In-Text Citations and Reference Formatting in APA

by Sophia

1. In-Text Citations

Recall that 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. 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 quotation or paraphrase comes.

Also recall that 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. 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 quotations, 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.

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.** 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, webpages) 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 Pages in Action

Looking at a sample reference page can help you understand how it should be constructed. Here's a sample of the sources used for a research essay. The five entries on this reference page are listed in alphabetical order according to the authors' last names:

References

Allen, P. (2012). *The sacred hoop: A contemporary Indian perspective on American Indian literature*. Retrieved from **faculty.dwe.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 **epc.buffalo.edu/authors/perloff.jolas.html**

> Said, E. (2000). The politics of knowledge. In D. Richter (Ed.), *Falling into theory: Conflicting views of reading literature*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's.

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 webpage
- 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
- The title of the umbrella source
- The publisher's location and name

Obviously, these are not the only source types you may encounter, but the examples provide an overview of the information required on a reference page and how it should be formatted according to APA guidelines.

Source: THIS TUTORIAL WAS AUTHORED BY SOPHIA LEARNING. PLEASE SEE OUR **TERMS OF USE**.