

Academic Writing and APA Style

Dafina-Lazarus (D-L) Stewart

Department of Higher Education and Student Affairs

Bowling Green State University

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With thanks over the years to Christina Lunceford, Maureen Wilson, Mike Dannells, Denise Davidson, & Barb Toth

About Writing

- Read Chapter 3 of the APA Manual

And consider purchasing a copy of one of the following:

- Zinnser's *On Writing Well*
- Strunk's *The Elements of Style*

Your Friend, the APA Manual

American Psychological Association.
(2010). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

Tip: Purchase the spiral bound version if possible, so you can lay it flat on the desk next to you while you write. 😊

Characteristics of Scholarly Writing

- Precise and concise – *specific and brief*
- Clear – *makes intended meaning comprehensible to reader*
- Logical and well organized – *uses effective transitions and headings to guide effective flow; conveys one idea per sentence*
- Formal – *avoids contractions, colloquialisms, figures of speech, and clichés*
- Proofread – *free of grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors*

Writing and Thinking

- Ambiguous, poorly organized, and sloppy writing undermines effective communication of ideas
- Poor writing usually obscures good thinking
- Poor writing can reflect inadequate thought and attention
- Few of us are such gifted writers that we can write a good scholarly paper without multiple drafts

An Example of Rewriting

Original:

Not carefully following the assignment (particularly in exams) is a problem.

First Revision:

Not following directions on assignments, particularly in exams, is important to avoid.

Second Revision:

It is important to follow directions on assignments and exams.

Common Writing Errors

(known to annoy many HESA faculty)

- Subject-verb disagreement (pp. 78-79)
- Noun-pronoun disagreement (p. 79)
- Affect vs. Effect
- Incorrect possessives (students, student' s, students')
- Misspelling a source' s name (Coombs vs. Coomes)
- Using “myself” when “me” will do
- Using prepositions to end a sentence
- Using “which” when “that” will do (pp. 79, 83)
- Using “while” when “although” is intended (p. 84)
- Using “data is” instead of “data are”
- Using passive voice (pp. 73, 77, 81)

APA Formatting and Style

Preparing a Paper (p. 228-230)

- See pages 41-59 for sample papers
 - Title page (p. 229; ask if required)
 - Abstracts are rarely required for assignments
 - Double space everything (p. 229; *don't let Word add space before or after paragraphs*)
 - Use 1" margins all around (p. 229)
 - Indent first line of each paragraph ½" (p. 229)
 - Use left justification for text (not full) (p. 229)
 - Use page numbers and running head (p. 230)
 - Set ¶ format to avoid widows and orphans

- 
- Use headings in bold face (pp. 62-63) and keep headings with the text
 - In a string of 3 or more items, use a comma before “and,” “or,” or “but” (p. 88)
 - **Use spell-check AND proofread** (p. 230)
 - Also ask someone known to be a good editor to read and provide feedback
 - See Word Options or Preferences to select options for proofing

Periods (ugh!)

- Insert TWO spaces at the end of a sentence (pp. 87-88)
- Insert ONE space after:
 - Commas, colons, and semicolons
 - Periods separating parts of a reference citation
 - Periods in initials of personal names.
 - (C. J. Lunceford)

Capitalization and Hyphenation

- Capitalization (pp. 101-104)
 - Black, White (p. 75)
 - She works in student affairs.
 - He majored in sociology.
 - He introduced President Mazey.
 - She is president of the university.
- Hyphenation (pp. 97-100)
 - first-generation student
 - first-year students

Other Issues

- Abbreviations (pp. 106-111)
 - e.g., (for example) vs. i.e., (that is)
- Use of the first person (“I”) is acceptable, particularly when expressing your opinion
- Literature reviews typically use the past tense [“Ro (2015) noted . . .”]

- Use active voice (“Practitioners should . . .”) rather than passive voice (“It would be helpful to . . .”) (p. 77) Tip: MS Word can be set to identify passive language.
- Avoid anthropomorphisms (attributing human qualities to inanimate objects or entities) (p. 69)
 - NO: “The study found...” “The university decided...”
 - YES: “The researchers found...” “The director decided...”

Scavenger Hunt: Part 1

- Work in small groups (about 9 groups of 4) to identify the errors in the sample paper given to you.
- The group who identifies the most errors **WINS!** (The prize is bragging rights.)

Citations in APA Style

Why Do We Cite Sources?

- To give credit to whom it is due
- To establish weight of authority
- To help other scholars follow and build upon our work
- To avoid charges of plagiarism

Plagiarism

- Failure to cite sources (i.e., give proper attribution) for words or ideas that are not your own is plagiarism
- Neither ignorance (“I didn’t know better”) nor lack of intent (“I didn’t mean to”) is an acceptable defense
- Consequences: See policy in student handbook
- You may not submit the same paper for different courses

What Requires Citation?

(pp. 170-171)

- Direct quotation
 - Page or paragraph number *required*
- Paraphrase: “summarize a passage or rearrange the order of a sentence and change some of the words” (APA, 2010, p. 15)
 - Page or paragraph number encouraged

Tips:

- Typically, every sentence does not need a citation (see examples on p. 171)
- See APA on ellipses and include spaces before and after periods [. . . and] (pp. 172-173)

Citing Sources in APA Style

- Use in-text citations (pp. 174-179)
- Use a reference list (pp. 180-192; Chapter 7)
- Each source cited in text must be on the reference list except: (p. 174)
 - Personal communications
 - Classical works like the Bible or Qur'an
 - Works referenced in a secondary source

- Each entry on the reference list must be cited in text (p. 174)
- An item cited in text and entered on the reference page indicates that you have read that piece
- Avoid secondary citations (p. 178)
- Reference list begins on a new page (p. 230) and comes before any appendices

Citing a Book (pp. 202-205)

Stewart, D.-L. (Ed.). (2011). *Multicultural student services on campus: Building bridges, re-visioning community*. Sterling, VA: Stylus.

In-text citations

- (Stewart, 2011)
- Stewart (2011) reviewed the development of multicultural student services (MSS) over time.
- “MSS does not only provide social and academic support services to non-majority or underrepresented students,” (Stewart, 2011, p. 8).

Book, Two Authors

Strange, C. C., & Banning, J. H. (2015). *Designing for learning: Creating campus environments for student success* (2nd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

In-text citations

- (Strange & Banning, 2015, p. 31)
- Strange and Banning (2015) argued that the residence hall is a “significant social space” (p. 31).

Book, Three – Five Authors

- Evans, N. J., Forney, D. S., Guido, F. M., Patton, L. D., & Renn, K. A. (2010). *Student development in college: Theory, research, and practice* (2nd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

In-text citations

- 1st citation: (Evans, Forney, Guido, Patton, & Renn, 2010)
- 2nd and successive citations: Evans et al. (2010) described . . . (see APA manual, p. 175)

Group Book and Chapter Within It

Schuh, J. H., Jones, S. R., & Harper, S. R. (2011).
Student services: A handbook for the profession (5th ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

(You rarely will cite the whole book!)

Reason, R. D., & Broido, E. M. (2011). Philosophy and values. In J. H. Schuh, S. R. Jones, S. R. Harper (Eds.), *Student services: A handbook for the profession* (5th ed., pp. 80-95). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

In-text citations

– Reason and Broido (2011) described . . .

New Directions Citation

Coomes, M. D., & DeBard, R. (Eds.). (2004). *Serving the millennial generation* (New Directions for Student Services No. 106). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

You'll typically cite individual chapters in an edited volume

Stewart, D.-L., & Lozano, A. (2009). Intersections of race and religion. In S. Watt, E. Fairchild, & K. Goodman (Eds.), *Intersections of difficult dialogues: Religious privilege and student affairs practice* (New Directions for Student Services, no. 125, pp. 23-31). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Note: Initials precede surname following "In"

Newspaper Article (p. 200)

Electronic:

Hilts, P. J. (1999, February 16). In forecasting their emotions, most people flunk out. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com>

Note: Do not include volume or issue number

Journal Article (p. 198)

Renn, K. A., & Lunceford, C. J. (2004). Because the numbers matter: Transforming racial and ethnic data collection in postsecondary education to meet the challenges of a changing nation. *Educational Policy*, 18, 752-783.

Notes:

- Volume number is in italics
- Do NOT include the issue number for continuously paginated journals

Electronic Journal Article with DOI (p. 198)

Hirschy, A. S., & Wilson, M. E. (2002).
The sociology of the classroom and its
influence on student learning. *The
Peabody Journal of Education*, 77 (3),
85-100. doi:
10.1207/S15327930PJE7703_5

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Research in Higher Education, Vol. 48, No. 8, December 2007 (© 2007)
DOI: 10.1007/s11162-007-9056-5



THE IMPACT OF ON-CAMPUS STUDENT GROWTH
ON FIRST-YEAR STUDENT ENGAGEMENT
AND SUCCESS

Steven M. LaNasa,^{*†} Elizabeth Olson,^{*} and Natalie Alleman^{**}

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During the past two decades institutions of all types have sought to expand and enhance residential facilities. Institutional focus on scale, configuration, amenities, and academic integration has sought to leverage prior research documenting the multiple and often positive impacts of on-campus residence. Although institutional size has been documented to differentially impact student engagement [Kezar, A. J. (2006). *NASPA Journal* 43(1): 87–114], few studies, however, have directly explored the effect of residential expansion on student engagement. This study, based on a sample of 731 first-time freshmen explores NSSE results before and after the opening of a residential facility that doubled on-campus living at a single, metropolitan institution. Results indicate limited positive differences after opening,

Done

Start Windows Live Messe... Inbox - Microsoft Out... LaNasa_Steven_M... Windows Media Player Microsoft Word Microsoft Excel Microsoft PowerPoint ... 10:44 AM

Electronic Journal Article without DOI (p. 199)

Borland, K. (2001-2002). Assessing retention: Six steps and four paradigms. *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice*, 3, 365-380. Retrieved from <http://www.baywood.metapress.com>

Notes:

- No retrieval date
- No hyperlink
- No period at end of URL

Undated Content from Website (e.g., p. 211)

Inter-Association Task Force on Alcohol & Other Substance Abuse Issues. (n.d.). *Parental notification: A working report*. Retrieved August 18, 2009, from www.iatf.org/parent1a.htm

In-text citations

– (IATF, n.d.)

Note: Include retrieval date as content could change or be relocated

Other Sources

The APA manual includes 77 citation examples (pp. 198-215) including:

- Personal communication (p. 179)
- Reports (pp. 205-206)
- Magazine articles (p. 200)
- Documents with no author (e.g., p. 200)
- Papers presented at conferences (p. 206)

Look for examples, follow as closely as possible, and help reader to locate the source

Electronic Sources (pp. 187-192)

- Electronic references should generally follow print reference format plus retrieval information
 - Use Digital Object Identifier (DOI) when available
 - Use home page if accessed via subscription
 - Include retrieval date only when material may change over time (e.g., Wikis; p. 192)
 - Database name (e.g., Academic Search) no longer necessary

Fine Points for Reference List Citations (p. 180)

- Use hanging indent and learn to format automatically, rather than spacing to create the indent (p. 37)
- Every element ends in a period, except a URL address
- One space after a period in the reference list
- Use a space between authors' first and middle initials

More Fine Points for Reference List Citations (p. 180)

- Comma before the ampersand (&) even if only 2 authors
- Titles of books use sentence capitalization:
 - *Good practice in student affairs*
- Titles of journals capitalize every main word:
 - *Journal of College Student Development*
- Volume number in italics, but not issue number and no space between volume number and opening parenthesis:
 - 7(2)
 - Note: Do **not** give issue number for continuously paginated journals

More Fine Points for Reference List Citations (p. 180)

- Do not include hyperlinks for URLs
- For publishers, do not include Publishers, Co., or Inc.; do include Books or Press (p. 187)

Multiple Sources by Same Author

- Multiple sources: (p. 177-178)
 - Place in alpha order separated by a semi-colon (Ashley, 2007; Selby, 2005) or within sentence structure
 - Ashley (2007) and Selby (2005) noted . . .
- Multiple sources, same author: date order (p. 182)
 - Coomes, M. D. (2001). *Title*.
 - Coomes, M. D. (2004). *Title*.
- Multiple sources, same author, same publication date: list alphabetically within the year and add a letter
 - Coomes, M. D. (2001a). *An examination of . . .*
 - Coomes, M. D. (2001b). *Methodological . . .*

In-text Citation Examples

- Howe and Strauss (2000) identified seven key characteristics of the Millennial generation: special . . .
- Millennial students have seven key characteristics: “special . . . and achieving” (Howe & Strauss, 2000, p. 8).

Notes:

- For in-text citations, “and” used within a sentence; “&” used within parentheses
- Note use of past tense in first example

In-text Citations for Electronic Sources

- If there are no page numbers, use the paragraph number
 - (Myers, 2000, para. 5)
- If headings are available, use them to guide the reader
 - (Butler, 2000, Conclusion section, para. 2)

In-text Citation for Long Quotation (p. 171)

- Quotations with 40 or more words require only left indentation and different punctuation (i.e., block quote)
 - No quotation marks
 - Punctuation **before** page number

In her review of *Matters of Race*, Stewart (2005) noted that:
One of the most important aspects of this service is that the viewer is not shown just one perspective. Both working-class and middle-class Latinos, Asians, American Indians, Hawaiians, and African Americans are pictured. White people are portrayed both as champions for social justice and perpetrators of segregation and exclusion. (p. 32)

Becoming an APA Expert

Follow these steps in this order:

1. Look in the book!
2. Learn from your mistakes
3. Ask 3 and then me (use your peers!)
4. Ask faculty for guidance (after you've done step 3!)

Removing Bias in Language (p. 70-77)

Problems of Designation

- PROBLEMATIC: The sample included 400 undergraduate students

NON-BIASED: The sample of 400 undergraduates included 250 White students (125 males and 125 females) and 150 Black students (75 males and 75 females).

- PROBLEMATIC: The 50 American Indians

NON-BIASED: The 50 American Indian individuals represented...(25 Choctaw, 15 Hopi, and 10 Seminole)...

Note: Groups are designated by proper nouns & capitalized.

Problems of Evaluation

- PROBLEMATIC: ...the articulate African American professor...

NON-BIASED: ...the African American professor...

Person-first language?

Maybe...

PROBLEMATIC

- defective child
- mentally ill person

PREFERRED BY SOME

- disabled person
- blind person
- Deaf person

APA PREFERRED; PROBLEMATIC TO SOME

- person with (who has) a disability
- child with a congenital disability
- child with a birth impairment
- person with mental illness or psychiatric disability

Do not label people by their disability

PROBLEMATIC

- Schizophrenics
- epileptics
- amputee
- paraplegics
- the disabled
- the retarded
- the mentally ill

PREFERRED (POSSIBLY)

- people who have schizophrenia
- individuals with epilepsy
- person with an amputation
- individuals with paraplegia
- people with disabilities
- children with developmental delays
- people with a psychiatric disability

Avoiding Heterosexual Bias in Language

- **“Sexual orientation” or “sexuality” not “sexual preference”**
- **“Lesbian”, “gay”, or “bisexual” not “homosexual”**
- **Bisexual women and men, bisexual persons, or bisexual student**
- **Men, as well as some women, use the word “gay” to describe their sexuality**
 - **“Gay” is not an umbrella term for all people who are non-heterosexual**
- **“Lesbian” is usually only used by those who identify as women**

Gender (p. 73-74)

- Social construction, not biologically determined
- Not only present in binary
 - Not all trans* people identify within the gender binary
- Avoid bias by rewording phrases & sentences; use plural to avoid having to use a singular gendered pronoun
 - Do not use "he/she" or "(s)he"

APA Challenge!

Identify what APA error(s) are in the following sentences and reference list citations.

Each has **at least one** thing wrong!

Problem 1:

According to Jones (1998), "Students often had difficulty using APA style, especially when it was their first time."

Correction:

According to Jones (1998), "Students often had difficulty using APA style, especially when it was their first time" (p. 199).

- Need page number for a direct quote

Problem 2:

Jones's (1998) study found that "Students often had difficulty using APA style, especially when it was their first time citing sources. This difficulty could be attributed to the fact that many students failed to purchase a style manual or to ask their teacher for help" (p. 199).

Correction:

Jones's (1998) study found the following:

Students often had difficulty using APA style, especially when it was their first time citing sources. This difficulty could be attributed to the fact that many students failed to purchase a style manual or to ask their teacher for help. (p. 199)

- Block quote should be indented 1" and punctuation goes before page number

Problem 3:

For interviews, letters, e-mails, and other person-to-person communication, cite the communicator's name, the fact that it was personal communication, and the date of the communication. Do not include personal communication in the reference list (L. Johnson, 1998; E. Johnson, 2001).

Correction:

For interviews, letters, e-mails, and other person-to-person communication, cite the communicator's name, the fact that it was personal communication, and the date of the communication. Do not include personal communication in the reference list (E. Johnson, 2001; L. Johnson, 1998).

- List references in alphabetical order

Problem 4:

Harris et al (2001) argued that APA does not recommend the use of footnotes and endnotes because they are often expensive for publishers to reproduce. However, if explanatory notes still prove necessary to your document, APA details the use of two types of footnotes: content and copyright.

Correction:

Harris et al. (2001) argued that APA does not recommend the use of footnotes and endnotes because they are often expensive for publishers to reproduce. However, if explanatory notes still prove necessary to your document, APA details the use of two types of footnotes: content and copyright.

- Follow the "al" in "et al." with a period, but do not place a period after "et"

Problem 5:

C. J. Lunceford claimed that most of her students did not have any difficulties with APA style (personal communication, 2/17/2009).

Correction:

C. J. Lunceford claimed that most of her students did not have any difficulties with APA style (personal communication, February 17, 2009).

- Write out the date. Remember personal communications are not included in the reference list

Problem 6:

Kernis, M. H., Cornell, D. P., Sun, C. R., Berry, A., & Harlow, T. (1993). There's more to self-esteem than whether it is high or low: The importance of stability of self-esteem. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 65, 1190-1204.

Correction:

Kernis, M. H., Cornell, D. P., Sun, C. R., Berry, A., & Harlow, T. (1993). There's more to self-esteem than whether it is high or low: The importance of stability of self-esteem. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 65, 1190-1204.

- Should use reverse paragraph indentation (a.k.a., hanging indent)

Problem 7:

Berndt, T. J. (2002). Friendship quality and social development. *Current directions in psychological science*, 11, 7-10.

Correction:

Berndt, T. J. (2002). Friendship quality and social development. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 11, 7-10.

- Names of journals are capitalized except for articles of speech or prepositions; the journal name and volume number are both italicized

Problem 8:

Wegener, D. T., and Petty, R. E. (1994). Mood management across affective states: The hedonic contingency hypothesis. *Journal of personality & social psychology*, 66, pp. 1034-1048.

Correction:

Wegener, D. T., & Petty, R. E. (1994). Mood management across affective states: The hedonic contingency hypothesis. *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology*, 66, 1034-1048.

- Use an ampersand (&) for "and" instead of spelling it out in the reference list and anywhere in text where the citation is in parentheses; journal name is capitalized; do not use "pp" for page numbers of a journal article – only for a book chapter

Problem 9:

Duncan, G. J., & Brooks-Gunn, J. (Ed). (1997).
Consequences of Growing up Poor. New York:
Russell Sage Foundation.

Correction:

Duncan, G. J., & Brooks-Gunn, J. (Eds.). (1997).
Consequences of growing up poor. New York, NY:
Russell Sage Foundation.

- Use "Eds." when it is more than one editor and follow with a period; titles of books use sentence capitalization; always give the state abbreviation for the publisher's location unless it is included in the name of the publisher

Problem 10:

Scruton, R. (1996). "The eclipse of listening".
The New Criterion, 15 (30), 5-13.

Correction:

Scruton, R. (1996). The eclipse of listening.
The New Criterion, 15(30), 5-13.

- Titles of journal articles do not need to be put in quotation marks; the volume number is italicized but the issue number, when needed, is not

Problem 11:

Biswas, Steven. (2008). Dopamine D3 receptor: A neuroprotective treatment target in Parkinson's disease. *Retrieved from ProQuest Digital Dissertations.* (AAT 3295214)

Correction:

Biswas, S. (2008). *Dopamine D3 receptor: A neuroprotective treatment target in Parkinson's disease.* Retrieved from ProQuest Digital Dissertations. (AAT 3295214)

- Only give the first letter of the author's first name; titles of dissertations are italicized like book titles; retrieval information is not italicized