The Basics of APA

At its bare minimum, each research paper must have two elements: (1) in-text citations, and (2) a reference list. Whether quoting word for word, paraphrasing, or summarizing information from any source, you should always provide appropriate citation for each sentence containing another’s words, ideas, or data and include a complete reference to each source in the reference list at the end of your paper; also visit https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/18/ to view a sample APA paper. Please note that failure to properly attribute words, ideas, or data to their original author constitutes plagiarism and violates Pepperdine University’s Code of Academic Ethics for Students.

In-text Citation

In-text citation provides information about the author, the year of the publication, and the page number of your source (no page number is necessary for online sources). Its place is at the end of a sentence, which makes it easy to see how current all your references are and helps establish your credibility. Internal citation also supports the forward flow and holds your reader’s attention without risking any detours to study a footnote or an endnote.

Reference List

A reference list is an alphabetical compilation of all references made throughout a research paper. It offers a complete description of each work referenced by in-text citations, and its place is at the end of your report. Faculty, employers, or peer reviewers might use references for data retrieval, fact checking, or additional reading. The following “formula” prescribes the general reference format, where all lines are single-spaced and there is an indent after the first line:

Last Name, First Name Initial (Year of Publication). Title of a book. Publication City, State: Publisher name.

Here is an example illustrating direct quotation and its corresponding reference list entry from a printed book with one author:

In-text citation

“When you read an economic forecast emphasizing how different groups – consumers, investors, and governments – will be spending, you most likely are reading a Keynesian forecast” (Wessels, 2006, p. 152).

Reference list entry

Notice how the in-text citation comes after the closing quotation marks but before the period and includes the author’s last name, the year of the publication, and the page number of the citation. Direct quotes are appropriate in situations where a writer is making a point of specific language or word choice.

If your source happens to have two authors, list them in the order of their appearance in the original text, as shown in the example below:

(Smith & Jones, 2016, p. 177).

Three to five authors would warrant a comma after each last name:

(Smith, Jones, & Wall, 2016, p. 177).

Finally, a publication with six or more authors would only list the primary author’s last name followed by “et al.”, which means “and others”:

(Smith et al., 2016, p. 1).

**Best Practice in Paraphrasing**

Although writers may freely choose between direct quotes and paraphrases or summaries, paraphrases or summaries are the most appropriate choice in business writing. Unlike direct quotes, paraphrases/summaries allow the omission of quotation marks. If you are paraphrasing/summarizing information from an outside source, you may freely choose between introductory phrase and parenthetical citation. Here is an example:

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**In-text citation (Introductory phrase)**

According to Wessels (2006), Keynesian camp follows the spending patterns of consumers, investors, and governments to form economic forecasts (p. 152).

**In-text citation (Parenthetical style)**

Keynesian camp follows the spending patterns of consumers, investors, and governments to form economic forecasts (Wessels, 2006, p. 152).

**Reference list entry**

Even a good paraphrase is useless without your own interpretation or conclusion. So please be sure to add a sentence of explanation immediately after your paraphrase. Here is an example:

**In-text citation (Introductory phrase)**

According to Wessels (2006), Keynesian camp follows the spending patterns of consumers, investors, and governments to form economic forecasts (p. 152). Therefore, Keynesian economists explore how the aggregate demand defines market behaviors.

**Reference list entry**


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Examples

In this section, you will find guidance on the most frequently used types of citations in business research papers and reports. Since more and more students are now using the internet for research, most examples below address online citations. A more comprehensive set of guidelines is also available from https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/949/1/. If you have any additional questions about APA Style conventions or content covered in this primer, please contact Antonia Leonid, MBA, Business Writing Specialist, Pepperdine Graziadio Business Writing and Communication Center at antonia.leonid@pepperdine.edu

**Corporate/Organization Author (Website)**

**In-text citation (Paraphrase)**

Over 40 years ago, Nike’s founders Bill Bowerman and Phil Knight sealed a deal to start a new company that would eventually revolutionize the world of sportswear (Nike, 2011).

**Reference list entry**


Corporate/Organization Author Name (Year of Publication or use n.d. if there is no date). Document or section title. Retrieved from [add full URL address]
Corporate/Organization Author (Blog Post)

In-text citation (Paraphrase)

Elon Musk’s team has recently reached an agreement with SolarCity to combine, marking the start of the first vertically integrated green energy venture (Tesla, 2016).

Reference list entry


Corporate/Organization Author Name. (Year of Publication, Month Day). Blog post title [Web log post]. Retrieved from [add full URL address]

Website Page (Known Author)

In-text citation (Direct quote)

“We liked the name Alphabet because it means a collection of letters that represent language, one of humanity’s most important innovations, and is the core of how we index with Google search” (Page, n.d.)!

Reference list entry


Last Name, First Name Initial (Year of Publication, Month or use n.d. if there is no date). Page title. Full publication or corporate/organization domain title. Retrieved from [add full URL address]

Daily Newspaper (Online)

In-text citation (Paraphrase)

Google’s latest release of Google Duo is set to liberalize the market of video calling (Chen, 2016).

Reference list entry


Last Name, First Name Initial (Year of Publication, Month Day). Article title. Newspaper Name. Retrieved from [add home page URL]
Personal Communication (E-mail, Personal Conversations/Interviews, Phone Calls, Lectures)

In-text citation (Direct quote with an introductory phrase)
I still remember my boss’s advice on my first day of work, “Although you might think you already have plenty of knowledge, you still need to be humble. Respect others, and then the others will treat you good” (C. Ye, personal communication, September 3, 2016).

Reference list entry
None. [Please note that e-mails, personal conversations/interviews, phone calls, lectures, and the like are unrecoverable personal communications. Therefore, they are not included in the reference list.]

YouTube Video

In-text citation (Paraphrase)
Harvard’s Linda Spencer suggests that job candidates review and research their own qualifications for the position, the position itself, the company, and the industry before an interview (Harvard Extension School, 2013).

Reference list entry

Screen name or Last Name, First Name Initial. (Year, Month Day). Video title [Video file]. Retrieved from [add full URL address]

Table
It is common to summarize and present select data from a database or another print or online resource in a table. In such instances, always add a source line at the bottom of the table to credit the original source. Here is an example (go to page 9):
### In-text citation

**Table 1**

*U.S. Investment Banking Industry Statistics*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Top 4 Concentration Ratio</td>
<td>52.7%</td>
<td>49.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Employment Change</td>
<td>-2.6%</td>
<td>-1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Revenue Change</td>
<td>-7.2%</td>
<td>-14.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Wages Change</td>
<td>-4.0%</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


### Reference list entry


Last Name, First Name Initial (Year of Publication). Report Title. Retrieved from [Database Title]: [add full URL address]

### Additional Resources

For more information and resources on citation conventions for online and printed publications:

- Review the APA Publication Manual (6th Ed.) at the nearest Pepperdine Libraries location
References

