Each page is numbered, flush left, beginning with the title page.

Title of Paper

Author name(s)

University

Course name and number

Instructor name

Assignment due date

Any author's notes should be entered here, flush left

Abstract

The abstract (in block format) begins on the line following the Abstract heading. The abstract is generally between 150 and 250 words. It is a single paragraph and is not indented. All numbers in the abstract (except those beginning a sentence) should be typed as numerals (i.e., digits rather than words). The abstract is a 1 paragraph summary of the most important information in the paper. According to Breitenbach (2011), much in the same way that the angler fish's lure entices its prey, the abstract entices the reader into the article. In general, it is not necessary to use abbreviations in the abstract because the abstract is so short. However, if the abbreviation would help the reader recognize a term or find your article via search, then it is permissible to include an abbreviation in the abstract, even if it is not used three times. When you use an abbreviation in both the abstract and the text, define it in both places upon first use. This sample abstract is approximately 250 words; an actual abstract could be about half the length of this sample abstract and would not contain a picture of an angler. The previous sentence contains a semicolon, which illustrates one of the proper uses of a semicolon (i.e., to link two independent clauses that are not joined by a conjunction), whereas this sentence illustrates one proper use of a comma (i.e., to set off a separate non-restrictive or nonessential dependent clause. The angler was inserted for fun—and because it was an interesting image on Breitenbach's blog post.

*Keywords*: five or six keywords, separated by commas, should be included here

Title of Paper (does not count as heading)

The first part of the paper is assumed to be the introduction. Therefore, the introduction to the paper should not have a name, especially not "Introduction." The paper's title should appear as a center heading on the page that follows the abstract. The title should be centered on the first line of text. The title should not be underlined and none of the text should be underlined. Paragraphs are formatted using first line indent, which is done with paragraph special formatting rather than with a tab. A particular technical term requiring elaboration can be *italicized*, although it is preferable to use syntax (i.e., the words and grammar) rather than italics to show emphasis of a word. In a standard paper, only the abstract, the first page of the paper, the reference page, and any appendices begin on new pages.

This sample paper is based on the publication guidelines of the American Psychological Association (APA; 2020). With acronyms and abbreviations, as illustrated in the preceding sentence, the abbreviation is spelled out in words the first time the term is used, and then the abbreviation is placed in parenthesis. The preceding example also illustrates an unusual use of the semicolon, rather than the usual comma that is typically used to separate author and date within a parenthesis. The following sentence illustrates the use of a semicolon to link two independent clauses that are not joined by a conjunction. A term should not be abbreviated unless it appears at least three times in a paper; once a term is abbreviated, the abbreviation must be used consistently thereafter. There is no rule that actually requires the use of an abbreviation of a term that appears three or more times. If a reference has a group author, the name of the group can sometimes be abbreviated. For example, the Supreme Court of the United States can be abbreviation to SCOTUS. There is no requirement to abbreviate the name of a group author, but it can be used if the abbreviation would help avoid cumbersome repetition and will appear more than three times in the paper. If the name of a group first appears in parentheses, put its

abbreviation in brackets after it, followed by a comma and the year for the citation (Lee, 2015) such as is shown in the next sentence. An effective strategy is to put aside the first draft of a paper, then reread it later while editing the paper before letting a colleague review it before submission (American Psychological Association [APA], 2020).

Five levels of headings may be used in APA style, although most papers use no more than three. Capitalization and format of headings depend upon level of headings. Do not begin a new page with each new heading. This sample paper illustrates all five levels of heading styles.

## Spacing, Indentation, and Headings (Level One Heading)

A Level One Heading is centered, **boldface**, with uppercase and lowercase. This type of capitalization is also referred to as *title case*. All text in the paper, including blocked quotations, should be double spaced. The references in the reference list, placed at the end of the paper, should also be double spaced. The only exception would be to allow an additional line before a complicated table or figure. Although one space is still required after punctuation, do not insert space after internal periods in abbreviations (e.g., a.m., i.e., U.S.). Use a period to end a complete sentence (APA, 2020, p. 154). According to APA (2020, p. 154), "We recommend using one space after the period or other punctuation mark at the end of a sentence; however, follow the guidelines of your publisher or instructor if they have different requirements." Therefore, use one space after the period or other punctuation mark at the end of a sentence. Use one space after commas, colons, and semicolons.

It is easier to notice spaces and tabs when the word processor is set to show hidden paragraph marks and other hidden formatting symbols. As a rule, each paragraph in a paper is longer than a single sentence, but not longer than one manuscript page. Paragraphs in an actual paper should never be shorter than three sentences. The exception to this guideline occurs in the case of section introductions and conclusions, which may appropriately be two sentences.

## In-text Citations (Level One Heading)

Note that a Level One Heading is centered, **boldface**, with uppercase and lowercase. In-text citations consist of an author's last name followed by year of publication. Citations may appear in the running text or within parentheses. Here are some examples.

### Example One (Level Two Heading)

Zur (2001) stated that… (etc.).

Note that a level two heading is flush left, **boldface**, with uppercase and lowercase.

### Example Two (Level Two Heading)

Doverspike (2008) reported that… (etc.).

Note that the conjunction *and* is used in text citations that are not parenthetical. However, if the citation is parenthetical (e.g., Walker, Doverspike, Ahmed, Milevsky, & Wooley, 2012), the reference would use an ampersand rather than a conjunction. In both cases, the publication date follows the authors' names, and serial commas are used to separate three or more names. Within a paragraph, when the name of the author is part of the narrative, you do not need to include the year of publication in subsequent nonparenthetical references to a publication as long as the publication cannot be confused with other publications cited in the article. However, do include the year in all parenthetical citations. When both the name and the year are in parentheses, include the year in subsequent citations within the paragraph. For example, the use of a parenthetical citation (e.g., Walker et al., 2012) <u>would</u> need to be accompanied by a publication date within the parenthetical citation, whereas a second Walker et al. nonparenthetical citation in part of the narrative of this same paragraph would <u>not</u> need to be

accompanied by a publication date (i.e., as long as the publication cannot be confused with other publications cited in the article).

**First subdivision of level two, or the level three heading.** A level three heading is an indented, **boldface**, lowercase paragraph heading ending with a period. In the lowercase paragraph heading, the first letter of the first word is uppercase and the remaining words are lowercase. If you need to subdivide a level two heading into sections, use level three headings as illustrated here. Each paragraph should be at least three sentences long. If a level three heading is used, then the paper much contain a second level three heading. A paper cannot have only one level three, four, or five heading.

**Second subdivision of level two, or the level three heading.** When using a particular level heading, remember that you need at least two headings at that level. Each level must contain three or more sentences.

***First subdivision of level three, or the level four heading.*** A level four heading is an indented, **boldface**, *italicized*, lowercase paragraph heading ending with a period. If you need to subdivide a level three heading into sections, use level four headings as illustrated here. Remember that if you have a level four heading, you must have a second level four heading. In other words, you cannot have only one level three, four, or five heading.

***Second subdivision of level three, or the level four heading***. Remember that you need at least two headings at each level.

*First subdivision of level four, or the level five heading.* If you need to subdivide a level four heading into sections, use level five headings as illustrated here. A level five heading is an indented, *italicized*, lowercase paragraph heading ending with a period. There is no boldface.

*Second subdivision of level four, or the level five heading*. Remember that you need at least two headings at each level, each with three or more sentences. Again, use no boldface.

## Quotations

In general you should paraphrase rather than quote. If you quote less than 40 words, place the quoted material inside double quotes in the text and give the page number of the quote. For example, Doverspike (2015) advised, "A good consultant is someone who can help you see your ethical blind spots" (p. 19). According to APA (2020, p. 277), "For quotations of fewer than 40 words, use single quotation marks within double quotation marks to set off material that was enclosed in double quotation marks in the original source." If the quote is 40 words or more, do not use double quotation marks; instead, set off the quote in a block indented paragraph one-half inch from the left margin. If the quote contains more than one paragraph, indent the first line of each paragraph an additional half inch (i.e., about five spaces). A block indented or "nested" paragraph should look like the following example:

> Assume that this next paragraph consists of a quote exceeding 40 words. 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. (APA, 2020, p. 277)

After the quoted material has been cited, the paper would continue in the normal way (i.e., beginning with a first line indent). In other words, this paragraph would be indented one half inch and need would be at least three sentences long. Note in the preceding paragraph that, when a parenthetical citation is used to cite the source of a block quotation, the parenthetical citation is actually placed after the period.

With respect to grammar, write in first person or third person, but not in more informal second person.

In general, each pronoun should refer clearly to its antecedent and should agree with its antecedent in number and gender. Verify noun-pronoun agreement so that nouns and pronouns agree in number. Use of the singular "they" is part of APA (2020, p. 121) style because it "is inclusive of all people and helps writers avoid making assumptions about gender." Although usage of the singular "they" was once discouraged in academic writing, many advocacy groups and publishers have accepted and endorsed it, including Merriam-Webster's Dictionary. Therefore, it can be used in some circumstances. If the singular "they" as a generic third-person seems awkward or distracting, rewrite the sentence by rephrasing, using plural nouns or plural pronouns, replacing the pronoun with an article, or dropping the pronoun (APA, 2020, p. 121).

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. Use the relative pronoun *that* when writing restrictive clauses that are essential to the meaning of the sentence. Use the word *which* when writing nonrestrictive clauses that are non-essential (i.e., that merely add further information) to the meaning of the sentence. Use a comma to set off a non-restrictive or nonessential clause. 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, ambiguously or illogically modify a word. Eliminate these by placing an adjective or an adverb as close as possible to the word it modifies.

### Parentheses

Do no use parentheses to enclose text within other parentheses; instead use square brackets to avoid nested parentheses: (Beck Depression Inventory–II [BDI–II]; Beck et al., 1996)

To enclose back-to-back parenthetical information, place the information in one set of parentheses, separated with a semicolon: (5th ed.; *DSM-5*)

**Clarity and Precision**

Just as the heading structure alerts the reader to the order of ideas with the paper,

seriation helps the reader understand the organization of key points with sections, paragraphs,

and sentences. In any series, all items should be syntactically and conceptually parallel. Present

parallel ideas in parallel or coordinate form, and make certain that all elements of the parallelism

are present before and after the coordinating conjunction (i.e., *and*, *but*, or *now*). In her list of "43

embarrassing grammar mistakes that even smart people make" in undergraduate term papers,

DesMarais (2017) includes overuse of "literally" (Item #36). Write concisely, use economy of

expression, and avoid wordiness. Write with clarity and avoid ambiguity. Be aware of

*contranyms*, which are words that can mean their opposite or serve as their own antonym. For

example, "*Continue* usually means to persist in doing something, but as a legal term it means

stop a proceeding temporarily" (Herman, 2018, #16). With respect to choice of words, make sure

that every word means exactly what you intend it to mean. Avoid colloquial expressions (e.g.,

awesome, issues, sign off), which diffuse meaning and weaken statements. For example, rather

than using a vague expression such as a writing *issue*, use a particular word that means exactly

what you intend it to mean. Table 1 contains some examples of nouns, listed alphabetically, that

be used to increase specificity.

**Table 1        Examples of Nouns That Improve Specificity and Precision**

| Table 1 <br> Examples of Nouns That Improve Specificity and Precision | |
|---|---|
| Adjective | Noun |
| Behavioral | antecedent, consequence, disorder, model, perspective, principle, problem, program, repertoire, skill, therapy, theory, topic |
| Clinical | disorder, disease, guidelines, illness, incident, management, problem, sequelae, setting, significance, symptom, syndrome |
| Emotional | conflict, control, disorder, dysfunction, dysregulation, functioning, growth, maturation, problem, regulation, stability, strength, topic |
| Ethical | aspect, code, conflict, consideration, dilemma, infraction, standard, principle, violation, practice, problem, quagmire |
| Family | boundary, chaos, conflict, dispute, enmeshment, harmony, meeting, problem, relationship, setting, violence |
| Interpersonal | agreement, amends, boundary, conflict, dispute, perspective, problem, reconciliation, relationship, situation, topic |
| Legal | aspect, citation, conflict, consequences, consideration, entanglement, statute, system, perspective, problem, question |
| Marital | bliss, conflict, contract, discord, dispute, disharmony, harmony, problem, relations, repair, residence, status |
| Medical | condition, diagnosis, doctor, facility, guidelines, hospital, illness, management, setting, school, symptom, syndrome, training |
| Mental | conceptualization, disorder, disability, effort, health, hospital, hygiene, illness, model, problem, strength, status |
| Military | assault, base, benefit, branch, campaign, career, conflict, department, discount, intelligence, officer, secret, tactic, weapon |
| Spiritual | dimension, director, discernment, focus, growth, maturation, mentor, perspective, principle, program, problem, value |

**Citations and References**

*In-text citations* are parenthetical or narrative (i.e., previously referred to as "nonparenthetical") expressions that include the name of the author(s) and publication date, whereas *reference list entries* are an alphabetized list of sources at the end of the paper. There should be a one to one correspondence between text citations and reference entries. The References section begins on a new page. In the References section, use italicized sentence case for titles of books and use italicized title case for titles of journals. Use non-italicized sentence case for titles of articles. In contrast, use italicized sentence case when writing the title of a book or periodical in the text of the paper, although APA style generally uses text citations (i.e., author, publication year, and page number if quoting an author) rather than writing the title of a book in the text of a paper. See the examples below:

This sentence is written in non-italicized sentence case.

*This sentence is written in italicized sentence case.*

*This Sentence is Written in Italicized Title Case*.

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Zur, O. (Producer). (2011, October 5). *Top ten questions about telehealth: Interview with William Doverspike, Ph.D., by Ofer Zur, Ph.D.* [Audio podcast]. http://www.zurinstitute.com/telehealthethics.mp3

Notes: In the reference list, only one space is used after the period at the end of an element. Do not use a period at the end of a URL or DOI. Do not tab or space at the beginning of the line; instead, use a hanging indent. The *hanging indent* offers you one other advantage in the latest version of Microsoft Word: You can autosort the references alphabetically. This means that you can write a long paper and type references as they come rather than alphabetize. Then, you can auto-alphabetize the references. To do so, make sure you use auto-hanging indents. Then highlight the first word of the first reference in the list. Highlight everything up to and including the last word of the last reference, but don't highlight the title "References." Once you have done this, click "home." In the middle of menu screen there is a sort icon (AZ with an arrow). Click this. Then choose Paragraph, text, ascending (which is usually the default, unless you have somehow changed it). Click "Okay," and it will sort the references for you. Once you have read this, you can delete it.

**Appendix A:**

**Common APA Style Guidelines**

**Format for the Five Levels of Heading in APA Style**

| Level | Format |
|---|---|
| 1 | **Centered, Bold, Title Case Heading**<br>Text begins as a new paragraph. |
| 2 | **Flush Left, Bold, Title Case Heading**<br>Text begins as a new paragraph. |
| 3 | ***Flush Left, Bold Italic, Title Case Heading***<br>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 | ***Indented, Bold, Title Case Heading, Ending With a Period.*** 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 B:**

**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)<br><br>Author (year) |
| Author | Provide the title, date, and source | Title. (Date). Source. | (Title, year)<br><br>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.)<br><br>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)<br><br>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.)<br><br>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)<br><br>[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.)<br><br>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.)<br><br>[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)<br><br>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
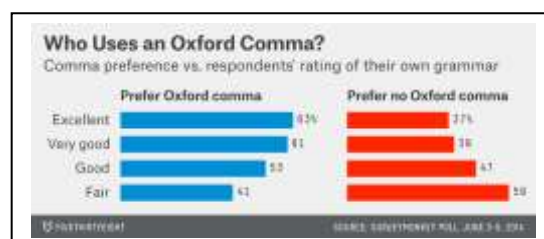
**Appendix C:**

**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 D:**

**Editing and Proofreading the Paper**

The most useful method for ensuring required content, reducing writing errors, and improving the quality of the final paper is for the author and a proof reader to carefully edit a printed hard copy of the final paper before submission of the paper. On a printed hard copy, editors will spot errors in writing, formatting, and punctuation that they may not see when reviewing a digital version on a screen.

The APA (2010, p. 70; 2020, p. 126) *Publication Manual* includes 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 solicit feedback from colleagues helps provide a critical review.

- Revisomg a draft into a polished paper requires time and effort on the part of the writer.

## 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 template*. http://drwilliamdoverspike.com/

Note: The 2020 APA Style Template replaces the original template, which is documented below with the full URL for archival and retrieval purposes:

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

**Chicago Manual of Style / Kate Turabian**

Doverspike, William, "APA style template," Jul. 15, 2019. 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 Template" 15 Jul. 2019 [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.

Last updated: 04-01-2024