

APA: Guideline overview and examples

Professional Academic Skills

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In-text citations

General information (see APA Publication Manual: Citing References in Text, page 174)

In-text citations allow a reader to know where to look in your reference list when you provide information from a specific source. Depending on how you write your text, an in-text citation can be either *active* or *passive*:

- **Active:** A citation in which you mention the author in the sentence itself
 - Example: Van Hoof (2017) found more factors in alcohol-purchasing strategies.
- **Passive:** A citation in which you only provide information from a specific source
 - Example: Risk-benefit evaluation is an important factor when it comes to privacy of data (Barth & De Jong, 2017).

However, depending on the type of source and citation, the way in which you must cite an author or authors varies. In some situations, the way in which you must refer to certain authors changes after the first time you cite them. Below are the most common examples:

Type of citation	First citation (active)	Subsequent citations (active)	First citation (passive)	Subsequent citations (passive)
1 author	Van Hoof (2017)	Van Hoof (2017)	(Van Hoof, 2017)	(Van Hoof, 2017)
2 authors	Barth and De Jong (2017)	Barth and De Jong (2017)	(Barth & De Jong, 2017)	(Barth & De Jong, 2017)
3/4/5 authors*	Janssen, Van Vuuren, and De Jong (2013)	Janssen et al. (2013)	(Janssen, Van Vuuren, & De Jong, 2013)	(Janssen et al., 2013)
6 or more authors	Hellmann et al. (2010)	Hellmann et al. (2010)	(Hellmann et al., 2010)	(Hellmann et al., 2010)
Group (with abbreviation)**	Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS, 2013)	CBS (2013)	(Central Bureau of Statistics [CBS], 2013)	(CBS, 2013)
Group (no abbreviation)	University of Twente (2010)	University of Twente (2010)	(University of Twente, 2010)	(University of Twente, 2010)

* Example includes only 3 authors. The same format applies for 4 and 5 authors

** You have to write the full name of the group once before using the abbreviation

Multiple sources (see APA Publication Manual: Citing References in Text, page 175)

When writing a text, you may use several pieces of information from multiple sources at the same time. In these cases, the following rules apply:

Type of citation	Example (passive)
Works of different authors	(Barth & De Jong, 2017; Janssen, Van Vuuren, & De Jong, 2013)
Works of the same authors	(Van Hoof, 2017, 2010)
Works of the same authors that were published in the same year*	(Barth & De Jong, 2017a, 2017b)
Works of different authors, but first authors have the same surname**	(J. Jansma, 2001; S. R. Jansma & Gosselt, 2017)

*If this situation occurs, you must also apply this to your references

**If this situation occurs, you must include the first author's initials in all text citations, even if they have different publication years

Online sources (see APA Electronic References Guide: Websites, Internet Message Boards, Electronic Mailing Lists, and Social Media, page 31)

Unless you are citing an entire website, citing online sources comply to the normal rules of in-text citations.

Type of citation	Example (passive)
Entire website (not a specific page)*	(https://www.utwente.nl)
Social media (e.g., Twitter)	(Obama, 2013)

*When citing an entire website, you should not include it in your reference list

**When citing a specific webpage, refer to an author and a date if available

Sources without an author or publication year (see APA Publication Manual: Citing References in Text, page 176)

Sometimes, the source you are trying to cite is missing certain information. This most commonly occurs when trying to cite certain types of web content.

Below are some of the most common examples of how this should be dealt with:

Type of citation	Example (passive)
Unknown author*	("Title of the text", 2015)
Unknown publication year**	(Haaksma, n.d.)
Anonymous author	(Anonymous, 2010)

*In this case, you provide the title of the work instead of the author

** In this case, you replace the year of publication by "n.d.", which is an abbreviation for "no date"

Quotes (see APA Publication Manual: Quoting and Paraphrasing, page 170)

In some cases, it is better to quote a source directly instead of paraphrasing it (putting it in your words). This can be the case when wanting to use specific definitions, or information that may be misinterpreted. When quoting, the following rules apply:

Type of citation	Rules	Example
Quote, <40 words	Use double quotation marks Provide page number(s)	Liu, Volcic, and Gallois (2014) define communication as “the process by which people use shared verbal or nonverbal codes, systems, and media to exchange information in a particular cultural context” (p. 28).
Quote, ≥40 words	Use a block quotation Provide page number(s)	Lowdermilk (2013) described the main advantage of unstructured interviews as follows: Unstructured interviews allow for a more open dialog that’s fitting for this type of exploration. The key to unstructured interviews is the level of informality. Not structuring your interview allows free-form ideas to emerge because you’re having an open discussion about the problem space (pp. 83-84).

When quoting directly, you may not make any modifications to the source. However, you may change the first letters of the sentence into uppercase or lowercase, the punctuation that marks the end of a sentence, and omitting certain parts of the text and replace them with three spaced ellipsis. When quoting online sources, page numbers are not always present. In that case, you should indicate the paragraph number in which your quote appears, instead of mentioned a page number. This has the following format: (Author, year, para. x)

Secondary sources (citing a source within another source)

It may sometimes be the case that you find a useful source within a certain work. If this is the case, you must always attempt to try and access the original article first. However, this is not always possible. In this situation, you have to consider both the *primary source* and *secondary source*. For instance:

- **Situation:** You are reading a book by De Jong (2017), which provides information from an article from Haaksma (2016) you want to use. However, the article by Haaksma (2016) is no longer accessible.
 - The source of the information (article by Haaksma) is the *primary source*.
 - The source that you actually read (book by De Jong) is the *secondary source*.

In this situation, you should cite the both sources as shown below. In your reference list, you should only include the *secondary source*.

- **Example (active):** Haaksma (as cited in De Jong, 2017) found several distinguishing user groups.
- **Example (passive):** Users of technical products have their own ways of framing their experiences (Haaksma, as cited in De Jong, 2017).

Reference list

General information (see APA Publication Manual: Reference List, page 180)

Your reference list contains the full references of the work that you cite in your text. As is the case with in-text citations, the rules for what to include in a reference varies depending on the type of source. There are a few general rules you need to take into account when organizing your reference list:

- Your reference list should always start on a new page
- Your reference list should have “References” as the title
- Your references should be arranged in an alphabetical order by the last name of the first author
 - Single authors go before multiple authors when references have the same first author
 - Organise by year of publication if names are the same
- Your references should be separated by using indentations (do not use bullet points or numbers)
 - The first line of a reference should be left as normal, while subsequent lines of each references should be indented (see examples)

Journal articles (see APA Publication Manual: Periodicals, page 198)

Journal articles are quite straightforward to refer to. In general, the following format applies:

Author, A. A., Author, B. B., & Author, C. C. (Year of publication). Title of the article. *Journal, volume number*(issue number), x-y. <https://doi.org/...>

Type of source	Example
Journal article: 1 author	Mellers, B. A. (2000). Choice and the relative pleasure of consequences. <i>Psychological Bulletin</i> , 126(6), 910-924. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.126.6.910
Journal article: 2 authors	Bochaver, A., & Fenko, A. (2010). Metaphors in happy and unhappy life stories of Russian adults. <i>Metaphor and Symbol</i> , 25(4), 243-262. https://doi.org/10.1080/10926488.2010.510928
Journal article: 3-7 authors	Janssen, S., van Vuuren, M., & de Jong, M. D. T. (2013). Identifying support for functions in developmental relationships: A self-determination perspective. <i>Journal of Vocational Behavior</i> , 82(1), 20-29. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2012.09.005
Journal article: 8 or more authors*	Ascherman-Witzel, J., Grunert, K. G., van Trijp, H. C., Bialkova, S., Raats, M. M., Hodgkins, C., . . . Koenigstrofer, J. (2013). Effects of nutrition label format and product assortment on the healthfulness of food choice. <i>Appetite</i> , 71, 63-74. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.appet.2013.07.004

*In this case, you do not list the 7th author and above, except for the last author

Notes about DOI

At the end of the reference you see something called a DOI (Digital Object Identifier) link. A DOI code can usually be found in the document details of an article, or in the first few pages of the article itself. Once you found that code, you only need to turn it into a link by adding <https://doi.org/> in front of it.

Though this is the recommended way of presenting a DOI code, some other formats are also accepted. Examples are:

- <https://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.126.6.910>
- doi: 10.1037/0033-2909.126.6.910

Your DOI links are allowed to be hyperlinks, though we recommend that you remove the underlining of the link and keep the text black. This improves the readability of your reference list.

If there is not DOI available, provide an URL to the source instead by writing: Retrieved from <http://www...>

Books (see APA Publication Manual: Books, Reference Books, and Book Chapters, page 202)

When referring to an entire book or a book chapter, you should include the book's edition, editors (if present) and the publisher (including location)

Type of source	Example
Printed book*	Kassin, S., Fein, S., & Markus, H. R. (2013). <i>Social Psychology</i> (9th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
Book chapter**	Lowdermilk, T. (2013). What is user-centered design? In M. Treseler (Ed.), <i>User-centered design: A developer's guide to building user-friendly applications</i> (pp. 5-11). Sebastopol, CA: O'Reilly Media.
Book from an online library	Liu, S., Volcic, Z., & Gallois, C. (2014). <i>Introducing intercultural communication: Global cultures and contexts</i> . Retrieved from https://books.google.com/books?isbn=1473909112

*Add the book's edition (e.g., (9th ed.)) if applicable

**In this case, you first list the chapter that you want to cite first, and the full title of the book second

**Whenever applicable, indicate the editors of a book by marking them with (Ed.) or (Eds.)

Conference proceedings (see APA Publication Manual: Meeting and Symposia, page 206)

Not all articles are published in scientific journals. Some are submitted or presented at certain meetings or symposia. Depending on how these works are published, you have to refer to these sort of articles differently:

Type of source	Example
Conference proceeding, published regularly online*	Forlizzi, J., & Battarbee, K. (2004). Understanding experience in interactive systems. <i>Proceedings of the Conference on Designing Interactive Systems: Processes, Practices, Methods, and Techniques</i> , 5, 261-268. https://doi.org/10.1145/1013115.1013152
Conference proceedings, published in book form**	Bevan, N. (2009). Extending quality in use to provide a framework for usability measurement. In M. Kurosu, <i>Lecture Notes in Computer Science: Vol. 5619</i> (pp. 13-22). Heidelberg, Germany: Springer-Verlag. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-642-02806-9_2

*In this case, you use the same format as a journal article

**In this case, you use the same format as a chapter in an edited book

Online sources (see APA Electronic References Guide: Websites, Internet Message Boards, Electronic Mailing Lists, and Social Media, page 31)

Writing a reference for an online source can be very tricky, since there are many different kinds of online sources, and sometimes not all the information you require is available. Below are some common examples:

Type of source	Example
Webpage (e.g., a blog post)*	McAdoo, T. (2017, March 1). DOI display guidelines update [Blog post]. Retrieved from http://blog.apastyle.org/apastyle/2017/03/doi-display-guidelines-update-march-2017.html
Webpage (year of publication unknown)**	The de Bono Group. (n.d.). <i>Six thinking hats</i> . Retrieved 2017, June 26, from http://www.debonogroup.com/six_thinking_hats.php
Social media (e.g., Twitter)*	Obama, B. [BarackObama]. (2013, November 26). For entrepreneurs and founders of startups, #Obamacare is a businessopportunity [Tweet]. Retrieved from https://twitter.com/BarackObama

*In this case, the source is a blog post or status update which is posted regularly. For these kind of sources, the title should not be *italized*

**In this case, the exact date of publication is unknown. Therefore, you must indicate the date on which you retrieved the information from the source

**In this case, the source concerns a stand-alone webpage. Therefore, the title must be *italized*

For more information about what to do when missing certain information from (online) sources, see Table 1 of APA Electronic References Guide (page 3)

Other types of content

There are a few more common types of content which have not been covered yet. Below are some examples:

Type of source	Example
Thesis or dissertation*	Jansma, S. (2011). <i>Sharia and democracy: Doomed to fail?</i> (Master's thesis). Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam.
Institutional report (online)	McDaniel, J. E., & Miskel, C. G. (2002). <i>The effect of groups and individuals on national decision making</i> (CIERA Report 3-025). Retrieved from University of Michigan, Center for Improvement of Early Reading Achievement website: http://www.ciera.org/library/reports
Newspaper article (online)**	Singer, N. (2017, May 13). How Google took over the classroom. <i>The New York Times</i> . Retrieved from https://www.nytimes.com
Standards (e.g., quality/safety)	International Organization for Standardization. (2010). <i>Ergonomic of human system interaction - Part 210: Human-centered design for interactive systems</i> (ISO Standard No. 9241-210). Retrieved from https://www.iso.org/standard/52075.html

*If you retrieved the source from the web, replace the publisher institution and location with a URL.

*This example concerns a master's thesis. If it concerns a doctoral dissertation, indicate this after the title of the source

**For online newspaper articles, provide only the homepage URL of the newspaper

References

American Psychological Association. (2010). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

American Psychological Association. (2012). *APA style guide to electronic references* (6th ed.). Retrieved from <http://www.apa.org/pubs/books>