

APA for Life
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Abstract

The second page usually contains your abstract, which is a summary of your paper. The abstract should include your topic, purpose/thesis, and conclusions. Some instructors may tell you not to include an abstract for a short paper or for a report. The abstract should be between 150 and 250 words. Thus, you should always check with your instructor concerning its length, or before excluding the abstract. Note that the title “Abstract” is on the first line of this page and is bolded. Also note that the first few words of the title are at the top left-hand side of the page opposite the page number and that the words “Running head” are omitted. Everything is evenly spaced (double spaced). There is no extra space between the word “Abstract” and your text and the first line is not indented. In terms of margins, you should set your margins for 1 inch all around and you should use 12 point font. By the way, this page contains 167 words.

Writing a Business Paper Using APA Style

This is where you start the text of your paper. Notice that the title is on the first line of this page and that everything is evenly double spaced. There is no extra line between the title and the first paragraph. Also note that the title is bolded, not italicized or underlined. It is in the same font as the rest of the text.

Some points about the **title page**: Sometimes students don't understand the difference between the "Running head" and the "Header." The **header** is in the top margin of your paper along with the page number. It should be ½ inch from the top of the paper, with the text of the paper ½ inch below the header...making the text 1 inch from the top of the paper. The purpose of the header is to let the reader know which pages go where in case the reader loses a page. On the title page, your header should be your running head; on each consecutive page the header will be the abbreviated version of your title without the words "running head."

The "**Running head**" tells the editor what you would like to see on the top of the pages of your article. In some journals that use the APA style, you will see the author's name at the top of the page on one side of the journal; on the other side is the running head. This makes it easy to find articles as you browse through the journal or magazine. The running head is simply an abbreviated title. If the title of your paper is short, the running head may be exactly the same as the title. Sometimes, the running head, the title, and the header are all the same; sometimes, each is different. Note that the "h" in "Running head" is not capitalized.

Next, let's talk about **citing sources** within your paper. If you use a direct quote, make sure you put quotation marks around it. For example: According to Thorton (1998), "Nissan's sales are expected to grow over the next eight years" (para. 3). When using a direct quote from

print sources make sure you use page numbers. Much like the above example, many electronic sources do not include page numbers. If this happens to be the case then you need use paragraph numbers in the place of page numbers, and include the abbreviation **para**.

If possible, avoid placing a quote in the middle of a paper without introducing it. For example: “It is of paramount importance for good managers to consider the market conditions” (Kozinets, 2002, p. 25). This is not good form and your professor may take off points for this. If your professor allows you to use direct quotes, a good rule of thumb is limit the number of direct quotes to only one per page; everything else should be paraphrased or your own original writing. Also, only use quotes that make an eloquent or emphatic point, or quotes that present information that is difficult to paraphrase. Avoid quoting something like: According to Euromonitor (2003), “Most people own furniture” (para. 3). This information is not particularly eloquent or unique so it would be best to paraphrase it in your own words.

Finally, let’s talk briefly about block quotes. According to the American Psychological Association (2001):

Display a quotation of 40 or more words in a freestanding block of typewritten lines, and omit the quotation marks. Start such a *block quotation* on a new line, and indent the block about ½ in. (1.3 cm, or five spaces) from the left margin (in the same position as the new paragraph). (p. 117)

Factual statements, ideas, or concepts **THAT ARE NOT YOUR OWN** should be paraphrased, correctly cited in the text of your paper, and correctly referenced in your reference list. You can only discuss ideas or information without citing if **YOU YOURSELF MADE UP THE IDEAS OR IF THE INFORMATION IS COMMON KNOWLEDGE!**

For example, suppose you read in Datamonitor (2003): “The slumping economy will significantly impact how companies like Microsoft will stay competitive among industry leaders” (para. 5). In addition, you also read in Berquist (2004): “Companies like Dell, Apple, and Microsoft will need to consider global competition if they want to remain industry players in the future” (para. 7).

Paraphrased correctly, the above information may be presented like this: According to Datamonitor (2003), one of Microsoft’s challenges is to compete with its peers in a declining economy (para. 5). In addition, some analysts believe that global competition will also affect Microsoft’s competitive edge in the years to come (Berquist, 2004, para. 7).

It’s really important that you don’t plagiarize. Use your own words to paraphrase what the author says. Sometimes it helps to read the information, then set it aside and explain what you read in your own words. Do not make the mistake of taking the author’s words and simply changing a few words. For example, suppose you read the following in Bank (2002): “Bill Gates is seen as a pioneer in software development and continues to grow his business by hiring creative talent” (p. 121). When paraphrasing, do **NOT** do the following: Bill Gates is viewed as a visionary in software development and continues to grow his business by hiring creative people (Bank, 2002, p. 121). This is still plagiarism! You have changed a few words, but most of the words still belong to Banks! It is your job to tell the reader what Bank’s ideas are, but it is critical that you do so in your own words.

Another bit of advice: According to the current edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, all direct quotes **MUST** have page or paragraph numbers. However, when you paraphrase an author it is *optional* to include the page number where you found the idea/information. A good rule of thumb to follow is if the source is less than five

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pages then leave out the page numbers. If your source is longer than five pages then include the page numbers in your parenthetical citations as a courtesy to your reader. Doing this makes it much easier for your reader to look up the cited information in a very large source.

One caveat: This sample paper presents an example of a typical APA style paper. However, when writing group reports for your business classes, some professors will ask you to deviate from this format. For example, they may request that you label each section of your paper, single space your sentences, omit running heads, include page numbers with all in-text citations that paraphrase, or use a *completely different citation style* altogether. Therefore it is VERY IMPORTANT that you read your assignment carefully and understand what your professor requires before following this format. **At the very least this paper will give you some basic guidelines on how to cite direct quotes, paraphrases, and how your reference page should look.**

Finally, it is simply impossible to include examples in this paper for every potential question that you may have. Therefore, please contact the librarian with any questions you might have or consult the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. Copies are available on the Reference shelves in the in the Upland and Ontario campus Libraries.

Works Cited

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