The Basics of APA Style

Name

Fullerton College

Class Name (optional)

Professor’s Name (optional)

Month Day, Year (optional)

Abstract

You will include an abstract here if your professor requires one. Otherwise, delete this page including the “Abstract” heading above. If an abstract is required it should be between 150 and 250 words, but sometimes your instructors will have you write one that is shorter. This paper provides you with a template you can use when writing a paper in APA format. Simply substitute the contents of your paper, including header, title, name, main body and references. To modify the header simply double-click at the top of the page to open the header. The other contents can be highlighted and deleted. But take a gander first, you might just learn something new! Also note, the abstract is not indented and the words “Running head” only appear on the first page.

*Keywords*: If you have keywords, list them here.

The Basics of APA Style

The paragraphs in the body of your paper should be indented. Set up your paragraph format by right clicking, making sure you have the following selections; alignment: left; indentation, special: hanging; spacing: double

The introduction guides your reader into the paper by grabbing attention and introducing the topic. It should begin with a hook that catches the reader’s interest. This could be a quote, an analogy, or a question. After getting the reader’s attention, the introduction should give some background information on the topic. Ideas within the introduction should begin as very general and gradually get more specific until it ends with the thesis statement. The thesis statement states concisely the main idea of the essay, sets limits on the topic, and indicates the organization of the essay. The thesis serves as a roadmap for your entire paper, showing readers what you have to say and how you will support your ideas. The last sentence of your introduction should be your thesis statement. Following your introduction will be the body of your paper.

The body of the paper supports the main points of the thesis. Each point is developed by one or more paragraphs and supported with specific details. These details include information from books, articles, websites, personal experiences, interviews, etc. Remember, any information you use from a source must be cited using the author—date citation system (American Psychological Association [APA], 2010). You can refer to the fourth page of the APA style guide provided in the library for details on how to format your in-text citations.

Topic sentences often serve as transitions between paragraphs, discussing one idea in detail and supporting the thesis or main idea of the paper. Each paragraph in the body of the paper should include a topic sentence, supporting details to support the topic sentence, and a concluding sentence. The main idea of each paragraph is stated in a topic sentence that shows how the idea relates to the thesis or overall focus of the paper. Generally, the topic sentence is placed at the beginning of a paragraph, but the location and placement may vary with individual organization and audience expectations. The paragraph’s purpose and scope will determine the length, but paragraphs must contain at least two complete sentences. Each paragraph should end with a final statement that ties together the ideas brought up in the paper and emphasizes the main idea one last time. If the assignment is longer, it should transition to the ideas of the next paragraph. Transitions help paragraphs connect to each other and to the thesis. They are used within and between paragraphs to help the paper flow better. Transitions can be one or two words, e.g. First, Next, In addition, etc. or one or two sentences that bring the reader to the next main point. The topic sentence often serves as a transition. Using APA headings serves to organize your text, keep you on track as you write, and clearly introduce points to your reader. An outline can assist you in determining how to title your headings, as well as how many you should use. APA uses the five levels of headings. More information on headings can be found in the APA format Quick guide available in the library.

If you incorporate research into your paper, be sure to credit each source in the sentence where you use the material. The in-text citation must include the author’s name and year of publication. If there is no author name available, use the title of the article as the author. If there is no publication date available, use n.d. which stands for “no date”. By providing an in-text citation you are giving credit for any idea not your own. Make sure to cite direct quotations (using the author’s exact words), paraphrases (putting information into your own words), information that is not common knowledge, and any other borrowed material that might appear to be your own if there were no citations. It’s easy to get confused, but if you are not sure make sure to cite!

Sources can be located a number of ways, but it is strongly recommended that you utilize the databases provided by the school. To access these databases, go to the Fullerton Library Databases, click on the Databases tab on the widget, and select the View Full Database List button. You can select the database you need as they are alphabetically sorted at this point. These are subscription-based services, so they are accessible to you since you are a Fullerton College student. Make sure to conduct a brainstorming session before searching for materials to make your search more effective (J. Kageyama, personal communication, April 1, 2017).

Your conclusion should bring together all the main points of the essay. It refers back and restates the thesis statement. The conclusion leaves readers with a final thought and sense of closure by resolving and ideas brought up in the essay. In the conclusion, new topics and ideas that were not developed in the paper should not be introduced.

Your references will begin on the next page after the end of your paper. You will replace the references in this template with your own references. Remember to put your references in alphabetical order.

References

Last Name, F. M. (Year). Article title. *Journal Title.* Pages From – To.

Last Name, F. M. (Year). *Book Title.* City Name: Publisher Name.

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