

# APA 6<sup>th</sup> Edition Update

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The American Psychological Association (APA) style guide for scientific papers, reference lists, tables, and figures is the preferred format for the social, behavioral, and nursing sciences. The APA manual provides guidance on all aspects of the writing process, including planning the manuscript, editorial style, the ethics of authorship, and reducing bias in language.

APA style was first developed 80 years ago by a group

of social scientists who wished to establish sound standards of communication. The APA assembles a task force to revise the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* approximately every 10 years (American Psychological Association [APA], 2010). The latest APA update, the 6<sup>th</sup> edition (herein referred to as APA 6<sup>th</sup>) includes many changes (Table 1), ranging from the format of the cover page to the final set of tables and figures.

This brief review will high-

light errors made in the first printing; review changes in in-text citations, listings for multiple authors, and management of electronic resources; and provide additional author resources for using the APA 6<sup>th</sup> edition.

## ERRORS IN 6<sup>TH</sup> EDITION, FIRST PRINTING

The first printing of APA 6<sup>th</sup> contained a significant number of errors in the text, samples and referencing guidelines. Errors were reported by readers and resulted in a detailed review

**Table 1. New and expanded content: APA 6th Edition**

Topic	Highlights of changes
Ethical issues in publishing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct of scientific enquiry and ethical publishing standards</li> <li>• Guidance on determining authorship, collaboration, and conflicts of interest; duplicate publication, plagiarism, and self-plagiarism</li> </ul>
Manuscript construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Definitions of the core content of scholarly manuscripts, including statistical methods, use and preparation of supplemental materials for website publishing</li> <li>• Sample papers</li> </ul>
APA style	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Simplification of APA heading style to incorporate electronic publication</li> <li>• Guidelines for reducing bias in language to reflect current practices and preferences, with examples of inappropriate historical language, and current accepted usage</li> <li>• Punctuation, capitalization, abbreviations, and numbers in text</li> <li>• Guidelines for reporting inferential statistics</li> <li>• Table of statistical abbreviations</li> <li>• Use of supplemental files containing lengthy data sets and other media</li> </ul>
Graphic material	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Electronic presentation of data</li> <li>• Communication of results</li> <li>• Examples of displays including imaging and biological data</li> </ul>
Citations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information on citations has been consolidated in a single chapter</li> <li>• In-text citations and reference components with expanded content on electronic sources and the digital object identifier (DOI)</li> </ul>
Reference examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reference examples in a range of categories, with an emphasis on referencing of electronic formats</li> <li>• Reference styles for many newer media, such as blog posts and audiovisual material, including videos and podcasts</li> </ul>
Overview of journal publishing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overview of the journal publishing process</li> <li>• Author responsibilities in manuscript preparation</li> </ul>

*Note.* APA = American Psychological Association. Based on information from the American Psychological Association (APA), 2010.

**Table 2. Examples of APA 6<sup>th</sup> Edition reference formatting****Periodicals**

7 or fewer authors	Author, A. A., Author, B. B., Author, C. C., Author, D. D., Author, E. E., Author, F. F., & Author, G. G. (year). Title of article. <i>Title of Periodical</i> , volume number, pp-pp. doi:xxxxxxx
8 or more authors	Author, A. A., Author, B. B., Author, C. C., Author, D. D., Author, E. E., Author, F. F., . . . Author, Z. Z. (year). Title of article. <i>Title of Periodical</i> , volume number, pp-pp. Retrieved from <a href="http://www.xxxxxxx">http://www.xxxxxxx</a>

**Books**

Unedited book	Author, A. A. (year). <i>Title of work</i> . City, State/Country: Publisher.
Edited book	Author, A. A. (Ed.). (year). <i>Title of work</i> . City, State/Country: Publisher.
Unedited book, electronic version	Author, A. A. (year). <i>Title of work</i> . City, State/Country: Publisher. Retrieved from <a href="http://www.xxxxxx">http://www.xxxxxx</a>
Chapter in edited book	Author, A. A., & Author, B. B. (year). Title of chapter. In A. Editor & B. Editor (Eds.), <i>Title of book</i> (pp. xx-xx). City, State/Country: Publisher.
Chapter in edited book, electronic version	Author, A. A., & Author, B. B. (year). Title of chapter. In A. Editor & B. Editor (Eds.), <i>Title of book</i> (pp. xx-xx). City, State/Country: Publisher. Retrieved from <a href="http://www.xxxxxx">http://www.xxxxxx</a>

Note. APA = American Psychological Association. Based on information from American Psychological Association (APA), 2010

of the first printing, prompting a second printing in October 2009 and a third printing in December 2009. According to the APA, all errors in the first printing were corrected in the second printing. The APA has produced a detailed corrections summary of the errors in a user-friendly presentation. The APA summary notes all the errors in the *Publication Manual*, first printing, and puts them in context for greater understanding.

If you have a first printed edition of APA 6<sup>th</sup>, you may wish to print the summary available at <http://supp.apa.org/style/pubman-reprint-corrections-for-2e.pdf> and keep it with your manual for easy reference. A printed version of the supplement, formatted to accompany the book, is also available through the APA Service Center at 1-800-374-2721.

If you plan to purchase the APA 6<sup>th</sup>, make certain the version you are purchasing is a second or later printing. All editions currently being sold through the

APA website or Amazon.com are second or subsequent printings. The *APA Style* website continually updates the online *Style Guide*; the online version should be the definitive source for questions on formatting.

### CHANGES IN APA 6<sup>TH</sup> EDITION

**References and in-text citations:** One of the more noticeable changes in reference citation is the treatment of multiple authors in both in-text citations and the reference list. When a reference has up to seven authors, spell out all authors' names in the reference. The in-text citation for one or two authors lists all authors and the year at each citation. When there are three to five authors, all authors are listed at the first citation; in subsequent citations, only include the first author, followed by "et al.," and the year (e.g., Author et al., 2009). The citation for six or more authors is shown as "Author et al., year" for all in-text citations.

When a reference has more than seven authors, list the first six author names, followed by an ellipsis, and then the final author; for all in-text citations, use the first author, followed by "et al.," and the year (e.g., Author et al., 2009). Include the year every time the reference is cited in the text, whether or not the same citation was used earlier in the paragraph (APA, 2010). Examples of some common reference formats for periodicals and books are found in Table 2.

Use an issue number only when a journal is not serially paginated. Do not use a retrieval date for electronic content, unless you are aware the material may change over time. When giving the location of a publisher, all cities should be followed by the state or country. When quoting electronic material that does not have page numbers, use other methods to identify the location of the specific information (e.g., [para. 4], [Discussion section, para. 1], or ["Implications for Nursing Practice," para. 2]).

**Table 3. Online APA Style Guide resources**

Organization Resource	URL
<b>American Psychological Association</b>	
General Information	<a href="http://www.apastyle.org/">http://www.apastyle.org/</a>
Basics of APA Style [online tutorial]	<a href="http://www.apastyle.org/learn/tutorials/basics-tutorial.aspx">http://www.apastyle.org/learn/tutorials/basics-tutorial.aspx</a>
What's New in the 6th Edition	<a href="http://www.apastyle.org/manual/whats-new.aspx">http://www.apastyle.org/manual/whats-new.aspx</a>
Corrections to 6th Ed First Printing	<a href="http://supp.apa.org/style/pubman-reprint-corrections-for-2e.pdf">http://supp.apa.org/style/pubman-reprint-corrections-for-2e.pdf</a>
APA Help Desk	<a href="http://www.apastyle.org/apa-style-help.aspx">http://www.apastyle.org/apa-style-help.aspx</a>
Mastering the Sixth Edition (CE; fee)	<a href="http://www.apastyle.org/learn/courses/4210700.aspx">http://www.apastyle.org/learn/courses/4210700.aspx</a>
<b>Purdue University</b>	
Online Writing Library (OWL)	<a href="http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/">http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/</a>
<b>Southeastern University</b>	
Help: APA Sixth Edition	<a href="http://www.nova.edu/library/dils/lessons/apa/">http://www.nova.edu/library/dils/lessons/apa/</a>
<b>Twitter*</b>	
Follow APA Style on Twitter*	<a href="http://twitter.com/APA_Style">http://twitter.com/APA_Style</a>

*Note.* APA = American Psychological Association; CE = continuing education; URL = uniform resource locator

**Locator information and electronic sources:** When you are citing electronic sources, APA recommends that you “include the same elements, in the same order, as you would for a reference to a fixed-media source and add as much electronic retrieval information as needed for others to locate the source you cited” (APA, 2010, p. 187).

**Digital object identifier:** A Digital Object Identifier (DOI®) is a unique alphanumeric string assigned by a registration agency to identify content and provide a consistent link to its location on the Internet. The publisher assigns a DOI when an article is published and made available electronically. If the article is subsequently published in print, the DOI will not change. The system is managed by the International DOI Foundation, an open membership consortium including both commercial and noncommercial partners. As of February 2010, over 40 million DOI names have been assigned by the DOI system (International DOI Foundation, 2010).

The DOI typically is located on the first page of the elec-

tronic or print journal article, near the copyright notice or in the header. The DOI can also be found on the publishing journal's landing page for the article. DOI numbers begin with a 10 and contain a prefix and a suffix separated by a slash. The prefix is a unique number of four or more digits assigned to organizations; the suffix is assigned by the publisher and was designed to be flexible with publisher identification standards. DOIs are usually associated with journal articles but are increasingly found on books published only in electronic format. To locate an article using the DOI, log onto the DOI home page (<http://www.doi.org>), locate the retrieval box at the bottom of the webpage, enter the DOI, and click on “Submit” to go directly to the article. Alternatively, you can type <http://www.doi.org/xxxxxxxxxx> into the address bar to go directly to the article, bypassing the DOI website.

APA 6<sup>th</sup> recommends using a DOI in the reference list for both print and electronic sources when one is available (APA, 2010, pp 188–189). In the refer-

ence list, the DOI should be included following the reference citation. Because many DOIs are long and complex, it is preferable to cut and paste the DOI from the source into the manuscript. The DOI is not followed by a period, and must be shown exactly as listed in the source. Do not insert a hyphen to break a long DOI. The acronym “DOI” can be shown in all lower case or all capitals; the individual journal will make the choice on case for the acronym. Older articles (e.g., pre-2003) may not have been assigned a DOI.

**Electronic sources:** If a DOI has not been assigned, provide the home page or uniform resource locator (URL) of the journal, book, or report publisher. Keep in mind that readers may not have full text access to journal articles that require a subscription for access. Linking references to the abstract will provide sufficient information for the reader to decide whether or not to pay for access to the article. URLs should be verified any time a manuscript is revised or submitted to another journal. If the content is no longer avail-

able, substitute another source or remove the in-text citation and reference from the paper (APA, 2010).

### AUTHOR RESOURCES

Following each new edition of the *APA Publication Manual*, assistance guides for the new edition appear on the market. In addition, most colleges and universities have a webpage or library link providing APA guidelines and assistance. These manuals and websites may be easier to use, but remember that the APA manual itself is the pri-

mary resource. Table 3 contains links to a variety of online resources to help authors format scholarly papers according to APA 6<sup>th</sup> recommendations. The *APA Style* website continually updates the online style guide and maintains a “Help” section including frequently asked questions (FAQs) and a link to send unresolved questions to the experts at APA (<http://www.apastyle.org/apa-style-help.aspx>).

This brief update is not intended to replace the APA 6<sup>th</sup> *Publication Manual*. Authors

are encouraged to purchase or borrow a copy of the new edition and consult the *APA Style* website when developing papers and before submitting manuscripts to journals.

### REFERENCES

- American Psychological Association. (2010). *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Washington DC: American Psychological Association.
- International DOI Foundation. (2010). *The DOI System*. Retrieved from <http://www.doi.org/>

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