

APA Style Checklist
William F. Doverspike, PhD, ABPP
Drwilliamdoverspike.com
770-913-0506
(Revised 08-15-2020)

The *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (APA, 2020), hereinafter referred to as the *Publication Manual*, is the authoritative source of style guidelines. According to the APA Style website (<https://apastyle.apa.org/instructional-aids/>), because the scope of what constitutes a student paper is broad, flexible, and varies by course and academic institution, there are no formal requirements for APA Style student papers. Students should follow the guidelines of their instructor, advisor, department, and/or institution when writing papers. The APA Style team encourages instructors, departments, and institutions to adapt APA Style to fit their needs.

This checklist is not an exhaustive list. Some of the most common style errors are discussed by Onwuegbuzie et al. (2010). Grammar or punctuation requirements not addressed in the *Publication Manual* may be contained in the *Chicago Manual of Style* (2017). For spelling of word, consult an unabridged edition of *Webster's* dictionary, if the word is not contained in the *APA Dictionary of Psychology*. Writers who are unsure about when or how to cite or quote an author should read pages 169-174 (Crediting Sources), pages 174-175 (Citing references in Text), and Page 170 (Section 6.02: Plagiarism) in the 7th edition of the *Publication Manual*. Be aware of Ethical Standard 8.11 (Plagiarism) of the APA (2017) Code of Ethics: "Psychologists do not present portions of another's work or data as their own, even if the other work or data source is cited occasionally" (p. 12).

Strategies to Improve Writing Style

APA (2020, p. 126) recommends several strategies for improving a paper:

- Writing from an outline improves the flow of a paper.
- Putting aside a paper for a few days and rereading it allows a fresh perspective.
- Seeking help and soliciting feedback from colleagues helps provide a critical review.
- Revising a draft into a polished paper requires time and effort on the part of the writer.

Title page

1. Title page is Page 1. Number the pages consecutively, beginning with the title page. Number all pages in Arabic numerals in the upper right-hand corner (pp. 30–31).
2. Page header is placed one inch from the top, five spaces to the left of the page number, on right margin (p. 44).
3. An abstract is a brief, comprehensive summary of the contents of a paper. Begin the abstract on a new page and identify it with the running head or abbreviated title and the page number 2 (p. 38). The APA Style website provides an [Abstract and Keywords Guide](#).
4. The running head is an abbreviated title that is printed at the top of the pages of a manuscript or published article to identify the article for readers. The running head should be a maximum of 50 characters, counting letters, punctuation, and spaces between words. It should appear flush left in all uppercase letters at the top of the title page and all subsequent pages (p. 37).
5. Title page contains running head, page number, paper title, author, affiliation, and author note (p. 31). Student title page contains paper title, page number, author, affiliation, course, instructor, and due date name (p. 32). See Sample Professional Title Page (p. 31) and [Sample Student Title Page](#) (p. 32) in the APA (2020) *Publication Manual*.
6. Title is repeated, one inch from the top, and double-spaced (if more than one line) on first page of text (p. 48).

Preparation

7. Use regular 12-point Times Roman font (p. 44) or the font required by your instructor.
8. Use one inch (2.54 cm) margins at top, bottom, left, and right on all sides of the page (p. 45).
9. Double-space the entire paper (p. 45). **This checklist is single-spaced to conserve space.**
10. Headings have five possible levels. Avoid having only one subsection within a section. Use at least two subsection headings within a section, or use none (pp. 47-49). See the Heading Levels Templates for [Student Papers](#) and for [Professional Papers](#).
11. The heading “Introduction” is not needed (p. 47) because the first paragraphs of a paper are understood to be introductory. In general, a paragraph is longer than a single sentence, but not longer than one manuscript page.
12. All strong assertions and empirical statements must be supported by citations (pp. 253-254).
13. To refer to all human beings, use inclusive terms like “individuals,” “people,” or “persons” rather than “man” or “mankind” (p. 139). There are many alternatives to the generic *he*, including rephrasing, using plural nouns and plural pronouns, replacing the pronoun with an article, or dropping the pronoun (p. 121). Do not anthropomorphize or attribute human characteristics to inanimate sources (p. 117). If you are writing a paper by yourself, use the pronoun “I” to refer to yourself (p. 120). In professional writing, do not use second person (i.e., “you”).
14. Abbreviate a term only if it is used three or more times in a paper. A term to be abbreviated must, on its first appearance, be written out completely and followed immediately by its abbreviation in parentheses (or, if already in parentheses, use brackets). Thereafter, use the abbreviation in text without further explanation (p. 173). Do not switch between the abbreviated and written-out forms of a term. For additional details, see APA style blog by Chelsea [Lee \(2015\)](#).

Grammar and Punctuation

15. Use a period to end a complete sentence (p. 154). Use one space after commas, colons, and semicolons. Use one space after the period or other punctuation mark at the end of a sentence (p. 154), unless your publisher or instructor has different requirements.
16. Just as headings alert the reader to the order of ideas in a paper, seriation helps the reader understand the organization of key points within sections, paragraphs, and sentences. In any series, all items should be syntactically and conceptually parallel (pp. 124–125). Present parallel ideas in parallel or coordinate form. Use parallel structure in compound sentences, series and lists, and table studs (p. 124). Ensure that all elements of the parallelism are presented before and after the coordinating conjunction (e.g., “and,” “but,” “or,” “nor”) (p. 124). Use economy of expression to achieve conciseness and clarity (p. 113). Avoid wordiness and redundancy (p. 114).
17. Within a sentence, use a comma between elements in a series of three or more elements, including before the final item (p. 155). Use a semicolon to separate items in a list that already contain commas (p. 156). See Appendix A (“Why Punctuation Matters”) and Appendix B (“Origin of the Oxford Comma”) of this checklist.
18. Use a comma to set off a non-restrictive or nonessential clause, which is a clause that embellishes a sentence but if removed would leave the grammatical structure and meaning of the sentence intact (p. 155).
19. Use a comma following an introductory phrase (p. 155), particularly after a long introductory adverbial or prepositional phrases (p. 155).
20. Use a comma to separate two independent clauses joined by a conjunction (p. 155).
21. Use a semicolon to separate two independent clauses that are not joined by a conjunction (p. 156), and to separate elements in a series that already contain commas (p. 156).
22. Place periods and commas inside quotation marks, with few exceptions (p. 157). Place other punctuation marks (e.g., colons, semicolons, ellipses) outside closing quotation marks (p. 157).

23. Use only surnames (do not use first names but use only initials) in text citations (p. 286).
24. Use only standard Latin abbreviations in parenthetical material (e.g., i.e., etc.). In nonparenthetical material, use the English translation of Latin terms such as *for example*, *that is*, and *so forth* (p. 176).
25. Ensure that every word means exactly what it is intended to mean. In informal speech, for example, *feel* broadly substitutes for *think* or *believe*, but in scientific style such latitude is not acceptable. A similar example is that *like* is often used when *such as* is meant. Avoid contractions and colloquial expressions (*write up* for *report*), which detract from a professional tone in scholarly writing (p. 116). Avoid imprecise words such as “issue,” which are vague, lack specificity, and diffuse meaning.
26. Pronouns confuse the reader unless the referent for each pronoun is obvious; readers should not have to search previous text to determine the meaning of the term. Pronouns such as *this*, *that*, *these*, and *those* can be troublesome when they refer to something or someone in a previous sentence. Eliminate ambiguity by writing (e.g., “this test,” “that trial,” “these reports”). In other words, do not use “this” as a noun. Choose words and phrases carefully, and specify the intended meaning if there is potential for ambiguity (p. 114).
27. Pronouns replace nouns, and each pronoun should refer clearly to its antecedent (p. 120). If you are writing a paper by yourself, use the pronoun “I” to refer to yourself. Do not refer to yourself in the third person (p. 120).
28. Verify noun-pronoun agreement so that nouns and pronouns agree in number. Use of the singular “they” is part of APA Style because it “is inclusive of all people and helps writers avoid making assumptions about gender” (p. 121). Although usage of the singular “they” was once discouraged in academic writing, many advocacy groups and publishers have accepted and endorsed it. For more details, see [APA Style](#) website and [Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary](#).
29. Use the pronoun “who” (not “that”) when referring to human beings and people. Use the pronoun “that” (not “who”) when referring to inanimate things and objects (p. 121).
30. Use the relative pronoun “that” when writing restrictive clauses that are essential to the meaning of the sentence. Use “which” when writing nonrestrictive clauses that are non-essential (i.e., that merely add further information) to the meaning of the sentence (pp. 122–123). Use a comma to set off a non-restrictive or nonessential clause (p. 155).
31. An adjective or an adverb, whether a single word or a phrase, must clearly refer to the word it modifies. Misplaced modifiers, because of their placement in a sentence, can ambiguously or illogically modify a word. Avoid misplaced, dangling, and squinting (two-way) modifiers by placing an adjective or an adverb as close as possible to the word it modifies (pp. 123–124).
32. Write the word for numbers below 10, and use numerals for numbers above 10 and in some other instances such as when a numeral precedes a unit of measurement (pp. 178–179). If beginning a sentence with a number, always spell out the number using a word (p. 179).
33. Use italics for titles of books and periodicals; a letter, word, or phrase used as a linguistic example; and the introduction of a new, technical, or key term or label. Note: After a key term or technical label has been used once, do not italicize it (pp. 170).

Text citations

34. When paraphrasing an author, cite the author and publication date (pp. 261-262). Avoid using terms such as “research has shown.” An example of a parenthetical citation is as follows: Cats have been found to run faster when chased by dogs (Brown & Jones, 2020). An example of a narrative (or non-parenthetical) citation is as follows: Brown and Jones (2020) have found that cats run faster when chased by dogs. See examples in Appendix C (“Basic In-Text Citation Styles”).
35. When citing multiple authors in a parenthetical citation, place the citations in alphabetical order, separating the citations with semicolons (p. 263).

36. For a citation with one or two authors, include the author name(s) in every citation (p. 266).
37. For a citation with three or more authors, include the name of only the first author plus “et al.” in every citation, including the first citation, unless doing so would create ambiguity (p. 266).
38. In parenthetical citations in text, use an ampersand (&) between the names of two authors or before the last author when all names must be included to avoid ambiguity. In narrative (nonparenthetical) citations, spell out the word “and” (p. 266).
39. For back-to-back parenthetical information, place the information in one set of parentheses, separated with a semicolon (p. 160). To enclose parenthetical material that is already within parentheses, use square brackets to avoid nested parentheses (p. 259).
Semicolon avoids back-to-back parentheses: (5th ed.; *DSM-5*)
Brackets avoid nested parentheses: (Beck Depression Inventory–II [BDI–II]; Beck et al., 1996)
40. As a general rule, use ampersand (&) inside parentheses and use conjunction (i.e., and) outside of parentheses. In parenthetical citations in text, use an ampersand (&) between the names of two authors or before the last author when all names must be included to avoid ambiguity. In narrative citations, spell out the word “and” (p. 266).
41. Within the same paragraph, when the name of the author is part of the narrative, you need not include the year of publication in subsequent narrative (nonparenthetical) citations, as long as the study cannot be confused with other studies cited in the article. Include the year in all parenthetical citations. When both the name and the year are in parentheses, include the year in subsequent parenthetical citations within the same paragraph (p. 266).

Direct quotes

42. Quotation marks should be used to indicate the exact words of another author or yourself. Use quotation marks whenever quoting or duplicating words from an original source (p. 270). When quoting, always provide the author, year, and specific page citation or paragraph number for nonpaginated material (p. 270). If there is no date, author, or page, use the style illustrated in Appendix D (“How to Cite and Reference a Source When the Material Does Not Include Page Numbers”) of this checklist.
43. Direct quotations must be accurate. The quotation must follow the wording, spelling, and interior punctuation of the original source, even if the source is incorrect (p. 274–275).
44. Use correct punctuation with commas and periods when citing or quoting authors (p. 270–272). See Table 8.2 (Examples of Direct Quotations Cited in the Text) in the *Publication Manual* (APA, 2020, p. 272). For more details, see APA style blog post by [Lee \(2010\)](#).
45. Use secondary sources sparingly (e.g., when the original work is out of print, unavailable through usual sources, or not available in English). Give the secondary source in the reference list; in text, name the original work and give a citation for the secondary source. Clearly indicate secondary source if you are quoting an author from a secondary source (pp. 63, 258). See page 258 of the APA (2020) *Publication Manual*, page 178 of the APA (2010) *Publication Manual* (6th ed.) or see Pages 245–247 of the APA (2001) *Publication Manual* (5th ed.) for examples.
46. When quoting directly, always provide the author, year, and page number of the quotation in the in-text citation (p. 270).
47. If the quotation comprises 40 or more words, display it in a freestanding block of text and omit the quotation marks. Start each *block quotation* on a new line and indent and block about a half inch from the left margin (in the same position as a new paragraph). Double-space the entire quotation. At the end of a block quotation, cite the quoted source and the page or paragraph number in parentheses after the final punctuation mark (pp. 272–273).

References

48. The reference list starts on a new page and the pages do not count as text pages (pp. 40, 303).
49. Reference pages contain the header and are continuously paginated from text (pp. 40, 303).
50. The words “References” is centered, double-spaced below the header, and located on the first page (only) of the references list (pp. 40, 303).
51. There should be a one-to-one correspondence between the text citations and the reference list. In other words, all citations in the text should be contained in the reference list, and all citations in the reference list should be contained in the text (p. 257).
52. In general, a reference should contain the author name, date of publication, title of the work, and publication data (p. 283–284).
53. Use only surnames (not first names) and initials of first (and middle) names in reference list (p. 303).
54. Use ampersand (&) between two names (p. 286), and also before the last name, in reference list.
55. Titles of books and periodicals should be italicized. Titles of journal articles should not be italicized (p. 291). Capitalize major words in titles of books and articles within the body of the paper (p. 167), which is known as *title case*. Use italicized title case for titles of journal, and use non-italicized sentence case for titles of articles in journals. In titles of books and articles in reference list, capitalize only the first word, the first word after a colon or em dash, and proper nouns (p. 168), which is known as *sentence case*. For additional details, see Lee (2012).
56. Volume numbers of journals should be italicized, but issue numbers should not be italicized (p. 294).
57. Include the issue number for all periodicals that have issue numbers. Place the issue number immediately after the volume number (with no space in between), and enclosed the issue number in parentheses. Place a comma after the closing parenthesis. Do not italicize the issue number, the parentheses, or the comma after the issue number (APA, 2020, p. 294).
58. Include the name of the publisher in reference entries for whole books, edited book chapters, reports, and mobile apps. Do not include the publisher city or geographic location in the reference entry, because online search makes a publication easily discoverable without the city. It may be unclear what location to provide for publishers with offices worldwide or for online-only publishers that do not readily disclose their location (p. 295).
59. Some publishers may prefer to abbreviate publisher names (e.g., “John Wiley & Sons” to “Wiley”) to save space in reference list entries; this is acceptable as part of a house style (p. 296). Consult your instructor to determine whether to follow this practice. When the author and publisher are the same, omit the publisher from the source element (p. 324).
60. Order the reference list entries alphabetically by author (p. 303–305).
61. Double-space the entire reference list (both within and between entries) (p. 303).
62. Each reference list entry is indented with a “hanging indent” format, which meaning that the first line of each reference is set flush left and subsequent lines are indented (p. 303).
63. Present both DOIs and URLs as hyperlinks (i.e., beginning with <http://> or “https:”). Because a hyperlink leads readers directly to the content, it is not necessary to include the words “Retrieved from” or “Accessed from” before a DOI or URL (p. 299).
64. Finish the element of an entry in the reference list with a period (p. 154). However, do not put a period after a DOI or URL because it may interfere with link functionality (p. 284). In text, include web addresses in parentheses when possible or revise the sentence to avoid ending a sentence with a URL and no punctuation (<http://www.apa.org>).

References

[This list is actually a resource list because it includes sources that were not cited in this paper. APA style requires a one-to-one correspondence between text citations and the reference list.]

American Counseling Association. (2014). *ACA code of ethics*.

American Psychiatric Association. (2013). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (5th ed.). <https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.books.9780890425596>

American Psychological Association. (2001). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (5th ed.).

American Psychological Association. (2010). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.).

American Psychological Association. (2012). *APA style guide to electronic references* (6th ed.).

American Psychological Association. (2017). Ethical principles of psychologists and code of conduct (2002, Amended June 1, 2010 and January 1, 2017). <https://www.apa.org/ethics/code/index>

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

APA Dictionary of psychology. (n.d.). <https://dictionary.apa.org/>

Associated Press, Bratton, A. J., Garcia, O., McMillan, J., Mintoorn, D., Schwartz, J., & Froke, P. (Ed.). (2018). *Associated Press Stylebook 2018*. Associated Press.

Becker, D. (2011, April 7). Using serial commas. *APA Style Blog*.
<http://blog.apastyle.org/apastyle/2011/04/using-serial-commas.html>

DesMarais, C. (2017, July 11). 43 embarrassing grammar mistakes even smart people make. *Inc*.
<https://www.inc.com/christina-desmarais/43-embarrassing-phrases-even-smart-people-use.html>

Doverspike, W. F. (2013). Citing ethical and legal standards.
http://drwilliamdoverspike.com/files/apa_style_citing_legal_sources_doverspike.pdf

Doverspike, W. F. (2013). Citing DSM-5 in APA style.
http://drwilliamdoverspike.com/files/apa_style_-_citing_DSM-5.pdf

Dreyer, B. (2019, February 1). The writing rules to disregard. *The Paris Review*.
<https://www.theparisreview.org/blog/2019/02/01/three-writing-rules-to-disregard/>

- Hickey, W. (2014, June 17). Elitist, superfluous, or popular? We polled Americans on the Oxford comma. *Five Thirty Eight*. <https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/elitist-superfluous-or-popular-we-polled-americans-on-the-oxford-comma/>
- Hume-Pratuch, J.(2014, July 25). How to use the new DOI format in APA style. *APA Style Blog*. <https://blog.apastyle.org/apastyle/2014/07/how-to-use-the-new-doi-format-in-apa-style.html>
- Kretzschmar, W. A., Jr., & Meyer, C. F. (2012). The idea of Standard American English. *Standards of English: Codified varieties around the world*. Cambridge, England, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Learning Express. (2013). *Write better essays in 20 minutes a day* (3rd ed.). [See Rubric for Essays on pp. 166–167]
- Lee, C. (2011, August 11). Punctuating around quotation marks. *APA Style Blog*. <http://blog.apastyle.org/apastyle/2011/08/punctuating-around-quotation-marks.html>
- Lee, C. (2012, March 1). How to capitalize and format reference titles in APA style. *APA Style Blog*. <http://blog.apastyle.org/apastyle/2012/03/how-to-capitalize-and-format-reference-titles-in-apa-style.html>
- Lee, C. (2015, October 28). An abbreviations FAQ. *APA Style Blog*. <https://blog.apastyle.org/apastyle/2015/10/an-abbreviations-faq.html#Q3>
- McAdoo, T. (2016, April 7). How to cite a blog comment in APA style. *APA Style Blog*. <http://blog.apastyle.org/apastyle/2016/04/how-to-cite-a-blog-comment-in-apa-style.html>
- McAdoo, T. (2017, March 1). DOI Display Guidelines Update (March 2017). *APA Style Blog*. <https://blog.apastyle.org/apastyle/2017/03/doi-display-guidelines-update-march-2017.html>
- Merriam-Webster. (n.d.). *Words we're watching: Singular "they": Though singular 'they' is old, 'they' as a nonbinary pronoun is new—and useful*. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/words-at-play/singular-nonbinary-they>
- Merriam-Webster. (n.d.). *Merriam-Webster.com dictionary*. <http://unabridged.merriam-webster.com/>
- Onwuegbuzie, A. J., Combs, J. P., Slate, J. R., & Frels, R. K. (2010). Editorial: Evidence-based guidelines for avoiding the most common APA errors in journal article submissions. *Research in the Schools*, 16(20), ix-xxxvi.
- Ripatrzone, N. (2019, February 6). Is line editing a lost art? *Literary Hub*. <https://lithub.com/is-line-editing-a-lost-art/>

- Strunk, W., & White, E. B. (2009). *The elements of style* (4th ed.). MacMillan Publishing.
- Truss, L. (2003). *Eats, shoots & leaves: A zero tolerance approach to punctuation*. Profile Books.
- Truss, L. (2004). *Eats, shoots & leaves: Why, commas really do make a difference!* G. P. Putnam's Sons.
- University of Chicago Press. (2017). *Chicago manual of style* (17th ed.).
- Victor, D. (2017, March 16). Lack of Oxford comma could cost Maine company millions in overtime dispute. *New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/16/us/oxford-comma-lawsuit.html>
- Walsh, J. M., & Walsh, A. K. (1959). *Plain English handbook* (Rev. ed.). Wichita, KS: McCormick-Mathers Publishing Company.
- Warriner, J. E., Mersand, J., & Griffith, F. (1977). *English grammar and composition: Fifth course*. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- In American Standard English, there are a few nouns, although plural in form, that take a singular verb. The following list of nouns includes some of these nouns although this list is not exhaustive: aeronautics, civics, economics, ethics, genetics, mathematics, news, physics, and United States.
- Webster's third new international dictionary, unabridged: The great library of the English language*. (1993). Merriam-Webster.
- Yin, K. (2011). The serial comma: Lovers and haters. *AP vs. Chicago*. <https://apvschicago.com/2011/03/commas-in-series.html>

Appendix A: Why Punctuation Matters: Consider Commas

Why Punctuation Matters

An unknown English professor is reported to have written the following words on the chalkboard before asking his students to punctuate it correctly: “A woman without her man is nothing.”

All of the males in the class wrote: “A woman, without her man, is nothing.”
All of the females in the class wrote: “A woman: without her, man is nothing.”

Punctuation is power because it can change the entire meaning of a sentence.

Why the Introductory Comma Matters in Religion

“Verily I say unto thee, This day thou shalt be with me in Paradise.”

or

“Verily I say unto thee this day, thou shalt be with me in Paradise.”

“...huge doctrinal differences hang on the placing of this comma. The first version, which is how Protestant’s interpret the passage (Luke, xxiii, 43), lightly skips over the whole unpleasant business of Purgatory and takes the crucified thief to heaven with our Lord. The second promises Paradise at some later date...and leaves Purgatory in the picture for Catholics, who believe in it.”

Hartley, Cecil (1818). *Principles of punctuation: Or, the art of pointing.*

Why the Serial Comma Matters in Psychotherapy

The use of serial commas separates the three subjects of this sentence:

Her professional counselor, sexual partner, and father of Maria’s first child confirmed that Jane had in fact suffered abuse as a child.

The missing serial comma creates a non-restrictive clause that completely changes the meaning:

Her professional counselor, sexual partner and father of Maria’s first child, confirmed that Jane had in fact suffered abuse as a child.

Why the Serial Comma Matters in Reviews of the Literature

The serial comma is used to separate three or more elements that do not have internal commas:

Maté (2010), Flores (2008), and Nakken (1996) view addiction in part as an attachment disorder.

In contrast, there is no serial comma in this instance, because there is no series of three or more elements. The comma is used after the introductory adverbial phrase:

Like Maté (2010), Flores (2008) and Nakken (1996) view addiction in part as an attachment disorder.

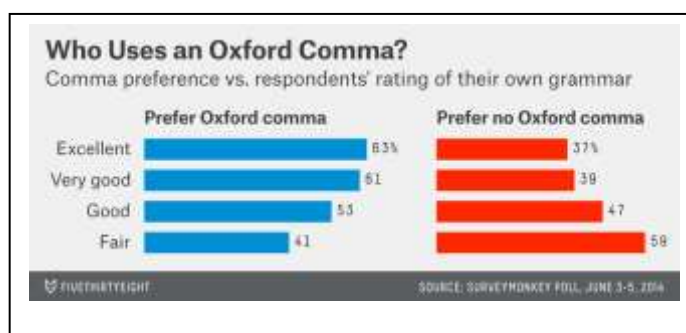
Appendix B: Origin of the Oxford Comma

The serial comma is also known as the Oxford comma, because it is part of the house style of Oxford University Press. It is required by the APA guidelines (APA, 2020, p. 155; 2010, p. 88; 2001, p. 64) and by the Chicago Manual of Style (University of Chicago Press, 2010, 2017). It is used by APA style bloggers (e.g., Becker, 2011). In Onwuegbuzie et al. (2010) guidelines for avoiding the most common APA errors in journal article submissions, omission of the serial comma is listed as the seventh most common error. In contrast to the APA and Chicago guidelines, the preference stated in the Associated Press (2018) stylebook is to omit the serial comma except when it prevents misreading. In general, the comma is not used by journalists, but it is used in for clarity in academic publications. The serial comma is used in highbrow publications such as *The Atlantic*, *The New Yorker*, and *Harpers Magazine*, although it is not used in *People*, *National Inquirer*, and *Variety* (Yin, 2018). Opponents of the serial comma believe it is unnecessary, but its supporters claim it helps resolve ambiguity. In a 29-page court decision handed down by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit, the simple omission of a serial comma could cost a dairy company in Portland, Maine an estimated \$10 million in overtime related to a 2014 lawsuit filed by three truck drivers of Oakhurst Dairies (Victor, 2017).

Although punctuation has changed in social media, the serial comma has been advocated for over 50 years in American English handbooks. For example, in the *Plain English Handbook*, Walsh and Walsh (1959) state, “Use commas to separate the items of a series of words, phrases, or short clauses” (p. 78). In *English Grammar and Composition*, Warriner, Mersand, and Griffith (1977) state, “Use commas to separate items in a series” (p. 427). Lynne Truss, whose book on punctuation won the British Book of the Year award in 2004, gives the following example of the serial comma: “Every day, Anthony turns, slides, and swings” (Truss, 2004, p. 8). Ms. Truss has a website in which one can test his or her “Comma IQ” (<http://www.savethecomma.com/game/>). In their authoritative *Elements of Style*, which has been referred to as “the English major’s Bible,” Strunk and White (1979, 2009) list the serial comma as their second rule: “In a series of three or more terms with a single conjunction, use a comma after each term except the last” (1979, p. 2). This comma is often referred to as the “serial comma.” Stunk and White give the following examples are taken from Strunk and White (1979, p. 2) to illustrate the stylistic rule of the serial comma:

Thus write ,
 red, white, and blue
 gold, silver, or copper
He opened the letter, read it, and made a note of its contents.

Table 1 (Hickey, 2014)
Who Uses an Oxford Comma?



Appendix C: Common APA Style Guidelines

Format for the Five Levels of Heading in APA Style

Level	Format
1	Centered, Bold, Title Case Heading Text begins as a new paragraph.
2	Flush Left, Bold, Title Case Heading Text begins as a new paragraph.
3	<i>Flush Left, Bold Italic, Title Case Heading</i> Text begins as a new paragraph.
4	Indented, Bold, Title Case Heading, Ending With a Period. Text begins on the same line and continues as a paragraph
5	<i>Indented, Bold, Title Case Heading, Ending With a Period.</i> Text begins on the same line and continues as a paragraph

Note: In title case, most words are capitalized (see Section 6.17)

Table 2.3 (Format for the Five Levels of Heading in APA Style) is in APA (2020, p. 48).

Basic In-Text Citation Styles

Author type	Parenthetical citation	Narrative citation
One author	(Doverspike, 2020)	Doverspike (2020)
Two authors	(Campbell & Doverspike, 2020)	Campbell and Doverspike (2020)
Three or more authors	(Doverspike et al., 2020)	Doverspike et al. (2020)
Group author with abbreviation		
First citation ^a	(American Psychological Association [APA], 2020)	American Psychological Association (APA, 2020)
Subsequent citations	(APA, 2020)	APA (2020)
Group author without abbreviation	(Emory University, 2020)	Emory University (2020)

^a Define the abbreviation for the group author only once in the text, choosing either the parenthetical or narrative format. Thereafter, use the abbreviation for all mentions of the group in the text (see Section 8.21).

Table 8.1 (Basic In-Text Citation) is contained in APA (2020, p. 206) *Publication Manual*.

Appendix D: Missing Reference 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.” or “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	(Title, year) Title (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 Publication Manual for more information).	No reference list entry	(C. C. Communicator, personal communication, month day, year) C. C. Communicator (personal communication, month day, year)

Note. This table illustrates how reference category templates change when reference elements such as the author, date, title, and/or source are missing. Italic formatting within the title or source varies by category and is not shown here.

Table 9.1 (How to Create a Reference When Information Is Missing) is contained in APA (2020, p. 284) *Publication Manual*.

American Psychological Association. (n.d.). Missing reference information.

<https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/references/missing-information>

Appendix E: Additional Resources

How to Cite and Reference a Source When the Material Does Not Include Page Numbers

When quoted material does not include page numbers, it is acceptable to include any of the following in the text to cite the quotation (APA, 2020, pp. 273-274):

- A paragraph number, if provided; alternatively, it acceptable to count paragraphs down from the beginning of the document.
- An overarching heading plus a paragraph number within that section.
- A short title in quotation marks, in cases in which the heading is too unwieldy to cite in full.

If there is no author, no date, and no author, then the text citation would include the title (or short title) “n.d.” for no date, and paragraph number (e.g., “Heuristic,” n.d., para. 1). The entry in the reference list might look something like this:

Heuristic. (n.d.). In *Merriam-Webster’s online dictionary* (11th ed.). Retrieved from <http://www.m-w.com/dictionary/heuristic>

In addition to the aforementioned references, which provide resources for professional writing style, the following online resources may also be useful:

- [An Abbreviations FAQ](#)
- [APA Instructional Resources](#)
- [APA Style Blog](#) addresses new topics each week (www.apastyle.org)
- [Almost Published \[How to cite unpublished manuscripts\]](#)
- [Authors With Only One Name](#)
- [Best of the APA Style Blog \(2017 Edition\)](#)
- [Best of the APA Style Blog \(2018 Edition\)](#)
- [Capitalization: Do I Capitalize This Word?](#)
- [Cultural Variations in Name Order](#)
- [Forming Possessives With Singular Names](#)
- [Free Tutorial on the Basics of APA Style](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [How to Avoid Wordiness](#)
- [How to Cite a Government Report in APA Style](#)
- [How to Cite a YouTube Comment](#)
- [How to Cite PowerPoint Presentations Using APA Style](#) [This is not an official APA site]
- [How to Format Reference Titles](#)
- [Names With Titles in Them](#)
- [Punctuating Around Quotation Marks](#)
- [Quick Answers-Formatting](#)
- [Quick Answers-References](#)
- [Quotations: When and Hold to Include Page Numbers in Citations](#)
- [The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association](#)
- [The Use of First Person in APA Style](#)
- [The Use of Singular “They”](#) [This link directs to APA Style blog]
- [The Use of the Singular “They”](#) [This link directs to Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary]

Correct Citation for Reference Entry

The reference entry correct citation styles for this document are illustrated below. Students should defer to the style preferences of their individual course instructors to determine whether the course instructor has preferences that are more specific than those shown below:

American Psychological Association

Doverspike, W. F. (2020). APA style checklist. <http://drwilliamdoverspike.com/>

Note: This 2020 APA Style Checklist replaces the original 2010 APA Style checklist, which is documented below with the full URL for archival and retrieval purposes:

Doverspike, W. F. (2013). APA style checklist.
http://drwilliamdoverspike.com/files/apa_style_checklist_-_2010.pdf

Chicago Manual of Style / Kate Turabian

Doverspike, William, "APA style checklist," Oct. 10, 2020. <http://drwilliamdoverspike.com/>

Note: According to the Chicago Manual of Style, blog posts are typically not included in bibliographies, but can be cited in the running text and/or notes. However, if a blog is cited frequently, you may include it in the bibliography.

Modern Language Association

Doverspike, William F. "APA Style Checklist" 10 Oct. 2020 [Date accessed]

Note: MLA guidelines assume that readers can track down most online sources by entering the author, title, or other identifying information in a search engine or a database. Consequently, MLA does not require a URL in citations for online sources such as websites. However, some instructors still ask for it, so check with your instructor to determine his or her preference.