

APA Basics

Formatting Your Essay

- Times New Roman
- 12-point font
- Double Spaced
- Page Number – right aligned (remember to change it to Times New Roman)
- Cover page (Centered in page) (Title – Bolded, Name, Department/School, Course Number/Course Name, Professor's Name/Title, Due Date)
- Student paper does not need running head in new version of APA
- Professional paper does need a running head (all caps first page, max 50 characters, following pages only include title in all caps)
- Ex. Cover Page – Heading - Running Head: DEPRESSION IN ADOLESCENTS
- Ex. Rest of Essay – Heading - DEPRESSION IN ADOLESCENTS

Components of a Research Paper

- Cover Page (Sometimes optional depending on professor's preference)
- Abstract
- Introduction
- Methods
- Results
- Discussion
- Limitations
- Future Research
- References

Cover Page Example

Happiness Inventory (Bolded/Center Aligned)

First Name Last Name

Department of _____, California State University, Long Beach

EDP 405: Positive Classroom Management

Dr. _____

December 15, 2021

Abstract (Formatting)

- Abstract – Center Aligned/Bolded
- No indent in paragraph
- Paragraph right-aligned
- Max 250 words
- *Keywords* (Italicized) – followed by keywords (Not italicized)
- Brief summary of research, research questions, results, implications of research

Abstract (Analyzing)

- This is a great way to review a paper without reading the entire article
- It can be a quick way to decide if the research is worth reviewing for your topic
- Keywords are helpful as well for searches, and this can help you find helpful keywords for your search engine

Introduction (Formatting your own paper)

- Write title of essay at beginning of page – center aligned/bolded
- Based on literature review – be thorough/ important to show you are an expert in this and you have done your research
- Want to include articles for your position and articles against your position – makes the lit review more interesting
- Include articles about a theory that supports your argument (essential component)
- Rebuttal arguments against your position by either showing evidence that contrasts their findings, or showing limitations within their research
- Tie the lit review into your research questions at the end – how does this support the questions you have and be specific about what you are interested in researching
- Research questions should be easily identifiable to another reader and this will help set the aim of the rest of the paper

Introduction (Analyzing another research paper)

- One of the most important parts of a paper
- Great way to get an idea of the research in the field and this section can help you find other research articles
- Helpful to find theories related to your research stance
- Also useful to know which authors are renowned researchers on the topic of interest

Methods/Procedures (Formatting)

- Methods (Centered/Bolded)
- (Be as DESCRIPTIVE as you can, if another researcher were to review your study you want to make sure they can follow your protocol exactly the same way)
 - Discuss which measurements you used within your study to collect the data, any statistical tests that were used, any assessment materials used, codebooks developed, etc
 - Independent and dependent variables clearly stated, type of design for your research stated
- Participants
 - Include details about race, religion, gender, ethnic minority status, age, languages spoken, number, reasons anyone was not included, how you implemented random selection/case study/etc
- Procedures
 - Describe the procedure of the experiment, what the participants completed, and the order that they completed each assigned task, length of time allocated, any compensation awarded, online or in-person, researcher in the room or behind a one way mirror?

Methods/Procedures (Analyzing)

- This is a section that you are able to skip if you are not interested in copying their research design
- However, it is useful to analyze this section when addressing limitation within their research such as gender demographics, ethnicity, region sample is located in, size of sample, generalizability, lab setting or natural setting?
- Worth skimming just to be familiar with their sample selection

Results (Formatting)

- Results (Centered/Bolded)
- List the results of your study based on each statistical test that you completed
- List p-values if needed, pearson's r, etc
- Depends on your research question what you will report
- This is where someone will see if your results were significant or not
- Unbiased view on research
- Include a short explanation of the findings followed by each report of the results but **do not** elaborate in this section
- Use past tense
- Use tables and figures to help readers visualize the data

Results (Analyzing)

- This is an area that allows you to quickly identify if their research was significant, however it will be further discussed in the discussion section of the article
- Able to skim this section
- If this paper is similar to what you are researching then it would be helpful to know what assessments/measures they used and what research stats they used to analyze the data

Discussion (Formatting)

- List each of the research questions you aimed to answer
- Restate your hypothesis/hypotheses and then address whether the results were significant or not
- This is another opportunity to include more research (almost a second lit review, but instead these articles are supporting your findings)
- Why is this important? What does this bring to the table? How is it generalized to the population of interest? Why is it important for other researchers? Why should we care as consumers of research?

Discussion (Analyzing)

- It is important to see if there research was significant, and if there findings were/were not it would be meaningful to see if that is similar to what other researchers found
- How do they describe the function of their research?
- Do they have supporting evidence to back their claims?
- What alternative explanations do they list in addition to their main explanation?

Limitations (Formatting)

- Have at least one limitation to your study because no study is perfect and it is important to recognize that
- Review your research methods and see where the study could be improved.
- Biased population? Method of collecting data? Specific subgroup that does not generalize to the wider population? Case study? Sample size? Lack of research on the topic? Self-Reported Data? Access to data? Longitudinal study? Cultural Biases?.....
- **Do not include too many limitations**, you don't want other researchers to think that your study is flawed
- Do not apologize for limitations

Limitations (Analyzing)

- This is a great area to determine future research questions and could be a potential inspiration for your next study
- Evaluate the impact of their limitations to the study
- Do these weaknesses affect the validity or reliability of the study? Think about the extent that these limitations would be a potential concern

Future Research (Formatting)

- This is a short section that restates your limitations in a way that allows researcher to expand on your study
- This section can also help your reader know what your next study will be conducted on

Reference Section (Analyzing)

- Great resource to identify theories the study used, and previous papers they cited that support their research claims
- Able to find who are the main researchers in the field based on who is cited
- Should be extensive
- Can find the studies for the assessment/measures used because you will need to cite those sources
 - Ex. Used Happiness Inventory Scale in your study, then you need to cite the source for the scale and list it in the reference section

In Text Citations

- Jane et al. (2019) states....
- Happiness increases positive feelings (Jane et al., 2019).
- Jane & Jim (2019) discuss....
- Sadness elevates feelings of anger (Jane & Jim, 2019).

How to write an APA Journal Reference

- https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/reference_list_articles_in_periodicals.html
- Hanging indent for each reference
- Alphabetized
- Always include a DOI – all articles should have one, if you don't see one then I would google the article to find the DOI

Last Name, First Initial. Middle Initial. (Year). Title. *Journal*, Volume #(Issue #), Page numbers. DOI **(there is no space between volume number and issue number)**

Hanes, J. (2019). Happiness inventory. *Journal of School Psychology*, 46(6), 123-148. <https://doi.org/10.111029.385839>

General Do's and Don'ts of APA

- Use in text citations
- Avoid direct quotes, always better to paraphrase! Can be seen as lazy if you use direct quotes, and researcher want to know how you interpret what you have read
- Appropriate to use 1-2 quotes in a paper, but use sparingly (Not generally recommended)
- When in doubt cite your source!
- Have others read your paper! Use Speechify to read your paper back to you
- Be concise and have a flow to your writing style