Rosebud) Lakota perspective. *Social Policy Times*, 3, 232-244. Retrieved from <http://www.rcssp.org/sptm1.htm>

Reference samples. Please note that the following headings are underlined for readability--due to the type of information that is provided, it may be confusing without further differentiation. **Correct APA format does not include the underline for this level of heading.**

Journal article with DOI.

*Herbst-Damm, K.L., & Kulik, J.A. (2005). Volunteer support, marital status, and the survival times of terminally ill patients. *Health Psychology*, 24, 225-229. doi: 10.1037/0278-6133.24.2.225

Journal article without DOI (when DOI is not available) and pagination is not continuous.

*Sillick, T. J., & Schutte, N. S. (2006). Emotional intelligence and self-esteem mediate between perceived early parental love and adult happiness. *E-Journal of Applied Psychology*, 2(2), 38-48. Retrieved from <http://ojs.lib.swin.edu.au/index.php/ejap>

Journal Article (continuous pagination). Volume 1 Issue 1 begins with page 1. Page numbers continue through all subsequent issues of the volume—they do not restart every issue with page 1. Therefore, no issue number is needed.

Billingham, C.T. (1986). Piaget revisited. *Journal of Social Issues*, 37, 618-625.

Paginated by Issue. Every issue begins with page 1 so an issue number is needed.

Voss, R.W., Douville, V., Little Soldier, A., & Twiss, G. (1999). Tribal and shamanic-based social work practice: A Lakota perspective. *Social Work*, 44(3), 228-241.

Books, print version.

Szuchman, L. T. & Thomlison, B. (2000). *Writing with style: APA style for social work*. Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole Thomson Learning.

*Shotton, M.A. (1989). *Computer addiction? A study of computer dependency*. London, England: Taylor & Francis.

Electronic version of print book, no DOI available.

*Shotton, M.A. (1989). *Computer addiction? A study of computer dependency* [DX Reader version]. Retrieved from <http://www.ebookstore.tandf.co.uk/html/indix.asp>

Writer's handbook. (2001). The University of Wisconsin-Madison Writing Center. Retrieved January 13, 2002, from <http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook>

Electronic version of print book with DOI.

*Schiraldi, G.R. (2001). *The post-traumatic stress disorder sourcebook: A guide to healing, recovery, and growth* [Adobe Digital Editions version]. doi: 10.1036/0071393722

Guest Editorial, print version.

Joyner, M.C. (2001). [Guest Editorial]. Reflections of Leadership. *The Journal of Baccalaureate Social Work*, 6(2), 1-23.

Book Review, print version.

Siegel, D.I. (1999). [Book Review]. Van Wormer, K. (1998). *Social welfare: A world view*, Chicago: Nelson-Hall.

Editor as Author.

Dykes, A.T. (Ed.). (1983). *Early developmental stages*. Bethesda, MD: Norcroft Books.

Article or Chapter in an edited book.

Voss, R.W., Douville, V., & Twiss, G. (2001). Native American healing: A pan-Indian perspective. In Marc S. Micozzi (Ed.), *Fundamentals of complementary and alternative medicine*, with a Foreword by C. Evertt Koop, (2nd ed.), 387-404.

Omi, M. & Winant, H. (1986). Racial formations. In Ore, T. (Ed). (2011). *The social construction of difference and inequality* (5th ed., pp. 19-29). Boston: McGraw Hill.

Citing audiovisual media.

Producer, A.A. (Producer), & Director, B.B. (Director). Year. *Title of motion picture* [Motion picture]. Country of origin: Studio.

Voss, R.W. (Producer & Director). (1999). *An interview with Ellen Moves Camp, Oglala Elder*, [Video]. Video by Ron Hodgins. West Chester, PA: FHG Library, West Chester University.

Citing Oral Interviews.

In-text citation only, unless interview is archived, then you should include the location of the written or recorded interview.

No Author Identified.

Understanding early years as a prerequisite to development. (1986, May 4). *The Wall*

Street Journal, p. 8.

No Author, No Date Identified.

Homelessness: A report from the field. (n.d.). Retrieved on 1/20/06 from

<http://www.advocatesforthehomeless>.

Citing a corporate author, government report.

*U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health, National

Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute. (2006). *Managing asthma: A guide for teachers*

(NIH Publication No. 02-3000). Retrieved from

http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/prof/lung/asthma/asth_sch.pdf

Final Step

Proof Read Your Paper Carefully

After having worked hard on the paper, the last thing needed is to commit a spelling or typographical error. **Use the Spell Check feature** on the word processing program, but remember that Spell Check also is not foolproof. Proof read the paper for clarity, adherence to the assignment criteria, and technical correctness. Make necessary corrections and submit to the instructor on the due date in the manner assigned. **Always save a copy of the paper.** There are many ways to do so, such as saving to the computer's hard drive, to a flash drive, to the cloud (e. g., Dropbox), or emailing to yourself.

References

Publication manual of the American Psychological Association (2010). Washington, DC:

American Psychological Association.

Footnotes

*Citation examples taken from illustrations included in *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (2010). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.