WHAT’S THE POINT OF APA STYLE?

Relevance of a Writing Style to Life After Graduation

by Samantha Denneny, Chelsea Lee, and Timothy McAdoo

American Psychological Association

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ABOUT US

SAMANTHA DENNENY
Development Manager, APA Style

CHELSEA LEE
Instructional Lead, APA Style

TIMOTHY MCADOO
Manager, APA Style
POLL: WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE POINT OF APA STYLE?

- **UNIFORMITY AND CONSISTENCY**
  Scan works quickly, focus on ideas

- **AVOID PLAGIARISM**
  Appropriately credit sources

- **PAPER FORMAT**
  Font, margins, headings, etc.

- **INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE**
  Affirm worth and dignity

- **NOT SURE**
  That’s why I registered for this webinar!
APA style is so unnecessary like why
11:18 PM · Dec 12, 2022

I’m currently having to research how to write a paper in APA style and I just don’t understand why formatting the paper has to be so much more difficult than writing the actual paper..
10:00 PM · Oct 3, 2021

i hate writing APA style papers such i’ve managed to do the dishes, take the trash out, clean the bathrooms, clean the kitchen, vacuum, do the laundry, water the plants, dust selves, call my insurance, alphabetize the medication cabinet, inventory the pantry, u get the picture
5:47 PM · Nov 8, 2022

Dude I forgot what APA style is. Why must this be a thing.
5:25 PM · Dec 5, 2022
APPLYING STYLE LESSONS TO LIFE

USE APA STYLE TO WRITE PAPERS…

BUT WHAT ABOUT THE REST OF LIFE?
Learning APA Style is learning professional communication skills.

We’ll explore…

• core principles of APA Style
• the “why” behind the guidelines
• real-world career applications of APA Style
CORE PRINCIPLES
The Foundation of APA Style
THREE TENETS OF APA STYLE

CLARITY

PRECISION

INCLUSION

Goal: communication
## COMMUNICATING WITH INTEGRITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fully explaining yourself</td>
<td>Transparency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using words that respect others</td>
<td>Inclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting claims with evidence</td>
<td>Critical thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing citations and references</td>
<td>Giving credit to others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consistently using punctuation, spelling, format, etc.</td>
<td>Attention to detail</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Goal: communication

- Format supports communication but is not itself the goal.
JUST AS YOU HAVE LEARNED TO CHECK WHAT YOU WRITE FOR SPELLING, GRAMMAR, AND WORDINESS, PRACTICE REREADING YOUR WORK FOR PRECONCEPTIONS ABOUT GROUPS OF PEOPLE

—APA Bias-Free Language Guidelines
USING INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE MEANS...

• calling people what they call themselves.

• to keep listening.
APA RESOURCES ABOUT INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE

BIAS-FREE LANGUAGE GUIDELINES

INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE GUIDELINES
WHAT'S THE POINT?

A Few Pointed Questions
WHY SO MANY RULES?

“Are these rules just about proving that I can follow directions?”

No!

- Guidelines are a framework to save writers from reinventing the wheel.
- Good communicators are clear and concise.
- Use *Publication Manual* as a reference book – look up answers as needed.
“Why not just provide links instead of references?”

Links break and don’t show context.

Complete references help writers
• consider their audience
• carefully evaluate sources

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Caplan, R. (2023, January 25). *Whoever claimed that the “internet is forever” didn’t have to go back to the internet of 2009 for a research* [Tweet]. Twitter.
https://twitter.com/robyncaplan/status/1618279366286520320
WHY SO MANY REFERENCE DETAILS?

References provide context and leave a trail of clues if links fail.

- Writing a reference gives you a chance to evaluate the source.
- Formatting distinguishes the elements.

Figure 9.1 Example of Where to Find Reference Information for a Journal Article
EVALUATING SOURCES EXAMPLE

Include reference information as it is presented on the source, even silly names.

SillyName123. (2023, January 27). *Important topic of relevance to your paper* [Video]. YouTube.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=23gGBaL2YO93Y24x

* Parenthetical citation: (SillyName123, 2023)
* Narrative citation: SillyName123 (2023)
FIRST PERSON

“Why can’t I say ‘I’?”

You can! Say “I” and “we” in APA Style.

• Give credit where due – to yourself and to other authors.
• Learn to navigate competing or overlapping guidelines.

https://apastyle.apa.org/blog/first-person-myth
LOCATIONS IN REFERENCES

“Why are locations needed in references? No one is driving to the publisher’s headquarters to buy a copy!”

You’re right. So, we updated the style.

Stay flexible and adapt to changes.


CONSISTENCY

“Why do I have to be consistent?”

Consistency is important to writing in any job.

• Shows you care.
• Avoid contradictions and miscommunications.
REAL-WORLD APPLICATIONS OF APA STYLE

Resumes, Stock Images, Fonts, Colors, Graphs, and Making a Difference
RESUMES

No “APA Style for resumes” but…

• describe job duties in parallel form (“assisted,” “improved,” etc.)
• use an accessible font
• use high color contrast
• consistent format
## Action Value

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Address cover letter/email to appropriate person with name spelled correctly</th>
<th>Inclusion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate your qualifications</td>
<td>Clarity and critical thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consistently use punctuation, spelling, format, etc.</td>
<td>Attention to detail/precision</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# PROFESSIONAL EMAILS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Using a descriptive subject line</td>
<td>Clarity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Addressing people by their name/pronouns</td>
<td>Precision, inclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing in full sentences with professional tone</td>
<td>Clarity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifying yourself (and pronouns if desired)</td>
<td>Precision, clarity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPLYING PRINCIPLES OF CLARITY AND PRECISION

- **WORD CHOICE**
  - Check it means what you think it means

- **PLAIN LANGUAGE**
  - Avoid jargon, excessive abbreviations

- **ACTIVE VOICE**
  - “Mistakes were made…” by who?
APPLYING PRINCIPLES OF INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE

EXAMPLE NAMES
- Not all Smith and Jones
- Show diversity

STOCK IMAGES
- Not all White, men, hands
- Or, avoid people and show concepts

COMMON SAYINGS
- Not pejorative ("gypped")
- Not appropriative ("spirit animal")
CHOOSING FONTS

• Use accessible fonts (legible, widely available) for emails, PowerPoint presentations, posters, and more.

Comic sans font on a web browser:

```
Practice MAP RF at home:
1. Login to https://sso.mapnwea.org/auth/studentLogin
   Username: StudentID#@mcpsmd.net
   Password: read
2. CLICK PRACTICE test
3. Please do not help your child with the answers
```

Comic sans font on my phone:

```
Practice MAP RF at home:
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USING COLOR

- Account for color-blindness
- Indicate meaning through
  - color + labeling
  - color + pattern
LABELING GRAPHS

• Label axes!
• Start y-axis at zero
• Avoid stereotypes even if intended to be cute
A nurse used principles of clarity, precision, and inclusion to create a resilience room for hospital staff during the pandemic.

- Organized plan
- Clear communication to superiors to demonstrate need and justify cost
CONTACT US

APA Style website: https://www.apastyle.org
Academic Writer: https://digitallearning.apa.org/academic-writer
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