

APA Style & Research

PSYCH 467: Advanced Perception
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"uplifting the whole people"

— JAMES MARSHALL TOWN, FOUNDING PRESIDENT, 1950



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APA
STYLE

Reasons for using APA style:

- provides consistent format within a discipline (over 1,000 journals use APA style)
- allows readers to cross-reference and find your sources easily
- gives you credibility as a writer
- protects you from plagiarism
- reduces bias in language (e.g., sexism)



Numerals

Use numerals for quantities:

- all numbers 10 and above
- below 10, if grouped with a number above nine:
2 rats out of a litter of 13
- number preceding a unit of measurement:
2 cm in length
- statistical/mathematical values:
5% of the population
4 times greater

Numerals

- times, dates, ages, scores, points on a scale, etc.:
12:30 a.m.
3-year-old
5 weeks ago
22 minutes
September 11
3 on a 7-point scale

Numerals

Use words for quantities:

- if it begins a sentence, for common fractions, or if "universally accepted"

Four days ago...

two-thirds

- if they are approximations:

about three months ago

Language

Take care in use of words:

- use person-first language ("people living in poverty") not labels ("the poor")
- "they" is endorsed as a gender-neutral pronoun
- no contractions: use "do not" not "don't"
- avoid anthropomorphism: an experiment cannot "attempt to demonstrate," but "researchers" can
- "since" means the passage of time; "because" refers to cause and effect

Language

- make sure you know the difference between:
"that" vs. "which"
"further" vs. "farther"
"i.e." vs. "e.g."

Citations

Citations refer to an external source of information, and are presented in the body of the text

- if you present information but do not cite a source, you are claiming to be the source (which may be a misrepresentation)
- citing sources of information strengthens your argument, and gives you credibility

Citations

- cite specific data in your blog post: provide quantities (statistics!), not just a qualitative description
e.g., "group 1 scored 74% and group 2 scored 56%"
not "group 1 scored significantly higher than group 2"
- report group means, confidence intervals, effect sizes, correlations, etc. of dependent variables
- do **NOT** give probabilities (e.g. $p < 0.05$), test statistics (e.g., $F = 100.09$), standard deviations, etc.

Citations

- report number of participants or demographic information **only** if relevant or noteworthy
(e.g., particularly large or small n , important differences due to gender or age, etc.)

Citations

Include author(s) surname(s) and year of publication.

Citations are placed in text:

- parenthetically: name(s) and date in parentheses
PSYCH 467 students were found to be cool
(Loepelmann, 2026).
- narratively: date in parentheses
Loepelmann (2026) found PSYCH 467 students to be cool.

Citations

- multiple authors:
 - for one or two authors, **always** cite **all** names
Smith and Jones (2002) reported...
 - for three or more authors, give first author's name and "et al." every time
Scott et al. (1990) reported...

Citations

For two authors cited in text:

- use "and" between names in a sentence:
Smith and Jones (2002) found that...
- use "&" between names in parentheses:
...was found (Smith & Jones, 2002).



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13

Citations

If you cite a source at the beginning of the paragraph, you do not have to keep repeating the citation after every sentence in the paragraph if it is clear that the source is the same.

Morin (1988) described two separate but linked epidemics. He distinguished the HIV (viral) epidemic from the subsequent AIDS (disease) epidemic. Morin also discussed a third epidemic, which is as much a part of the pathology of AIDS as the virus itself.



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14

Citations

In general, **avoid** direct quotes. If something is particularly vividly phrased, use **sparingly**. Format:

- name(s), year, and **page number** required
- less than 40 words: put quote in double quotation marks
- 40 or more words: do **NOT** use in this course



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15

Citations

Include a relevant decorative image. Give an attribution (e.g., URL) for your decorative image (it does NOT have to be cited in APA style):



A demo of spatial colour mixing
<https://x.com/AkiyoshiKitaoka/status/1737328141260218628>



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16

References

- centre and bold the word “**References**”

- journal article:

Macknik, S. L., King, M., Randi, J., Robbins, A., Teller, Thompson, J., & Martinez-Conde, S. (2008). Attention and awareness in stage magic: Turning tricks into research. *Nature Reviews Neuroscience*, 9(11), 871-879. <https://doi.org/10.1038/nrn2473>

References

- authors' names: surname and initials

Macknik, S. L., King, M., Randi, J., Robbins, A., Teller, Thompson, J., & Martinez-Conde, S.

- year of publication in parentheses (2008).

- title of article: Do **Not** Capitalize Each Word, *do not italicize*, “**do not** put in quotes”
Attention and awareness in stage magic: Turning tricks into research.

References

- capitalize first letter of every important word in the title of the journal; italicize title of journal and volume number (do not abbreviate name of journal)

Nature Reviews Neuroscience, 9

- issue number in parentheses (not italicized) (11),

- page range or article number 871-879.

References

- DOI® (Digital Object Identifier): format as hyperlink

<https://doi.org/10.1038/nrn2473>

(DOI takes you to the online article even if it has moved)

(do **NOT** include URLs with ezproxy.library.ualberta.ca in them: these require UAlberta login credentials and expire after 60 minutes)

References

- journal article with article number instead of a page range:

Barnhart, A. S., & Goldinger, S. D. (2014). Blinded by magic: Eye-movements reveal the misdirection of attention. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 5, Article 1461.
<https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2014.01461>
(if no article number exists, just give volume number)

article number

References

- advance online publication (may not be given issue, pages, or article number yet):

Thornton, I. M., Riga, A., & Todorović, D. (2026). The Mainz-Linez illusion. *i-Perception*. Advance online publication.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/20416695251399121>
- if no DOI exists, give official journal home page URL

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 in databases via U of A Library website

Finding Research Evidence

What sources should I avoid?

- secondary sources:** descriptions or summaries of research performed by someone other than the author
 - e.g., textbooks, magazines (including *Scientific American*), newspapers, science websites, blogs, and Wikipedia
- online **theses or dissertations** (are not peer-reviewed or published)

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 U of A Library website: [PSYCInfo database](#)



26

Disclaimer

This presentation does **NOT** cover everything you need to know!

See the assignment document for more resources on citing, summarizing, and paraphrasing.

- do you know what constitutes plagiarism?
- do you know the difference between summarizing and paraphrasing?



27

More Help on APA Style



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



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



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



28

More Help on Research

U of A Library's Psychology Subject Guide:
guides.library.ualberta.ca/psychology

Subject Librarian for Psychology Virginia Pow (virginia.pow@ualberta.ca) can help you via consultation



29

More Resources

U of A Library APA Citation Style Guide
guides.library.ualberta.ca/apa-citation-style

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

