Using APA Formatting

## How it is different from MLA formatting

The American Psychological Association (APA) system of citing resources for writing is used mainly for social science research papers or reviews of literature written about research topics. The formatting is a bit different than the Modern Language Association’s MLA formatting used in English and humanities courses.

## Title Page

With APA formatting, a title page is used rather than the 4-part heading found in the upper left corner of the first page of an MLA paper. Depending on the instructor’s directions, there may also be Author Notes at the bottom of the page which includes the course title and instructor’s name. The APA title page includes a Running Head in the upper left corner; a page number in the upper right corner; and the title of the paper, name of the student, and name of the academic institution centered in the middle of the page.

## Running Head

The Running Head is unique to APA formatted papers. As previously mentioned, it appears in the upper left corner of the title page. In the header area of the page, the words Running Head are typed in upper and lower case letters followed by a colon and the abbreviated title of the paper in all capital letters. On all consecutive pages only the title of the paper in all capital letters is found in the upper left corner.

#### Examples

Running Head: MOONBEAMS AND MARIGOLDS 1

MOONBEAMS AND MARIGOLDS 2

## Pagination

While the MLA version of page numbers in the upper right corner of each page requires the student’s last name, the APA version asks for only the page number. The title page is considered page one, rather than the first page of the essay or paper. Page numbers are placed in the header area of the page.

## Abstract

Some instructors will require an abstract and some will not. “An abstract is a 150-to-250 word paragraph that provides readers with a quick overview of your essay” (Hacker & Somers, 2015, p. 569). Main ideas key points, and any relevant applications to the research are placed here. Some instructors also ask for key vocabulary words to be included on this page in order for the reader to more easily find published papers on the Web or in a database.

## References

In APA papers the citations are collected and listed at the end of the research paper on a separate page titled References. This page corresponds to the MLA Works Cited page and, likewise, each source is listed alphabetically by author. However, the information is listed in a different order and using different punctuation. See an APA guide sheet or writer’s reference manual.

## In-text Citations

Both MLA and APA rules require all directly quoted information, as well as paraphrased material, to be cited within the text of the research paper. APA requests the author’s last name, date of publication, and page number in parentheses, if a signal phrase is not used. With a signal phrase, the date of publication is placed in parentheses directly after the author’s last name and the page number is placed in parentheses at the end of the quote/paraphrase.

#### Examples

According to Strunk and White (2013), “The adjective is placed before the noun” (p. 48).

“The adjective is placed before the noun” (Strunk & White, 2013, p. 48).