



Finding Research & APA Style

PSYCH 282:
Behaviour Modification
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Research & APA Style

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?



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Research & 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)



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Research & APA Style

Finding Research Evidence

What sources should I use?

- **primary sources:** original research articles
 - a research article has sections like "methods," "participants," "results," and "discussion"
 - 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



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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)



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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- online theses or dissertations (are not peer-reviewed or published)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*)



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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)



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Finding Research Evidence

How do I find research papers on a topic?

- search using 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](#)



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Finding Research Evidence

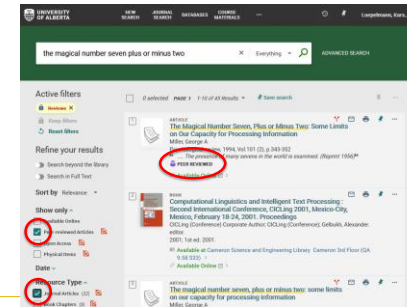
- UAlberta Library's [Psychology Subject Guide](#):
 - includes information on PSYCInfo, and explains primary and secondary sources
 - curated by Virginia Pow, the Librarian for Psychology, who offers individual consultation



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Finding Research Evidence

- search the using the new [Library](#) interface:



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Finding Research Evidence

- browse the tables of contents 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](#)



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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



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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"



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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 [Tips for Reading Psychology Journal Articles](#)
- HuffPost's [How to Read and Understand a Scientific Paper](#)



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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



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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



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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



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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, 2026).
- in the sentence itself with the year in parentheses right after the author's name:
Loepelmann (2026) found PSYCH 282 to be cool.



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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)



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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 reference:
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>



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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).



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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,



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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.



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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
 - if you can't find the DOI of your article, try entering the paper title at search.crossref.org



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References

- URLs (Uniform Resource Locators):
 - e.g., <https://www.nature.com/>
 - only use URL if DOI is **not** available
 - ⚠ **DO NOT** give URL or DOI 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



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Article Number

Some journals do not publish paper copies, so they do not use page numbers. Instead, each article has a number.

- instead of the page range, add the word "Article" before the article number:
- Torelli, J. N., Snyder, S. K., Griffin, M. L., Hellemn, M. P., Cagliani, R. R., & Morgan, G. A. (2025). Life skills evaluation in a kindergarten special education classroom. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, 59(1), Article e70041. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jaba.70029>



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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:

Wolfe, K., Dowdy, A., Ferron, J. M., & Li, R. (2026). Comparing masked and traditional visual analysis of multiple-baseline designs. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jaba.70043>



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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?
 - Do I use a DOI or a URL to an article?
 - Is Dr. Phil an actual psychologist?
- See More Resources...



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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/



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More Resources



Writing Supports
www.ualberta.ca/en/current-students/academic-success-centre/writing/index.html



UAlberta Libraries APA Citation Style Guide
guides.library.ualberta.ca/apa-citation-style



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