

Table 9.1 How to Create a Reference When Information Is Missing (APA, 2020, p. 284).

When information needed to create a reference list entry is missing or unknown, there are various strategies to adapt the reference. The following table shows the basic structure of an APA Style reference to a published work, adapted for missing information, along with the corresponding in-text citations. Refer to the reference examples and Chapters 9 and 10 of the *Publication Manual* for specific details for the type of work being cited. Table 9.1 (below) can be found in APA (2020, p. 284). This information can also be found on the APA Style website (<https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/references/missing-information>).

Missing Element	Solution	Template	
		Reference list entry	In-text citation
Nothing—all elements are present	Provide the author, date, title, and source of the work.	Author. (Date). Title. Source.	(Author, year) Author (year)
Author	Provide the title, date, and source.	Title. (Date). Source.	(Title, year) Title (year)
Date	Provide the author, write “n.d.” for “no date,” and then provide the title and source.	Author. (n.d.). Title Source.	(Author, n.d.) Author (n.d.)
Title	Provide the author and date, describe the work in square brackets, and then provide the source.	Author. (Date). [Description of work]. Source.	(Author, year) Author (year)
Author and date	Provide the title, write “n.d.” for “no date,” and then provide the source.	Title. (n.d.). Source.	(Title, n.d.) Title (n.d.)
Author and title	Describe the work in square brackets, and then provide the date and source	[Description of work]. (Date). Source.	([Description of work], year) [Description of work] (year)
Date and title	Provide the author, write “n.d.” for “no date,” describe the work in square brackets, and then provide the source.	Author. (n.d.). [Description of work]. Source.	(Author, n.d.) Author (n.d.)
Author, date, and title	Describe the work in square brackets, write “n.d.” for “no date,” and then provide the source.	[Description of work]. (n.d.). Source.	([Description of work], n.d.) [Description of work] (n.d.)
Source	Cite as a personal communication or find another work to cite (see the <i>Publication Manual</i> for more information).	No reference list entry	(C. C. Communicator, personal communication, month day, year) C. C. Communicator (personal communication, month day, year)

Note. Italic formatting within the title or source varies by category and is not shown in this table.

Anonymous authors

For a missing author, do not use “Anonymous” as the author unless the work is actually signed “Anonymous.” If the work is signed “Anonymous,” use “Anonymous” in the reference and in-text citation.

Anonymous. (2017). *Stories from my time as a spy*. Bond Publishers.

- **Paranthesisal citation:** (Anonymous, 2017)
- **Narrative citation:** Anonymous (2017)

If the work is not actually signed “Anonymous,” the title moves to the beginning of the reference and is used in place of the author name, as shown in the table.

Presentation of the date

The date in the reference list entry for a work with a publication date may be a year only, and month and year, or a specific date (e.g., a month, day, and year); however, in the in-text citation, provide the year only.

For an in-press work, use “in press” for the date in both the reference list entry and in-text citation.

For a work with no date, use “n.d.” in both the reference list entry and the in-text citation.

Italics in the title and source

Italic formatting within the title or source varies by reference and is not shown in the table. In general, the title is italicized for a work that stands alone (e.g., book, report, webpage on a website), and some part of the source is italicized for a work that is part of a greater whole (e.g., journal article, newspaper article).

See the reference examples and Chapters 9 and 10 of the Publication Manual for information on what to italicize within a reference.

References

American Psychological Association. (2019, September). *Missing reference information*.
<https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/references/missing-information>

American Psychological Association. (2020). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.). <https://doi/10.1037/0000165-000>