

Writing Papers for HDFS Classes

The Faculty

Human Development and Family Science Department

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Abstract

The Human Development and Family Science Department requires all papers by students to be written in the style specified by the American Psychological Association (APA) in the Publication Manual, 7th edition. APA style is explained within this document. Moreover, this document is written in APA style and can be used as an example for your paper. The purpose of using only APA style is to promote clear communication and to eliminate confusion caused by the use of many different styles. Please read this entire document before beginning your paper. Your professor will answer any questions you have regarding requirements that are not covered in this document.

Writing Papers for HFS Classes

The Human Development and Family Science Department uses APA style for all scholarly papers. The following guidelines are consistent with APA style. For more specific information, consult the *Publication Manual of The American Psychological Association, 7th Edition* (2020) which can be found in the resources section of the North Dakota State University (NDSU) library. You may also use the *Concise Rules of APA Style, 7th Edition* (2020) which is the handbook that corresponds to the 7th Edition publication manual. Reliable online sources are also available, such as the official APA web site: www.apastyle.org. Beware of online formatting sites such as www.citationmachine.net. While these sites may seem helpful, mistakes are common and easily overlooked. Be sure to check all your citations against a reliable source.

The purpose of writing is to communicate ideas and factual information, so write clearly and concisely. High quality writing is well organized and easy to understand. It may be helpful to create an outline of your paper before you begin writing. Avoid using words that are not necessary because they distract from the quality of your paper. Also, as a general rule, you should use nonsexist language (e.g., people, humanity). The following guidelines and components of APA style writing will help you organize your paper and make your points easier to understand.

General Typing Instructions

Use the same font and type size for every section of your paper. Number all pages consecutively beginning with the title page. Using the page numbers setting in your word-processing program will maintain consistency. All page numbers should be placed in the upper right-hand corner at least 1 inch from the right-hand edge of the page, between the top of the page and the first line of text.

Margins should be 1 inch at the top, bottom, right, and left of every page. Double-space the

entire paper, including lines following the title, headings, quotations, and references. Never use single-spacing. Indent the first line of every paragraph one tab stop equivalent to 0.5 inches (this is the default tab setting in most programs). The abstract is one exception to this rule. Type one space after commas, semicolons, colons, and all punctuation marks at the end of sentences. If a complete sentence ends with a parenthesis, the period follows the closing parenthesis. If a complete sentence is enclosed in parentheses, the period is placed within the parentheses.

The general rule concerning numbers is that numbers 10 and above are written as figures (e.g., 24) and numbers below 10 are written as words (e.g., nine). There are some exceptions to this rule. When numbers below 10 are grouped for comparison with numbers 10 and above in the same paragraph, all numbers are written as figures (e.g., 2 out of 55 students). However, use the general rule if different categories of items are not being compared, but are in the same sentence (e.g., 12 behaviors identified by three teachers). Mathematical functions are expressed as figures (e.g., 4%, 20:1). Times, dates, ages, and exact sums of money are also expressed as numerals (e.g., \$5, 3-year-olds). Numbers at the beginning of sentences should be written as words (e.g., Twenty-five students participated...).

It may be necessary to show an order or number in which topics or statements appear. This is called "seriation". Use lowercase letters (a), (b), to show seriation paragraphs only if seriation is required.

Be careful not to anthropomorphize inanimate sources. Anthropomorphizing is attributing human characteristics to things that are not human. For example, rather than writing, "The theory concluded..." or, "The child care was convinced that..." you should write the researchers' names, "White and Brown (2004) concluded that..." or write who was convinced, "The child care director and staff were convinced that..."

Avoid ending sentences with prepositions, such as "to", "with", "of", or "at". Although

in speech you might say, “Who did you go with?” in professional writing it is more appropriate to write, “With whom did you go?” This rule can be ignored only if reorganizing the sentence to avoid placing the preposition at the end causes the sentence’s meaning to be lost or reduces the clarity of your writing.

Paragraphs should be of an appropriate length. Avoid creating overly short paragraphs that contain fewer than three sentences. Conversely, if a paragraph is an entire double-spaced page, consider breaking it into two logical, but related paragraphs. All paragraphs, regardless of length, should consist of related information or ideas.

Abbreviations are appropriate for use in HDFS papers. If using an abbreviation, write out the term the first time you use it and place the abbreviation within parentheses afterward like this: the Human Development and Family Science (HDFS) faculty promote the use of.... Thereafter, use only the abbreviation like this: In addition, the HDFS faculty.... Some abbreviations do not need to be written out. Word entries in the *Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary* (2005) require no in-text explanation. Some examples are IQ, AIDS, HIV, and ESP. You may also use standard Latin abbreviations, such as *e.g.*, which means “for example”, or *i.e.*, which means “that is.” Use *e.g.*, when only some exemplars are included: The attachment styles (e.g., secure, avoidant) indicated....; use *i.e.*, when all exemplars are included: The attachment styles (i.e., secure, ambivalent, avoidant, disorganized) indicate....

The general APA rule is to use hyphens for clarity and to prevent misunderstanding of a word or phrase. Use a hyphen when a word or compound adjective might be misread. For example, if you want to say *un-ionized*, but without a hyphen the meaning is changed to *unionized*, you should use a hyphen. Here is another example. Observe how the meaning changes when a hyphen is added. “The child grew up in a single family home,” means the child lived in

only one family home, whereas, “The child grew up in a single-family home,” means the child lived in a home in which a single family resided. Do not use hyphens if a compound adjective's meaning is generally understood, (e.g., high school), if an adverb ends in -ly (e.g., widely known), or if common fractions are used as nouns (e.g., one fourth of the class).

Title Page

The title page includes the title, the author, and the affiliation (you can use the name of the class and department). Although APA does not require them, HDFS faculty would also like you to include the instructor's name and the date below the class and department. All should be double spaced, centered, and typed in upper and lowercase letters. Choose a title that clearly lets readers know what your paper is about and what they will learn by reading it. Avoid "cute" titles. The title should be as short as possible and must not exceed 15 words. The page number "1" should be in the upper right-hand corner of the title page.

Abstract

An abstract is a brief summary of the paper. Abstracts are not required for every assignment, so check with your instructor before including one. The abstract should not exceed 120 words, unless it is a part of a thesis or dissertation. The abstract should contain the topic, purpose, and main findings or conclusions. If your paper includes a methods section describing how the information was obtained, a brief description of the methods should be included in the abstract prior to the main findings and conclusion. The abstract should be one paragraph in block form. Do not indent. All numbers should be in digits, unless they begin a sentence. Type the heading “Abstract” in uppercase and lowercase letters, centered, on top of the page. Only the abstract should be on this page. The page number 2 should be typed in the upper right-hand corner.

Introduction

Begin the text of your paper on a new page, with the page number in the upper right-hand corner. Center the title of your paper as a heading (no boldface), then left justify a new paragraph to start your introduction. Double-space and begin typing the introduction. The introduction should clearly state the purpose of your paper, the specific problem or topic you are writing about, why it is important or worthy of study, and explain the specific elements or parts of your main problem or topic. You might begin by stating the purpose of the paper followed by a sentence or two that explains why the purpose is important. You can cite statistics, include a reference to support the importance of your topic, or use a quote from an authority (direct quotes should be used rarely, if at all). The introduction should be one or two paragraphs.

Main Body

The main body of the paper is where you give information about each of the elements or parts of your main topic. It should clearly follow what you said in the abstract and the introduction. Each element or part should be identified by using a subheading and should follow each other without a break. Do not begin a section on a new page, unless it follows a full page of text.

Citing Sources

You must cite the source of all information in your entire paper that is not common knowledge or your own original idea. Even if you are not directly quoting a source, you must cite information or ideas that are not your own. To do otherwise constitutes plagiarism. Always follow each sentence that is someone else's work like this (Brown, 1993). If you are citing multiple works, place them in parentheses in alphabetical order and separated by a semicolon like this (Brown, 1993; Orange & White, 2004; Purple, 2006). If it is a direct quote, "You must

put quotation marks around the information and include the page number at the end," (Brown, 1993, p. 21). Another method is to use the author's name and date of publication in the sentence: According to Brown (1993), writing can be fun..., or Brown (1993) said.... If you are directly quoting 40 words or more, use the following free-standing block style. Indent 0.5 inches from the left margin, double-space, and do not use quotation marks.

When you select a topic for a paper, be sure you are interested in it, or you will dread having to work so hard on such a boring project. On the other hand, if you are really interested in the topic, you will look forward with great anticipation to your daily trips to the library. (Brown, 1993, pp. 13-20)

If you are citing a source with two authors, you must use both names every time you cite them (White & Brown, 1993). If you use a source with three or more authors, you simply list the first author and "et al.," (White et al., 1993). If you want some variety, include the name in the sentence: According to White et al. (1993).... Or, according to White and colleagues (1993), blue is a common....

Frequently websites or other sources will not have an author who is identified or will have a corporate author (i.e., the work was produced by an institution, agency, association, or company). If your source does not list an author, cite the first few words of the entry in your reference list (usually the title or institution) and the year like this: (Common Parenting, 2009), or this: (American Bureau of Statistics [ABS], 1993), and then if you mention them again, simply use the abbreviation (ABS, 1993). Many professors will not allow web sites as sources for HDFS papers. Check with your professor before using an internet source. Wikipedia is not considered a reliable source of information.

There may be times when you cannot obtain an original source that you read about in a

secondary source. For instance, you read about a study by Watson and Crick in your textbook, which was written by Berger in 2000, but you cannot find the Watson and Crick article. You would cite information from their study like this: Watson and Crick (as cited in Berger, 2000) found that writing is fun. In your reference list, include Berger (2000), but not Watson and Crick.

Personal communication, such as interviews or letters as references should also be cited. Cite these sources in the body of your paper (W. D. Johnson, personal communication, December 24, 1994) but, do not include them in the reference list. Another way to cite personal communication is like this: ...according to W. D. Johnson (personal communication, December 24, 1994).

Headings

The main body of your paper is divided into sections by using headings. Think of headings as a way to organize your paper for improved understanding. Headings are described by levels. There are five levels in the APA format; however, most papers use only two or three levels. Examples of level headings follow.

Main Section Heading

Type the main section headings (e.g., Abstract, Methods, Conclusions, References) in boldface, uppercase and lowercase letters, centered on the page. This example is a first-level heading. Double-space between lines if the title is more than one line. Check your headings before submitting or printing your paper. If a heading falls at the end of a page with no text below it, add a space so that it falls on the following page.

Second-Level Headings Are Flush Left, Boldface, in Title Case

The first sentence of the paragraph then begins here. It is indented one tab space (equivalent to 0.5 inches) and double spaced below the heading.

Third Level Headings Are Flush Left, Boldface and Italic, in Title Case

The first sentence of the paragraph Then begins here.

Conclusions

The conclusions are the last part of your paper. The heading “Conclusions” is a main-section heading so should be centered in upper and lowercase letters and should be boldfaced. In the conclusion section provide a quick summary of what you decide are the most important facts or ideas contained in previous sections of your paper. Conclusions should be short, clear, logical, and must be supported by the information in your paper. "I think this is an interesting subject" is not an appropriate conclusion.

References

References must be on a separate page. The heading should be centered, boldface in uppercase and lowercase letters. References should be listed in alphabetical order. The sub-headings you see in the reference list below should not be included in your paper’s reference list. These have been added here by the faculty for added clarity. Every source you cite in the text of your paper (except personal communications) must be listed in your references section, and every entry in your reference section must be cited at least once in the text of your paper. Double-space all references. Use a hanging indent for each reference entry. That is, type the first line flush left and indent all remaining lines. You can use the paragraph settings in your word-processing program to easily set hanging indents.

Examples for a book or manual published by an organization, books with one author or with two authors, a book with an author who is the editor, a chapter in an edited book, journal articles with one or with two authors, a publication with no author published by an institute, and a web site are illustrated in the following list of references. If a Digital Object Identifier (DOI) is available, you must report it. When using web sites as sources, many word-processing programs automatically format

recognized URLs with blue text and underline. This format is not acceptable. Turn auto-formatting off or remove automatic formatting by selecting “undo” (or Ctrl-Z) in your word processor as soon as the formatting appears. There are additional types of references you might choose to use in your paper.

You may consult the *Publication Manual of the APA, 7th Edition* (2009) or your instructor will assist you with the correct form for listing those references.

References

Examples of Books

American Psychological Association. (2020). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.). <https://doi.org/10.1037/0000165-000>

Anderson, G. O. (1993). *How to write papers*. Atheneum.

Candy, C. O., & Johnson, C. (1993). *Why teachers enjoy teaching*. Praeger.

David, S. O. (Ed.). (1992). *Welcome to the real world*. Merriam-Webster.

Examples of a Chapter in a Book

Johnson, M., Hanson, O., & Olson, L. (1993). How to write a paper. In W. O. Hanson (Ed.), *Preparing for life after college* (pp. 200-251). Mosby.

Examples of a Journal Article

Brown, W. B. (1993). Researching the literature. *Journal of Writing*, 37, 1-7. doi:10.0124/5679-101112.21.32

White, B. L., & Johnson, A. K. (2007). Double checking your work. *Online Journal of Editing*, 25, 1-12. <http://www.journalofediting.os.au/oje>

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Greater New Milford (CT) Area Healthy Community 2000 Task Force on Teen and Adolescent Issues, (n.d.). *Who has time for a family meal? You do*. <http://www.familymealtime.org>

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United States Sentencing Commission, (n.d.). *1977 Sourcebook of Federal Sentencing Statistics*. <http://www.ussc.gov/annrpt/1997/sbtoc97.htm>