

How to Do In-Text Citation and Reference Pages in APA

by Sophia Tutorial



WHAT'S COVERED

This tutorial covers how to correctly produce in-text citations and reference pages according to APA format guidelines. It includes an example reference page.

This tutorial examines the appropriate use of APA in-text citations in three parts:

1. In-text Citations
2. Reference Pages
3. Reference Page: Example

1. In-text Citations

An **in-text citation** is a source that is referenced or otherwise used in an essay, through quotation, summary, or paraphrasing. It is called an in-text citation because it appears *within the text* of the essay, not in footnotes or on a reference page. A **parenthetical reference** is the bibliographic information that is contained within parentheses at the end of an in-text citation.



TERMS TO KNOW

In-Text Citation

Sources used or cited in an essay through quotation, summarizing, and paraphrasing. They are called in-text citations because they appear within the essay, not in footnotes or on a reference page.

Parenthetical Reference

Bibliographic data that is contained within parentheses at the end of in-text citations.

A *signal phrase* is an important component of in-text citations. It is used by writers to introduce quotations, often by referencing the author or title of the source. According to APA guidelines, in-text citations must include the following information:

- The author's last name
- The year when the source was published

- The page or paragraph number where the quoted or paraphrased material is located

Page numbers are the default location method, but paragraph numbers can be used for online sources (and other sources that don't have pages). The APA guidelines require the author's last name and the source publication year to prevent confusion when multiple sources from the same author are used. Requiring both the last name and publication year clearly indicates from which of the author's sources the quote or paraphrase comes. If you use a signal phrase that makes note of the author prior to the quotation, include a parenthetical reference to the source's publication year following the author's name. Following the quotation, include another parenthetical reference with the page from which the quotation was taken. Here's an example:

And as historian Jeanine Laplante (1997) argues, "there are precious few examples of a people who had the ability to oppress another people, and did not" (p. 3).

Note how the bibliographic information is provided: first the author and year of publication, followed by the quotation, then the page number (for readers interested in learning more). Here is another example:

Ryan Onizu (2013) is less certain: "The only sure thing about NASA's future is that the legacy it has already achieved will outlast the scope of congressional budget hearings" (p. 24).

If you don't use a signal phrase that identifies the author before the quotation, use a parenthetical reference that includes the author(s), and the page or paragraph number, after the quotation, as shown in the example below:

The quickest way to Rome, it seemed, was to go around: "Finding the Mediterranean blockaded, Hannibal was forced to bring his army through the Iberian Peninsula" (Martinez, 1978, p. 102).

Here is one more example:

"So long as the status quo remains, America's working poor will continue to lose" (Hoster, 2000, p. 9).

Notice the punctuation in the preceding example. The quotation marks come immediately *after* the quoted material, followed by the parenthetical reference and a period. In block quotes, however, the sentence punctuation comes *before* the parenthetical reference, because the block quotation is not enclosed by quotation marks.

2. Reference Pages

APA formatting requires the use of a **reference page** at the end of the essay to log the sources used. It is a list of all bibliographic data, properly formatted, for all sources cited in the essay. Sources that were consulted but not cited or used directly should not be listed on the reference page.



References/reference page

A page at the end of an essay or book that lists properly-formatted bibliographic data for all sources cited in the essay

It's important to document sources correctly, so that every in-text citation correlates to its source listed on the reference page. It should not be difficult for readers to match one to the other. Following are the basic formatting requirements for an APA-style reference page:

- The word "References" must appear at the top of the page, capitalized and centered.
- The second and subsequent lines of each reference entry must be indented one half-inch.



HINT

This is called a "hanging indent." Most word processing programs (e.g., Microsoft Word) enable you to specify a hanging indent for selected text. This option can usually be applied through the paragraph- or text-formatting area.

- The author's name must be listed by last name and first initial. Author names must be listed in alphabetical order, according to the last name of the first author of each source.
- Multiple sources by the same author must be organized by date of publication, from oldest to newest.
- Titles of shorter works (e.g., essays, stories, web pages) should not be enclosed by quotation marks, italicized, or underlined. However, be sure to include the page span of essays and articles.
- Include the URLs of online sources.

These are the basic rules. More specific guidelines govern the formatting of sources with multiple authors, or an anonymous author (for example). Because specific rules apply in specific situations, look up how to correctly format a source when you are unsure how to do so. Your ability to format reference pages will improve with time and practice. In the meantime, there are many print and online sources on this topic to which you can refer for help.



HINT

Be careful when using — or attempting to use — online "citation generators." These tools are often helpful, but sometimes they produce errors. All things considered, you are better off learning to format citations yourself.

3. Reference Page: Example

This section provides a sample reference page to help you understand how a correctly-formatted reference page should be constructed. Here's a sample of the sources used for a research essay about dialects, creoles, and different types of literature.

References

- Allen, P. (2012). *The Sacred Hoop: A Contemporary Indian Perspective on American Indian Literature*. Retrieved from <http://faculty.dwc.edu/wellman/PGA.htm>.
- Corngold, S. (1994). Kafka and the Dialect of Minor Literature. *College Literature*. 21, 89-102.
- Edmundson, M. (2004) *Why Read?* New York: Bloomsbury.
- Perloff, M. (2012) *Logocinema of the Frontiersman: Eugene Jolas' Multilingual Poetics and Its Legacies*. Retrieved from <http://epc.buffalo.edu/authors/perloff.jolas.html>.
- Said, E. (2000). The Politics of Knowledge. In D. Richter Editor, *Falling into Theory: Conflicting Views of Reading Literature*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's.

The five entries on this reference page are formatted with hanging indentations, and are listed in alphabetical order according to the authors' last names.

The first source, an article found online, is listed in this order:

- The author's last name and first initial
- The date when the website was last edited (included in the absence of an original publication date)
- The title of the article
- The URL where the article is located

The next source is an article from a print journal, and is listed in the following order:

- The author's last name and first initial
- The publication date
- The title of the article, followed by the title of the journal in which it appears and the journal's volume number ("21")
- The pages on which the article is printed

The third source is a book, and is listed as follows:

- The author's last name and first initial
- The publication date
- The book's title, the location where it was published, and the name of the publisher

The fourth entry is for another online source, similar to the online source described above. It lists the author's last name, the date when the source was last edited, the title of the web page, and the URL.

The last source was taken from an anthology. It lists the author's name, the publication date, the title of the article, the name of the editor of the anthology and the title of the umbrella source, and the publisher's location and name.

The preceding example provides an overview of the information required on a reference page and how it should be formatted according to relevant guidelines (in this example, the APA guidelines).



SUMMARY

This tutorial examined how to construct in-text citations and reference pages according to the APA formatting and style requirements. A sample reference page that illustrated all these elements was also provided.

Source: Adapted from Sophia Instructor Gavin McCall



TERMS TO KNOW

In-Text Citation

Sources used or cited in an essay through quoting, summarizing, and paraphrasing, so-called because they appear within the text of the essay itself (as opposed to in footnotes or on a references page).

Parenthetical Reference

Specific bibliographic data, contained in parentheses at the end of in-text citations.

References/references page

A list at the end of an essay or book that includes properly formatted bibliographic data for all the sources cited in the essay.