APA Style Review and Overview of Changes in the 6th Edition

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Note: This paper includes the corrections made in the 6th edition identified by APA on October 6, 2009.

In July 2009, the American Psychological Association (APA) released the 6th edition of the Publication Manual. The major changes in the 6th edition concern headings, presentation of data in tables, expanded information on referencing electronic sources, expanded discussion on the ethics of publishing, and the use of language to avoid bias. This paper presents some of the changes in the 6th edition, as well as a review of seven aspects of APA style: the title page, headings, serial commas, direct quotes, citations, the reference list, and tables.

According to the APA 6th edition blog it is not expected that journals will be expecting authors to use the new standards until 2010. If you are planning to submit a manuscript it might be a good idea to check with the journal editor to determine if you need to update your paper to fit the new guidelines (Jackson, 2009). The NASW Press is currently adhering to the 5th edition and did not know when the change to the 6th edition would occur (L. M. O'Hearn, personal communication, August 20, 2009).

Title Page

The title page of this document is an example of the new format. The first change you will notice is that the running head – flush left – is on the same line as the page number – flush right. The running head is limited to 50 characters (including spaces) and is CAPITALIZED. This information should be typed in the header of the document so it will always appear at the top of every page regardless of margins or orientation. The title, byline (with no titles or degrees), and institutional affiliation should all be positioned in the upper half of the page.

Formatting

In the 5th edition in the header of each page (including the title page) you were to have a page header right next to the page number in the upper right corner. This has now changed a bit. The header is the abbreviated title that is next to running head on the title page, just minus the

words running head and is flush left. The page number is in the same header on the same line as the header but is flush right. Times New Roman 12 font is the suggested typeface to use and the text should be flush left. This means the words line up on the left but are ragged on the right. This keeps all the spaces between words equal size, again for the ease of the reader. Margins are to be one inch on all four sides. Another change from the 5th to the 6th edition is that two spaces are required between the end of one sentence and the beginning of the next.

Headings

The good news is in the 6th edition the headings are much clearer. In fact, specific guidance is actually offered. There are five heading options, and they are set up from the top down. In other words, the first heading you use in your manuscript or paper is heading number one, and, if you add an additional layer of headings, use heading number two, and so on. You will need to organize your writing to have not more than five levels of headings. No heading is included at the beginning of a paper as it is assumed the beginning of the paper is the introduction. Table 1 presents the five headings and the format. Include a hard return (or start a new paragraph) after the first two levels. For the remaining three levels, which all end with a period, the text begins on the same line as the headings. If you have headings under a higher-level heading, you need a minimum of two lower-level headings per heading. When you are reviewing your paper and have only one heading, that heading should be deleted from the text.

Table 1

APA Style Headings

Level of heading	Format
1	**Centered, Boldface, Uppercase and Lowercase Headings**
2	**Flush Left, Boldface, Uppercase and Lowercase Heading**
3	**Indented, boldface, lowercase paragraph heading ending with a period.**
4	***Indented, boldface, italicized, lowercase paragraph heading ending with a period.***
5	*Indented, italicized, lowercase paragraph heading ending with period.*

(APA, 2009, p. 62).

Serial Commas

If you have a string of three or more items and are using the words *and* or *or,* a comma should be between each element. The final element of a series includes the *and* or the *or*. This results in the reader understanding all the elements are considered separately. The best example of the importance of serial commas is one I learned from Ellen Thursby (personal communication, 2008). The story goes that a man wrote in his will that he wanted his assets split between his children Bill, Joe and Mary. Bill went to court (and won) arguing that since Joe and Mary were not separated by a comma his father meant the Bill should get half and Joe and Mary, together, should get the other half. If it had been written according to APA style (… between Bill, Joe, and Mary…), there would not have been any confusion. So, always remember the comma; though it may seem irrelevant and extra, it is very important.

Direct Quotes

When directly quoting, use quotation marks at the beginning and end of the direct quote. The citation must include the page number the direct quote was taken from as well as the rest of the information required in a citation (see next section). If you introduce the authors and the year before the quote, only the page number follows the quote (in parentheses and outside the quotation marks) with the closing parentheses preceding the period. If the quote is fewer than 40 words, place the quote within the paragraph. However, if the quote is 40 words or more, start the quote in a double-spaced block beginning on a new line, as if a new paragraph. If the quote consists of one paragraph, put it as a solid block, meaning the beginning of each line is even with the indentation of the first line. When the direct quote is more than one paragraph, the first line of the second paragraph should be indented. The punctuation is at the end of the quote. The citation, in parenthesis and without ending punctuation, follows the quote. Of note, this is the first of two times there is no punctuation after text using APA style.

If you are paraphrasing content, you do not have to provide the page number, though you do need to provide the author and year in a citation. Giving the page number is up to the writer if it will help direct the reader more easily to the original source.

When using a direct quote from an online document that doesn't have page numbers, provide the paragraph number (para. #) instead of the page number. If the online document has a heading in the document, include both the heading and the paragraph number so the reader can easily find the quote (e.g. Methods, para. #). If the heading is really L-O-N-G, you can shorten it; keep in mind, however, how much information will be needed by the reader to find the quote in the document.

Citations

Citations have not changed from the 5th edition to the 6th edition, but a few reminders are offered here. If the source has only one author, every time you cite the source use the author's last name and the year of publication. A source with two authors requires the use of both last names and the year each time the source is cited. For a source with three to five authors, the first time that source is cited, include each author's last name and the year. Each subsequent time the source is cited, use only the first author's last name followed by *et al.*, and the year. If the source has six or more authors, use the first author's last name followed by *et al.*, and the year each time the source is cited. When citing a sources using et al. as a part of the text, do not include a comma between the *al.* and the year, which is in parentheses.

The only exception to the rule of using *et al.* after the first author's last name is when it will result in confusion about which article is being cited. If a truncated citation for an article with three or more authors results in identical citations for two different sources, then you need to include the additional authors' last names in each citation until a variation is reached. An example of this is two articles published with James Zabora as the first author. One has five authors, and the other has six authors. Both were published in 2001.

Zabora, J., BrintzenhofeSzoc, K., Curbow, B., Hooker, C., & Piantadosi, S. (2001). The
   prevalence of psychological distress by cancer site. *Psychooncology, 10*, 19-28.

Zabora., J., BrintzenhofeSzoc, K., Jacobsen, P., Curbow, B., Piantadosi, S., & Hooker, C (2001).
   A new psychosocial screening instrument for use with cancer patients. *Psychosomatics,
   42*, 241-246.

The resulting citation used the second and subsequent times (Zabora et al., 2001), would be exactly the same as the citation with six authors (Zabora et al., 2001). It would not be

possible for the reader to easily determine which article is being cited. In these cases, truncate the first citation to Zabora, BrintzenhofeSzoc, Curbow, et al., 2001, and the second one to Zabora, BrintzenhofeSzoc, Jacobson, et al., 2001. This provides the reader with enough information to identify exactly which reference the writer is citing.

Reference List

The reference list starts on a new page following the end of the manuscript. The way to ensure that it is always on a new page regardless of changes made in the text is to insert a Page Break at the end of the manuscript text. The heading for this page is centered and bolded (level 1 of headings). The whole reference list is double-spaced. The first line of each reference is flush left, and all subsequent lines are indented. The way to ensure all references are formatted correctly regardless of the margins and orientation is to format the reference list. Do this by going to *Format* then *Paragraph*, proceed to the second section titled *Indentation*, on the right side under *Special* select *Hanging*. Each reference will then be correctly formatted.

For articles, books, or chapters with one to seven authors, all authors' last names, first initials, and middle initials (if provided) should be in the exact order as on the publication. If there are more than seven authors, include the last names and initials of the first six authors, an ellipses, and the last author's last name and initials. This is followed by the year in parentheses. When you have two to seven authors in a reference, an ampersand (&) is used before the final author. The title follows in sentence format: only the first letter of the first word, proper nouns, and the first letter of the first word following a colon are capitalized. For a journal article, the title of the article is followed by the italicized journal title, italicized volume, issue number in parentheses (if each issue of the journal begins on page 1), and the page numbers. The major words of the journal title are capitalized. For a book, the title is in sentence format and is

italicized. This is followed by the City and State of publication followed by a colon and the name of the publisher.

When citing a chapter in an edited book, the reference is the same as above up to the end of the chapter title. This is followed by In A.B. Editor (Ed.), *Title of book* (page numbers). City, State: Publisher. The only time initials are followed by the last name(s) are when editors are referenced.

The newest part of the 6th edition is the use of electronic source locators, the digital object identifiers (DOI). The DOI is a unique number assigned by the publisher to articles. The APA Manual (2009) suggests the DOI be included even when the article was not obtained electronically, in order to assist readers in obtaining it electronically. DOI's are linked to the website http://www.doi.org. If you go to this site and put in the DOI of an article, the abstract of the article will be presented. You can also get to an article using the DOI in Google search. The link to the full article is also available, most often for a fee. The reference for an article obtained electronically with a DOI is the same as with print articles with the addition of doi:xxxx/xxxx at the end of the reference. There is no longer any need to offer the specific website from which you retrieved the article.

In the case of an electronic source that does not have a DOI number, provide the full URL of the site from which the article was retrieved. Provide as much information as possible, so the reader can go directly to the article or source on the reference list. (Check to make sure the links work correctly before submitting a paper or manuscript.) Do not include a period after the URL or the DOI number on the reference list. This is the second time no punctuation is used in APA style.

There are a few other points to remember about the reference list. First, the order of the reference list is based on the first initial of the first author's last name. Never change the order of the authors: they are in that order for a reason.

Secondly, references will differ depending on the source. Below is an example of a reference list with different types of sources: articles, books, and book chapters. A much more extensive list of examples can be found in chapter seven of the APA Manual (2009).

<div align="center">**References**</div>

Ahearn, F. L. (Ed.), (2001). *Global aspects of aging.* Binghamton, NY: Haworth Press.

Bennett, S. (2006). Clinical writing of a therapy in progress: Ethical questions and therapeutic challenges. *Clinical Social Work Journal, 34,* 215-226. doi: 10.1007/s10615-005-0011-7

Blome, W., & Steib, S. (2004). Like musical chairs? Become a child welfare worker. *Child Welfare, 83*(4), 381-384.

Sheridan, M. J. (2008). The spiritual person. In E. D. Hutchison (Ed.), *Dimensions of human behavior: Person and environment* (3rd ed., pp. 183-224). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Zabora, J. R., BrintzenhofeSzoc, K., Jacobsen, P., Curbow, B., Piantadosi, S., Hooker, C., …Derogatis, L. (2001). A new psychosocial screening instrument for use with cancer patients. *Psychosomatics, 42*, 241-246.

<div align="center">**Tables**</div>

Tables should be inserted into the manuscript using the table function: do not use tabs and spaces. Insert a table with the number of rows and columns you need to present the data, and include one additional row for the column headings. It is easiest to put the data into the table with all the borders showing. Once the table is complete, click on *Format* followed by *Borders and Shading* (in Word 97-2003) or the Border icon in the paragraph section of your toolbar or

ribbon (in Word 2007) and then click *No Border* to remove all the borders. At this point,

highlight the table header (the first row of the table), click B*order* then select *Bottom Border* and

Top Border. Highlight the last row of data, and click B*order* then select *Bottom Border* to insert

a bottom border. See Table 2 for the full format of a table as per the 6th edition. Of note, the

table number and the table title (which is italicized) are on different lines and are double-spaced.

The other change from the 5th edition is that each column has a title, even the stub column (this is

the one to the far left in the table).

Table 2

Example of a Table for Demographic Data

Characteristic	n	%
Gender		
Male	0	0.0
Female	0	0.0
Language Preference		
English	0	0.0
Spanish	0	0.0

Miscellaneous Reminders

There are a few style guidelines that haven't changed from the 5th to the 6th edition but

are important to review. First, the only parts of a paper/manuscript that are not double-spaced in

APA style are tables and table notes. Everything else is double-spaced.

Secondly, the way numbers are presented in the text of a paper is a topic, about which we

as writers, often need to be reminded. All numbers that start a sentence, regardless of size, are

expressed in words. Within the text, numbers under 10 are spelled out, while numbers 10 or

above are presented in numerals. There are a few exceptions to this rule, which are presented in

the fourth chapter of the manual.

References

American Psychological Association (2010). *APA Publication Manual* (6th ed.). Washington,

DC: Author.

Jackson, P. (2009, July 2). The sixth edition: Effective now? [Web log message]. Retrieved from

http://blog.apastyle.org/