

Common Errors in APA Format

The following are common errors made in using APA style. Page references to the 6th Edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* are in parentheses ().

- ___ Do not hyphenate the prefixes anti, inter, multi, non, over, post, pre, re, semi, sub, under, etc. Spell words with these prefixes as one word, e.g., nonsignificant, pretest, posttest, with these exceptions: if the root begins with a capital letter, e.g., non-LDS; if there is a possibility for mispronunciation, e.g., non-native; if the word promotes confusion, e.g., recreate, re-create; if the prefix is self, e.g., self-report (pp. 99-100) {See 6th ed. regarding prefixes that are not hyphenated.}.
- ___ Italicize all letters used as statistical symbols or algebraic variables in text, tables, and figures, e.g., *t* test, *r*, *n*, *N*, *p*, *F*, *SD*, *M*, *d*, *a/b=c/d*, *SEM* (p. 101)[p. 105]. Place spaces around mathematical symbols (=, +, <, >, etc.)
- ___ Use figures for numbers 10 and above unless the number begins the sentence (p. 111).
- ___ Use figures for numbers under 10 in certain instances (pp. 111-112):
 - ___ If the number immediately precedes a unit of measurement, e.g., min, hr, weeks, years, cm, in.
 - ___ If the number represents statistical or mathematical functions, fractional or decimal quantities, percentages, ratios, and percentiles and quartiles (pp. 111-112 for examples.).
- ___ Do not place parentheses back to back (e.g., defensive pessimism) (Norem & Cantor, 1986) instead use a semicolon (e.g., defensive pessimism; Norem & Cantor, 1986). (p. 94).
- ___ e.g. and i.e. are always followed by a comma. Use e.g., i.e., or etc. only inside parentheses. Otherwise use their English translations. For example, this sentence demonstrates correct usage (i.e., using the abbreviations inside parentheses and the English translation in the regular text) (pg. 108). Do not italicize them. (p. 105)
- ___ Form the plural of numbers by adding "s" only, e.g., 2010s, 2020s (p. 114).
- ___ Form the plural of acronyms and abbreviations by adding "s" only, e.g., RNs. Do not use periods with capital letter abbreviations or acronyms, e.g., PhD, IQ, UNESCO (p. 110).
- ___ Use the page number on which a direct quotation is found in the citation in text, e.g., "Assume this material is quoted" (Jones, 1995, p. 44) (p. 171).
- ___ Cite the page number for a block quotation at the end of the quotation; no period follows the parentheses (p. 171). Quotations over three lines (block quotes) are single-spaced and indented (U of U format).
- ___ Spell out "and" with multiple author references in text, e.g., Smith and Jones (1995), but use "&" with parenthetical citations, e.g., (Smith & Jones, 1995) (p. 175).
- ___ Alphabetize multiple author citations in a parenthetical list in the text, e.g., (Adams, 1990; Jones & Downs, 1994; Zimmer, Bland, Edwards, & Carlucci, 1995) (p. 177).
- ___ In text cite all authors the first time they occur if the work has more than two authors and fewer than six. Subsequent citations include the first author's last name followed by et al. (p. 175).
- ___ In the reference list use lower case letters for book titles and journal article titles except for the first letter of the first word, the first letter of proper nouns, and the first letter following a colon. **Book example:** Smith, D., & Jones, P. (1995). *Capitalization using APA style: A guideline*. City and state of publication: Publisher. **Journal example:** Smith, D. (1994). Title of journal article. *Name of Journal Using First Letter Capitalization*, 38, 151-162. **URL example:** Sick, L. (Ed.) (2009). *Record structure for APA databases*. Retrieved from <http://www.apa.org/databases/training/recordstructure.pdf>
- ___ For references in the reference list with greater than seven authors, list the first six, followed by three ellipses and the name of the last author (p. 184).

Items from University of Utah format that take precedence over APA format:

- ___ Citations cannot be used in the abstract.
- ___ Permissions for adaptations are not required.
- ___ Headings and subheadings must conform to U of U guidelines. (Subheadings may be numbered.)
- ___ Running heads cannot be used.
- ___ References are single spaced within entries and double spaced between entries.