



Finding Research & APA Style

PSYCH 282:
Behaviour Modification
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Learning Outcomes

1. Why do I have to find research evidence?
2. What sources should I use (and avoid)?
3. How do I find research papers?
4. Why should I use APA style?
5. How are in-text citations presented?
6. How are references formatted?
7. Where can I learn more about APA style?



Finding Research Evidence

Why do I have to find research evidence?

- in parts II and IV of the self-management project, you are required to support your answers by citing research evidence
- it is your responsibility to search for, find, and evaluate relevant research evidence on your own
- these are important skills that will serve you well (and are highly valued by employers)



Finding Research Evidence

What sources should I use?

- **primary sources:** original research articles
 - a research article has sections like "methods," "participants," "results," and "discussion"
 - typically published in peer-reviewed scientific journals; most available online via UAlberta Libraries website
 - the best scientific research is typically an experiment using randomized controlled trials
 - however, b-mod research mostly uses single-subject experimental designs



Finding Research Evidence

What sources should I avoid?

- **secondary sources:** descriptions or summaries of research performed by someone other than the author
 - these include textbooks, magazines (including *Scientific American*), newspapers, science websites, blogs, and Wikipedia
 - and narrative literature reviews that are not systematic reviews (see below)



5

Finding Research Evidence

- online theses or dissertations (are not peer-reviewed or published)
- just because an article appears in a peer-reviewed journal does not necessarily mean that it is a research article; some articles are opinion papers or policy documents which are **not** primary research studies
- other sources to avoid: encyclopedias, legal documents, opinion papers, and fictional sources (e.g., *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*)



6

Finding Research Evidence

Non-experimental sources that *are* acceptable:

- a **systematic review** is a comprehensive summary of previously published primary research literature on a topic (do not use a narrative review)
- a **meta-analysis** is a statistical combination of previously published primary research on a topic
- a **survey** collects data on people's opinions or recollections (e.g., may describe how certain behaviours are socially unacceptable)



7

Finding Research Evidence

Links to some scientific journals on b-mod:

- [Behavior Modification](#)
- [Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis](#)
- [Journal of the Experimental Analysis of Behavior](#)
- [Behavior Analysis: Research and Practice](#)
- [Behavior Analysis in Practice](#)
- [Perspectives on Behavior Science](#)
- [Behavior Therapy](#)
- [Behaviour Research and Therapy](#)
- [Behavioural Interventions](#)



8

Finding Research Evidence

How do I search for research papers on a topic?

- use the PSYCInfo® database
 - has over 5 million records of peer-reviewed studies in psychology and the behavioral sciences from 1887 to the present
 - helps ensure you have a high-quality source
 - to access it, you must log in via the UAlberta Libraries website: [PSYCInfo database](#)



Finding Research Evidence

- UAlberta Library's [Psychology Subject Guide](#):
 - includes information on PSYCInfo, and explains primary and secondary sources
 - curated by Virginia Pow, the Librarian for Psychology, who offers individual consultation



Finding Research Evidence

- many behaviour modification articles are indexed by [PubMed](#) and [PubMed Central](#)
- for certain behaviours, you may need to search other databases, like ERIC (education), EconLit (economics), or MEDLINE (biomedicine): [UAlberta Libraries A-Z Databases](#)
- ⚠ use [Google Scholar](#), [EBSCO Discovery Service](#), [Semantic Scholar](#), etc. at your own risk



Finding Research Evidence

Having trouble finding a relevant paper showing that your target behaviour is beneficial?

- look for evidence that *not* doing your target behaviour is *detrimental*
e.g., instead of *saving money is good*, try *having debt is bad*
- then search for this opposite behaviour and the phrase "mental health"
e.g., "student debt" AND "mental health"



Finding Research Evidence

What do I do after I find an article?

- [How to Read and Comprehend Scientific Research Articles](#) tutorial video
- University of Alberta Library's [Foundational Research Tutorials](#)
- Verywell Mind's [Reading Articles in Psychology Journals](#)
- HuffPost's [How to Read and Understand a Scientific Paper](#)



13



Why should I use APA (American Psychological Association) style?

- provides consistent format within a discipline (APA style is used by over 1,000 journals)
- allows readers to cross-reference and find your sources easily
- gives you credibility as a writer when you support your claims with citations of evidence
- protects you from plagiarism



14

Format

Submitting your self-management assignments online:

- some parts use eClass text boxes, which cannot easily format some aspects of APA style (e.g., title page, double-spacing, margins, hanging indents, etc.)
- therefore, your assignments do **not** require these aspects of APA style
- however, citations and references otherwise **must** be in APA style



15

Citations

Citations indicate an external source of information.

- **do** cite all external sources of information (this helps protect you against plagiarism)
- **do not** copy-and-paste from sources
- **do not** include direct quotes; summarize or paraphrase (put it in your own words) instead and cite the source
- see self-management project document for more resources on citing, summarizing, and paraphrasing



16

Citations

Location: in the body of text (not a footnote)

- at the end of a sentence in parentheses with a comma after the author's name:
PSYCH 282 was found to be cool (Loepelmann, 2024).
- in the sentence itself with the year in parentheses right after the author's name:
Loepelmann (2024) found PSYCH 282 to be cool.



17

Citations

Format: depends on the number of authors

- if there is one author, give surname of author and year of publication:
(Freud, 1900)
- if there are two authors, give surnames of both authors and year of publication:
(Freud & Jung, 1974)
- if there are three or more authors, give surname of first author, "et al." and year of publication:
(Einstein et al., 1933)



18

References

References provide a standard set of information that enables the reader to find the cited source in a library or online, or order it via a bookstore.

- located at the **end of the document**
- centre and **bold** the word **References**
- example entry:
Achterberg, J., McGraw, P., & Lawlis, G. F. (1981). Rheumatoid arthritis: A study of relaxation and temperature biofeedback training as an adjunctive therapy. *Biofeedback and Self-Regulation*, 6(2), 207-223. <https://doi.org/10.1007/bf00998870>



19

References

APA style format for a scientific journal article reference **must** include the following:

- author's surname, comma, author's initials (repeat for all authors separated by commas; put ampersand before final author's surname):
Achterberg, J., McGraw, P., & Lawlis, G. F.
- year of publication in parentheses, period:
(1981).



21

References

- title of article (Do **Not** Capitalize Each Word, do **not** italicize, “do **not** use quotes”), period:
Rheumatoid arthritis: A study of relaxation and temperature biofeedback training as an adjunctive therapy.
(words in title following a colon **are** capitalized)
- journal title in italics (capitalize important words; do not abbreviate), comma:
Biofeedback and Self-Regulation,



References

- journal volume number in italics:
6
- journal issue number in parentheses (this article was published in the February issue and the issue number is 2; do **not** italicize), comma:
(2),
- page range (or article number if no page range is given), period:
207-223.



References

- digital object identifier (DOI®):
<https://doi.org/10.1021/ed075p1270>
 - DOI takes you to article online even if it has moved or the URL has changed
 - format DOI as a hyperlink
 - give DOI even if it takes you to a paywall
 - Can't find DOI of article? Enter title of paper at search.crossref.org



References

- URLs (Uniform Resource Locators):
 - e.g., <https://www.nature.com/>
 - only use URL if DOI is **not** available
 - **DO NOT** give URL with “ezproxy.library.ualberta.ca” in it (this requires UAlberta credentials, which expire when you log out)
 - if no DOI exists, and you cannot find a URL to the article without “ezproxy” in it, then give the URL of the official journal home page



Advance Online Publication

Some papers have been accepted for publication but have not yet been published (they may be called "OnlineFirst," or be on sites like PsyArXiv or ResearchGate).

- add "Advance online publication" to reference:
Norris, H. M., & Greer, B. D. (2024). Relative preference for distinct reinforcers maintaining destructive behavior. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jaba.1051>



Citations & References

- ⚠ Every source that has an in-text citation **must** also have a corresponding reference at the end (and vice-versa).
- ⚠ Do **not** use online APA style citation/reference generators--they are all flawed and will cost you marks.



Disclaimer

This presentation does **not** cover everything you need to know about APA style! For example:

- When do you use "and" or "&" between authors?
- What if no author name is given because an article was written by an organization?
- What if there's no DOI or URL to an article?
- What if there's an article number instead of a page range?
- Is Dr. Phil a real psychologist?

See More Resources...



More Resources



American Psychological Association. (2020). *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.). APA.



APA Style website
apastyle.apa.org and apastyle.apa.org/blog



Purdue Online Writing Lab
owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/



More Resources



Writing Services

www.ualberta.ca/current-students/academic-success-centre/writing-services



UAlberta Libraries APA Citation Style Guide

guides.library.ualberta.ca/apa-citation-style

