

Why Must We Write in the APA?

A Composition to Students

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I have read and understand the plagiarism policy as outlined in the syllabus and the sections in the Student Bulletin relating to the IWU Honesty/Cheating Policy. By affixing this statement to the title page of my paper, I certify that I have not cheated or plagiarized in the process of completing this assignment. If it is found that cheating and/or plagiarism did take place in the writing of this paper, I understand the possible consequences of the act/s, which could include expulsion from Indiana Wesleyan University.

Why Must We Write in the APA? A Composition to Students

Experience has shown me that writing in the American Psychological Association (APA) style can be difficult for students. Additionally, with the changes over time, even your professors may vary in their use and interpretation of the APA style. As you know, as a college student at Indiana Wesleyan University (IWU) you are expected to produce scholarly papers written in the APA style. If you pursue an advanced degree, this expectation will be even greater. In 2009, IWU adopted the standards of the APA Sixth Edition. Please take the time to review the materials that I have included with this essay. These materials include a checklist for scholarly writing, a paper illustrating how to setup Microsoft (MS) Word documents into APA format, an essay on when to cite, and a student done model journal (paper). Additionally, I have posted APA resources on my personal website: www.thinblueline.ws/students. The IWU Off Campus Library Services (OCLS) also has links and information regarding writing in the APA style.

You may wonder, why we must write in the APA style. The best scientific writing is spare and straightforward. It spotlights the ideas being presented, not the manner of presentation. Manuscript structure, word choice, punctuation, graphics, and references are all chosen to move the idea forward with a minimum of distraction and a maximum of precision (Paiz et al., 2012).

To achieve this clarity of communication, publishers have developed rules of style (Paiz et al., 2012). These rules are designed to ensure clear and consistent presentation of written material. Editorial style concerns uniform use of such elements as:

- punctuation and abbreviations,
- construction of tables,

- selection of headings,
- citation of references, and
- presentation of statistics.

When editors or teachers ask you to write in APA Style®, they are referring to the editorial style that many of the social and behavioral sciences have adopted to present written material in the field. APA Style was first developed 80 years ago by a group of social scientists who wished to establish sound standards of communication. Since that time, it has been adopted by leaders in many fields and has been used by writers around the world (Paiz et al., 2012).

APA Style establishes standards of written communication concerning:

- the organization of content,
- writing style,
- citing references,
- and how to prepare a manuscript for publication in certain disciplines.

Aside from simplifying the work of editors by having everyone use the same format for a given publication, using APA Style makes it easier for readers to understand a text by providing a familiar structure they can follow. Abiding by APA's standards as a writer will allow you to:

- Provide readers with cues they can use to follow your ideas more efficiently and to locate information of interest to them.
- Allow readers to focus more on your ideas by not distracting them with unfamiliar formatting.
- Establish your credibility or ethos in the field by demonstrating an awareness of your audience and their needs as fellow researchers.

APA Style describes rules for the preparation of manuscripts for writers and students in:

- Social Sciences, such as Psychology, Linguistics, Sociology, Economics, and Criminology.
- Business.
- Nursing.

I know from experience that learning the APA for many students is a chore. In my own academic experience, I learned the MLA in undergraduate school, then the Blue Book form of writing and citation while working on my Juris Doctorate, then to the APA 5th edition as a facilitator and PhD student, and finally to APA 6th edition. At times it seemed a bit maddening. I hope that the following information may be of some value to you.

Assignment Instructions

IWU uses the Internet and academic software as part of its academic offering to students. BlackBoard is an Internet based academic software platform that allows students and faculty to interact. Emails, discussion forums, announcements, assignment submissions, and much are available through BlackBoard. Ordinarily, the course Student Guide (Syllabus) and individual workshop assignments are located under the “Course Materials” tab in the BlackBoard course homepage. It should go without saying that students should read carefully both the course syllabus and the individual workshop assignments before submitting written assignments so that the assignment instructions are understood and followed.

The Student Guide also contains a quick reference guide for writing in the APA Style, citing sources, and how to list sources on the References page. Other important information regarding assignment submission, page length, et cetera is also found in the Student Guide.

APA Style and Common Errors

In my teaching experience, I have found that there are a number of common APA errors that students make that can be easily avoided and corrected. In order to score maximum points, papers should not only have excellent content, but should also be written in accordance with assignment requirements, and in proper format. For the most part, students will not need to prepare an abstract for their papers unless the paper is quite lengthy and complex. If an abstract is used, it must be in APA format. The following subsections describe a few of the most common errors and some ideas on how to avoid them.

APA Basics

The APA is a strict scholarly way of writing. Sometimes students believe they are writing in the APA style because they format their papers with one-inch margins and double spacing between lines. As you may know, the APA is a bit more complex than that. Here are some basic instructions:

- Do not try to jazz-up your papers with varying font styles, sizes, and colors. Use Times New Roman, #12 throughout the paper (including headers). Do not bold, underline, or use italics unless required or permitted by the APA.
- One inch margins all around.
- Use APA correct headers with page numbers on all pages including the Title page. *See* Running head: below.
- Double space between lines including block quotes and sources listed on the References page. MS Word may default to special line spacing between paragraphs. I have included a document with this composition that illustrates how to correct this should it occur.
- Indent one tab for each paragraph.

- Use author-year method of citation.
- Insert page breaks between main paper sections such as Title page, body, and References page.
- Eliminate “dead soldiers.” Dead soldiers are section headings that appear at the bottom of a page with no narrative below it. This can be corrected by inserting a page break just above the section heading. Do not do this until the final draft to avoid unintended white space.

Copy and Paste

One of the documents accompanying this compensation is an essay on when to cite. In this age of the Internet and word processing, the ability and the temptation to simply cut and paste the work of others is high. Be sure to review the University’s expectations on academic honesty and plagiarism. There are new tools available to detect plagiarism. One of the most copied and pasted cites is Wikipedia. Remember to always cite sources. If directly quoting a source, the citation must include the page number(s) or other specific location information as required by the APA.

The IWU Student Guides (Syllabus) are not written in APA format. Often students will cut and paste textbook information right from the Syllabus. Many times the textbook information listed in the Syllabus is not in APA format. It is important for students to learn how to identify and list sources in proper format and not rely on the formatting of someone else.

Self Plagiarism

Self plagiarism occurs when a student presents a previously presented work as new academic work (APA, 2009, p. 16). In other words, self plagiarism occurs when a student attempts to pass off previous assignments in other courses as new academic work. De minimus

amounts of materials from a previous work are acceptable. However, if extensive use of previous work is used, the materials should be cited and listed on the References page. For an unpublished work done by a student, the reference should appear in the following format:

Author, A. A. (Year). *Title of manuscript*. Unpublished manuscript.

Davidson, T. N. (2012). *Why must we write in the APA? A composition for students*.

Unpublished manuscript.

Assertions

Please avoid making assertions (unsupported statements) in your writing. It is important to clearly understand what an assertion is and why they can cause problems for academic writers. An assertion is a statement or declaration that something is true or accurate that is presented without sufficient supporting evidence. In everyday conversation, we often make assertions that are without support as a part of normal communication based on facts that everybody knows. One of the many challenges faced by emerging scholars learning the art of academic writing is to break out of the habit of communicating opinions in favor of arguments for which supporting evidence is available. Reviewers will often challenge unsupported assertions with comments like: “how do you know this is true,” “sources please,” “do not make unfounded assertions,” “this is a bold claim, how can you back it up with evidence” and so on. Before you submit assignments, reflect on each sentence you wrote to insure that either the views offered are universally understood (though few are) or are supportable with evidence from scholarly sources or data. Review my essay on when to cite for more information on this topic.

Running head:

When setting up a document in APA format, the header for the Title page must be set up in Microsoft (MS) Word so that it is different than the rest of the document. This can be done by selecting “Page Layout,” “Page Setup,” “Layout,” and selecting “Different first page.” I have put together some screen prints in a separate document that illustrates this process. It is

necessary to be able to have a different header on the first page of the paper because the Running head is different for the Title page than the rest of the paper (American Psychological Association [APA], 2009). Figure 2.1 of the Sixth edition of the APA manual exhibits the difference in headers between page one and page two of a sample paper (APA, 2009, p. 41).

The header for page one is located at the upper right hand of the Title page. The header begins with the phrase “Running head:” followed by the first few words of the title of the paper in all capital letters (APA, 2009, p. 41). For the subsequent pages, drop the phrase Running head:. The portion of the title of the paper in all capital letters remains throughout the remaining pages of the paper. The page numbers appear at the upper right of the page (including the Title page) (APA, 2009, p. 41).

Be sure that the first few words of the Running head: match the first few words of the title of the paper as listed on the Title page. I often see a mismatch between the two. For example, a student has the title of the paper listed as Journal One on the Title page, but has “Running head: THREE MOST IMPORTANT” listed in the header. This usually occurs because the student is confused about how to title the paper. The assignment in this example is for a journal to be completed by the end of the first workshop on the three most important topics in a particular chapter in the textbook. It makes no difference whether the title is Journal One or The Three Most Important Topics of Chapter One. Either way, the header should match the title listed on the Title page.

Another common error with respect to the header is the font. The APA in Section 8.03 recommends and IWU requires that students use Times New Roman #12, black font throughout the paper (APA, 2009, p. 228). For some reason not known to me, MS Word often automatically changes the font in the headers from that which is selected for the narrative. When this occurs,

students should select the words and numbers in the headers and change the font to Times New Roman #12 before submitting their paper to be graded.

Two Spaces between Sentences in the Narrative

The APA recommends that two spaces be used between sentences in the narrative (APA, 2009, p. 88). It is true that the APA clarified that it is their recommendation to use two spaces between sentences under Section 4.01 in the 6th edition. As a recommendation, this means that it is best practice. As you may know, this was an express change from the one space commentary found in the 5th edition. In 2009, as part of the University's instructor orientation program, the two space expectation between sentences was presented as the standard against which students' papers are to be evaluated. In fact, you can see from the scholarly writing checklist prepared by the University that item #8 indicates that there should be two spaces between sentences. This document was copyrighted in 2009 and was presented again at an IWU in-service training seminar in 2011. Keep in mind; this applies to spacing between sentences in the narrative, not to spacing between punctuation in the sources listed on the References page.

Title on First Page of Narrative

Students often forget to place the title on the first page of narrative. Even though there is a Title page, place the title of the paper at the top-center of the first page of narrative. The title replaces the introduction heading and should not be bolded, but is in upper and lower case (APA, 2009, pp. 42 & 63).

Remove all Hyperlinks and Superscripts

MS Word by default will insert hyperlinks (blue underlined font) into Internet and email addresses. Remove hyperlinks by placing the cursor on the hyperlink, right clicking, and selecting "Remove Hyperlink."

Remove superscripts. MS Word by default will insert superscripts “(11th ed.).” Remove the superscript by highlighting the area and clicking on the X² tab in the Font menu bar “(11th ed.).” The defaults in MS Word can be changed to eliminate the automatic hyperlinks and superscripts.

Author-Year Method of Citation¹

Paiz et al. (2012, In-Text Citations) arranged and organized the following information regarding in-text citations. The author's last name and the year of publication for the source should appear in the text, for example, (Davidson, 2012), and a complete reference should appear on the References page at the end of the paper.

If you are referring to an idea from another work but not directly quoting the material, or making reference to an entire book, article or other work, you only have to make reference to the author and year of publication and not the page number in your in-text reference. All sources that are cited in the text must appear on the References page at the end of the paper.

In-text citation capitalization, quotes, and italics/underlining.

- Always capitalize proper nouns, including author names and initials: D. Jones.
- If you refer to the title of a source within your paper, capitalize all words that are four letters long or greater within the title of a source: *Permanence and Change*. Exceptions apply to short words that are verbs, nouns, pronouns, adjectives, and adverbs: *Writing New Media, There Is Nothing Left to Lose*.

(**Note:** in your References list, only the first word of a title will be capitalized: Writing new media.)

¹ This section was largely taken from the Purdue Owl as cited above. The material was slightly reworked and not put into a block quotation.

- When capitalizing titles, capitalize both words in a hyphenated compound word: *Natural-Born Cyborgs*.
- Capitalize the first word after a dash or colon: "Defining Film Rhetoric: The Case of Hitchcock's *Vertigo*."
- Italicize or underline the titles of longer works such as books, edited collections, movies, television series, documentaries, or albums: *The Closing of the American Mind*; *The Wizard of Oz*; *Friends*.
- Put quotation marks around the titles of shorter works such as journal articles, articles from edited collections, television series episodes, and song titles: "Multimedia Narration: Constructing Possible Worlds"; "The One Where Chandler Can't Cry."

Short quotations.

If you are directly quoting from a work, you will need to include the author, year of publication, and the page number for the reference (preceded by "p."). Introduce the quotation with a signal phrase that includes the author's last name followed by the date of publication in parentheses.

According to Davidson (2012), "Students often had difficulty using APA style, especially when it was their first time" (p. 199). Notice that the period goes at the end of the parenthetical citation and not inside the quote. Question mark or exclamation point as part of the quote go inside the quotation marks.

Davidson (2012) found "students often had difficulty using APA style" (p. 199); what implications does this have for teachers?

If the author is not named in a signal phrase, place the author's last name, the year of publication, and the page number in parentheses after the quotation.

She stated, "Students often had difficulty using APA style" (Davidson, 2012, p. 199), but he did not offer an explanation as to why.

Long quotations.

Place direct quotations that are 40 words, or longer, in a free-standing block of typewritten lines, and omit quotation marks. Start the quotation on a new line, indented 1/2 inch from the left margin, i.e., in the same place you would begin a new paragraph. Type the entire quotation on the new margin, and indent the first line of any subsequent paragraph within the quotation 1/2 inch from the new margin. Maintain double-spacing throughout. The parenthetical citation should come after the closing punctuation mark.

Davidson's (2012) 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)

Notice that the punctuation for block quote citations is a bit different than the punctuation for other in-text citations.

Summary or paraphrase.

If you are paraphrasing an idea from another work, you only have to make reference to the author and year of publication in your in-text reference, but APA guidelines encourage you to also provide the page number (although it is not required.)

According to Davidson (2012), APA style is a difficult citation format for first-time learners.

APA style is a difficult citation format for first-time learners (Davidson, 2012, p. 199).

Citing an author or authors.

A Work by Two Authors: Name both authors in the signal phrase or in the parentheses each time you cite the work. Use the word "and" between the authors' names within the text and use the ampersand in the parentheses.

Research by Wegener and Petty (1994) supports...

(Wegener & Petty, 1994)

A Work by Three to Five Authors: List all the authors in the signal phrase or in parentheses the first time you cite the source.

(Kernis, Cornell, Sun, Berry, & Harlow, 1993)

In subsequent citations, only use the first author's last name followed by "et al." in the signal phrase or in parentheses.

(Kernis et al., 1993)

Six or More Authors: Use the first author's name followed by et al. in the signal phrase or in parentheses.

Harris et al. (2001) argued...

(Harris et al., 2001)

Unknown Author: If the work does not have an author, cite the source by its title in the signal phrase or use the first word or two in the parentheses. Titles of books and reports are italicized or underlined; titles of articles, chapters, and web pages are in quotation marks.

A similar study was done of students learning to format research papers ("Using APA," 2001).

Citing personal communications and interviews.

A number of IWU course require research papers whereby the researcher must interview persons with knowledge in the subject area. Students often ask "How do I cite a personal

interview?” 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 (Paiz et al., 2012). Do not include personal communication in the reference list. (T. Davidson, personal communication, November 26, 2012).

T. N. Davidson also claimed that many of his students had difficulties with APA style (personal communication, November 26, 2012).

Citing the Bible.

IWU is a Christian university with a faith in learning mission. Students are encouraged and challenged to incorporate faith in their assignments whenever appropriate. When citing the Bible, identify the version, chapter, verse, the first time the Bible is cited within the narrative. Example: (2 Cor. 5:17 King James Version). Unless another version is used, omit the version in subsequent citations. The Bible and other major classical works need not be listed on the References page (APA, 2009, pp. 178-179).

References Page

The reference list should appear at the end of the paper. It provides the information necessary for a reader to locate and retrieve any source cited in the body of the paper. Each source cited in the paper must appear in the reference list (exceptions include classical works such as the Bible and personal interviews); likewise, each entry in the reference list must be cited in the text (Paiz et al., 2012).

The references should begin on a new page separate from the text of the essay; label this page "References" centered at the top of the page (do not bold, underline, or use quotation marks for the title). All text should be double-spaced just like the rest of the paper (Paiz et al., 2012).

Properly listing sources in APA format may seem a daunting task for many students. There are some commercial software packages on the market that can be downloaded to setup MS Word documents in APA format and insert citations and sources in proper format. ReferencePoint® is software that I have personally used and have found to be reliable. This software can be purchased for about \$30 at: <http://www.referencepointsoftware.net/index.htm>. I have no pecuniary interest in this product; I only recommend it because I have used it. Before purchasing the product, I recommend working through the tutorials available on the ReferencePoint website.

I do not recommend using MS Word's "References" tab for citing and listing sources in APA format. For whatever reason, MS Word often does not cite correctly, mislabels the References page as "Works Cited," incorrectly lists sources. The proper heading for the References page is References, not Works Cited, Bibliography, or Sources.

Basic rules.

Paiz et al. (2012, Reference List) organized and listed some basic rules for the References page:

- All lines after the first line of each entry in your reference list should be indented one-half inch from the left margin. This is called hanging indentation.
- Authors' names are inverted (last name first); give the last name and initials for all authors of a particular work for up to and including seven authors. If the work has more than seven authors, list the first six authors and then use ellipses after the sixth author's name. After the ellipses, list the last author's name of the work.
- Reference list entries should be alphabetized by the last name of the first author of each work.

- For multiple articles by the same author, or authors listed in the same order, list the entries in chronological order, from earliest to most recent.
- Present the journal title in full.
- Maintain the punctuation and capitalization that is used by the journal in its title.

For example: *ReCALL* not *RECALL* or *Knowledge Management Research & Practice* not *Knowledge Management Research and Practice*.

- Capitalize all major words in journal titles.
- When referring to books, chapters, articles, or Web pages, capitalize only the first letter of the first word of a title and subtitle, the first word after a colon or a dash in the title, and proper nouns. Do not capitalize the first letter of the second word in a hyphenated compound word.
- Italicize titles of longer works such as books and journals.
- Do not italicize, underline, or put quotes around the titles of shorter works such as journal articles or essays in edited collections.
- Please note: While the APA manual provides many examples of how to cite common types of sources, it does not provide rules on how to cite all types of sources. Therefore, if you have a source that APA does not include, APA suggests that you find the example that is most similar to your source and use that format. For more information, see page 193 of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, sixth edition.

References page listings².

Paiz et al. (2012, Reference List) arranged and organized the following information regarding in-text citations.

² This section was largely taken from the Purdue Owl as cited above. The material was slightly reworked and not put into a block quotation.

Basic format for books.

Author, A. A. (Year of publication). *Title of work: Capital letter also for subtitle*. Location:
Publisher.

Note: For "Location," you should always list the city and the state using the two letter postal abbreviation without periods (New York, NY).

Calfee, R. C., & Valencia, R. R. (1991). *APA guide to preparing manuscripts for journal publication*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Edited book, no author.

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

Edited book with an author or authors.

Plath, S. (2000). *The unabridged journals*. K. V. Kukil (Ed.). New York, NY: Anchor.

A translation.

Laplace, P. S. (1951). *A philosophical essay on probabilities*. (F. W. Truscott & F. L. Emory, Trans.). New York, NY: Dover. (Original work published 1814).

Note: When you cite a republished work, like the one above, in your text, it should appear with both dates: Laplace (1814/1951).

Edition other than the first.

Helfer, M. E., Kempe, R. S., & Krugman, R. D. (1997). *The battered child* (5th ed.). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Article or chapter in an edited book.

Author, A. A., & Author, B. B. (Year of publication). Title of chapter. In A. Editor & B. Editor (Eds.), *Title of book* (pages of chapter). Location: Publisher.

Note: When you list the pages of the chapter or essay in parentheses after the book title, use "pp." before the numbers: (pp. 1-21). This abbreviation, however, does not appear before the page numbers in periodical references, except for newspapers.

O'Neil, J. M., & Egan, J. (1992). Men's and women's gender role journeys: A metaphor for healing, transition, and transformation. In B. R. Wainrib (Ed.), *Gender issues across the life cycle* (pp. 107-123). New York, NY: Springer.

Multivolume work.

Wiener, P. (Ed.). (1973). *Dictionary of the history of ideas* (Vols. 1-4). New York, NY: Scribner's.

Article from an online periodical.

Online articles follow the same guidelines for printed articles. Include all information the online host makes available, including an issue number in parentheses.

Author, A. A., & Author, B. B. (Date of publication). Title of article. *Title of Online Periodical*, volume number(issue number if available). Retrieved from <http://www.someaddress.com/full/url/>

Bernstein, M. (2002). 10 tips on writing the living Web. *A list apart: For people who make websites*, 149. Retrieved from <http://www.alistapart.com/articles/writeliving>

Online scholarly journal article: Citing DOIs.

Please note: In August of 2011 the formatting recommendations for DOIs changed. DOIs are now rendered as an alpha-numeric string which acts as an active link. According to *The APA Style Guide to Electronic References, 6th edition*, you should use the DOI format which the article appears with. So, if it is using the older numeric string, use that as the DOI. If, however,

it is presented as the newer alpha-numeric string, use that as the DOI. The Purdue OWL maintains examples of citations using both DOI styles.

Because online materials can potentially change URLs, APA recommends providing a Digital Object Identifier (DOI), when it is available, as opposed to the URL. DOIs are an attempt to provide stable, long-lasting links for online articles. They are unique to their documents and consist of a long alphanumeric code. Many-but not all-publishers will provide an article's DOI on the first page of the document.

Note that some online bibliographies provide an article's DOI but may "hide" the code under a button which may read "Article" or may be an abbreviation of a vendor's name like "CrossRef" or "PubMed." This button will usually lead the user to the full article which will include the DOI. Find DOI's from print publications or ones that go to dead links with CrossRef.org's "DOI Resolver," which is displayed in a central location on their home page.

Article from an online periodical with DOI assigned.

Author, A. A., & Author, B. B. (Date of publication). Title of article. *Title of Journal*, volume number, page range. doi:0000000/000000000000 or <http://dx.doi.org/10.0000/0000>

Brownlie, D. (2007). Toward effective poster presentations: An annotated bibliography.

European Journal of Marketing, 41, 1245-1283. doi:10.1108/03090560710821161

Wooldridge, M.B., & Shapka, J. (2012). Playing with technology: Mother-toddler interaction scores lower during play with electronic toys. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 33(5), 211-218. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.appdev.2012.05.005>

Article from an online periodical with no DOI Assigned.

Online scholarly journal articles without a DOI require the URL of the journal home page. Remember that one goal of citations is to provide your readers with enough information to find the article; providing the journal home page aids readers in this process.

Author, A. A., & Author, B. B. (Date of publication). Title of article. *Title of Journal*, volume number. Retrieved from <http://www.journalhomepage.com/full/url/>

Kenneth, I. A. (2000). A Buddhist response to the nature of human rights. *Journal of Buddhist Ethics*, 8. Retrieved from <http://www.cac.psu.edu/jbe/twocont.html>

Online newspaper article.

Author, A. A. (Year, Month Day). Title of article. *Title of Newspaper*. Retrieved from <http://www.someaddress.com/full/url/>

Parker-Pope, T. (2008, May 6). Psychiatry handbook linked to drug industry. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://well.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/05/06/psychiatry-handbook-linked-to-drug-industry/>

Nonperiodical web document, web page, or report.

List as much of the following information as possible (you sometimes have to hunt around to find the information. If there is a page such as <http://www.somesite.com/somepage.htm>, and [somepage.htm](http://www.somesite.com/somepage.htm) doesn't have the information you're looking for, move up the URL to <http://www.somesite.com/>):

Author, A. A., & Author, B. B. (Date of publication). Title of document. Retrieved from <http://Web address>

Angeli, E., Wagner, J., Lawrick, E., Moore, K., Anderson, M., Soderland, L., & Brizee, A. (2010, May 5). General format. Retrieved from <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>

Note: When an Internet document is more than one Web page, provide a URL that links to the home page or entry page for the document. In addition, if there isn't a date available for the document use (n.d.) for no date in the source listing.

Publishers.

Give the name of the publisher in as brief a form as possible. Write out the names of associations, corporations, and university presses, but omit terms such as Publishers, Co., and Inc. Retain the words Books and Press (APA, 2009, p. 187).

Naming and Saving Assignment Documents

Please be sure to name and save your written assignments as described in the Student Guide before uploading them to be graded. Example: Workshop 1, Activity 4 assignment: SMITH-WS1A4.doc. (Student's last name-workshop (WS) number followed by the assignment (A) number for that workshop.) Your facilitators may have dozens of students in different classes, just naming and saving your work as *Journal 1* for example can cause the assignment to be lost. The facilitators must download your assignments in order to grade them; you can see how instructors can get numerous assignments in our document libraries with the same or similar names. The name under which a document is saved is not the same as the title of the paper.

Common Writing Errors

Anthropomorphisms

Anthropomorphism is the term given when human characteristics are given to non-human objects. Avoid the use of anthropomorphisms. This often occurs when students are describing the contents of a chapter in the textbook. For example, a student wrote: "Chapter Six says that . . ." A textbook cannot speak. This error can be avoided by using the APA author-year method of citation. For example: "Siegel and Welsh (2012) explain in Chapter Six . . ."

Feel, While, and Contractions

We often write like we speak. But, in scholarly writing, some of the terms we use in speech are not appropriate. The term “feel” is often misused. One student wrote, “I feel that the Exclusionary Rule is a good rule.” The term feel refers to a sense or emotion. “I feel sick.” “The stove feels hot.” In the context of the sentence regarding the Exclusionary Rule, the word feel should be replaced with the word “believe.”

Another term that is often misused is “while.” “While I believe that the Miranda Rule is appropriate . . .” The term “while” is a measure of time. “I had to wait a while for the bus to arrive.” With respect to sentence regarding the Miranda Rule, replace the word while with “even as,” “although,” or “whereas.”

Contractions are not favored in scholarly writing (Bowman, 2007). In a contraction, two words are combined by leaving out some letters and replacing them with an apostrophe. People use contractions all the time when speaking and in informal writing. Because some possessives and contractions sound alike (you’re/your, they’re/their, it’s/its), you have to be very careful not to confuse these words (see the homonyms section below). To check for whether a possessive or a contraction should be used, consider the meaning of the sentence (Wells, 2009). What is being communicated? See the examples below.

- Incorrect: I heard that your going to the concert with us.
Correct: I heard that you’re going to the concert with us.
- Incorrect: Their shopping for a new blender right now.
Correct: They’re shopping for a new blender right now.
- Incorrect: I hear its going to snow tomorrow.
Correct: I hear it’s going to snow tomorrow (Wells, 2009).

Avoid the use of contractions in scholarly writing; use the complete words.

Grammarly.com

In my opinion, one of the most important things a student can do is proof read papers before submission. If possible, have another person read the paper. You may be able to submit your draft paper to Grammarly.com. Grammarly.com is software that is useful to detect grammar and English convention errors. It is not perfect. Sometimes it will view headings as sentence fragments for example, but it is a very good learning and teaching tool. I sometimes use it and send the Grammarly report to my students for review. Go to <http://www.grammarly.com/> to sign up and log in. You will need your IWU official email address in order to sign up.

Summary

Many students have difficulty writing in the APA style. I have summarized a variety of common errors that I have noticed students make over the years and provided some direction to help avoid these errors. This composition is but one of a larger group of essays that students might find of some value with respect to writing in the APA and succeeding with IWU assignments.

There are a number of resources for help with academic writing and the APA. For more help with academic writing, visit: <http://unilearning.uow.edu.au/academic/2e.html>, the Purdue Owl: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>, or IWU OCLS: http://www2.indwes.edu/ocls/style_guide.html. For a very helpful online APA tutorial, visit Harvard University's APA Exposed presentation at http://isites.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do?keyword=apa_exposed. I highly recommend it.

I grade primarily on content, but I also grade correct use of grammar, English convention, whether or not assignment instructions were followed, and the APA. I don't grade very harshly on the APA, but I do expect progress. In the end, I am sure you will have a good grasp of it if you do not already. Blessings and best wishes for continued academic success with IWU.

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