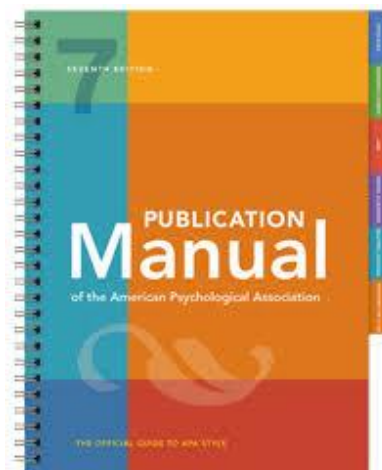# APA Style – A short guide to the 7th Edition

Liverpool Hope University (LHU)

Prepared by Prof. Galina Paramei and Mr. Robert Cunningham
in consultation with Assoc. Prof. Rosanna Cousins

What is the APA style?

The APA style is a convention for writing in the discipline of Psychology adopted by the majority of universities and Psychology journals throughout the world and governed by the American Psychological Association. It sets out a standardised approach for writing and referencing psychological academic works. This guide is based on the 7th edition of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association published in 2020.

Below we present a short summary of the APA style guide. For further details you are advised to consult the webpage, in particular, its specific rubrics:
https://apastyle.apa.org/products/publication-manual-7th-edition

Formatting of an academic work

All papers should start with a title page, following any guidance provided by tutors. If no guidance is provided, students should include the following:

- **Title** of the paper
- **Author's name**
- Author's affiliation (i.e. the university attended)
- Course number and name
- Tutor's name
- Due date, e.g. 6th March 2021

Note that if you informed that your work will be **marked anonymously**, you should **not** indicate your name or Hope ID: in Turnitin, your submission login will ensure that your work will be ascribed a unique code. The work author's details will be hidden until the mark posting date, i.e. after all cohort's works are marked. Then the code will reveal student's name and ID.

Papers should include a **page number**, which should be at the **top right corner** of the page (as is in this guide). The page numbers should continue in that position to the last page of the document.

The **font type and size are to be consistent** throughout the work. Conventionally the font is either 12-point Times New Roman, or 11-point Calibri, or 12-point Arial.

The whole paper is to be **double-spaced** and have 1-inch margins on all sides. The text is to be left aligned, with an indent of the first line of each paragraph by 0.5 inches, apart from the first paragraph after a (section) heading.

Structure of an academic work

An academic work traditionally has **five main sections**:

- Introduction
- Method
- Results
- Discussion
- References

The **Method** section has always four **subsections**: Participants, Materials, Procedure and Design (or Data Analysis). Note though that whilst APA style guidelines for research papers usually contain the five sections as is indicated above, the actual headings can vary according to the type of paper (APA, 2019). So, the Introduction could be the section titled Background, and the Participants subsection could be titled Sample (Subjects persists for animal research), etc.

Some papers include an additional section, titled Appendices or Supplementary Materials, that contains materials augmenting the content of the main text body. This section can include, e.g. detailed demographic characteristics of participants; a questionnaire used; characteristics and examples or the full array of the employed stimuli; tabular data containing analysis outcomes; supporting graphic illustrations that would overload the main narrative, etc.

Format of paper headings

https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/paper-format/headings

There are **five levels of heading** in APA Style. **Level 1** is the highest or main level of heading, **Level 2** is a subheading of **Level 1**, **Level 3** is a subheading of **Level 2**, and so on through **Levels 4 and 5**. The number of headings to use in a paper depends on the length and complexity of the work: use only the number of headings necessary to differentiate distinct sections in your paper. A short student paper may not require any headings.

The following table demonstrates **how to format headings** in APA Style.

Level	Format
1	**Centred, Bold, Title Case Heading** Text begins as a new paragraph
2	**Flush Left, Bold, Title Case Heading** Text begins as a new paragraph
3	***Flush Left, Bold Italic, Title Case Heading*** 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 regular paragraph
5	***Indented, Bold Italic, Title Case Heading, Ending with a Period.*** Text begins on the same line and continues as a regular paragraph

APA writing style

https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines

We insert a concise quotation from this APA webpage:

"APA Style provides a foundation for effective scholarly communication because it helps writers present their ideas in a clear, concise, and inclusive manner. When style works best, ideas flow logically, sources are credited appropriately, and papers are organized predictably. People are described using language that affirms their worth and dignity. Authors plan for ethical compliance and report critical details of their research protocol to allow readers to evaluate findings and other researchers to potentially replicate the studies. Tables and figures present information in an engaging, readable manner."

Important in your writing is using **language that does not make assumptions of gender or race**. For instance, to embrace participants of both sexes, to refer to individual participants you may write "they", or "s/he", or "she/he". Please be particularly mindful of the need to avoid descriptions such as "100 Iranian workers": one needs to write "100 workers based in Iran" (because the workers could be migrants from anywhere). We also discourage you to use the expression "were used" in relation to participants: human beings are not supposed to be "used" but recruited, tested, investigated etc. We encourage you to write your work in your own words, from start to finish, although, if necessary, quotations can be inserted, if properly referenced. **Check spelling, grammar and punctuation**: MS Word helps you by highlighting instances of incorrect writing with popping curvy red (spelling, grammar) and blue (punctuation) lines.

Also important is to **be consistent** in using **either British English** (e.g. behaviour, analyse) **or American English** (e.g. behavior, analyze) throughout your work. Note that this does not relate to quotations, names of established tests and questionnaires, and references: the spelling in these is to be retained as is in the original.

Here you can find **sample papers** in the APA style:

https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/paper-format/sample-papers

In this YouTube video you can also see an APA layout of an essay. Note that it is not a substitute for the present, more detailed guidance:

https://youtube.com/watch?v=c0e9DKDxUYU&feature=share

In-text citations and quotations

https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/citations

Proper in-text referencing will help you to **avoid accusations of plagiarism – a serious offence against academic integrity** that should be avoided at all costs. It is heavily penalised by academic community, in general, and particularly in university students. Plagiarism implies cases when one steals other persons' intellectual property – passages of others' work – in an attempt to present it as one's own work. The best way to avoid plagiarism is to acknowledge the sources one has used in their paper by providing a full and proper reference. You must not copy text verbatim from sources: the good academic practice is to paraphrase the information, that is, to re-write it using your own words and reference it appropriately.

APA style uses double quotation marks in various situations. These include when referring to a single letter "R", or a word in respect to a response (e.g. Students generally answered "Agree"), or when stimuli are presented in text (e.g. the stimulus words were "work", "play", "rest", "sleep"). Note that long lists of stimuli are better presented in a table.

Double quotation marks are also used when it is necessary to cite **a small passage from others' work** verbatim. In such cases you enclose the words in double quotation marks accompanied by the author(s)' surname(s), year of publication and, necessarily, the page number. Note that quotations should be used only when absolutely necessary and sparingly.

The length of quotations depends on the type of reported research. In academic works reporting empirical studies (surveys, experiments) quotations should be as short as possible. In comparison, in qualitative research reports, quotes are important; sometimes lengthy quotations from participants are essential. In such cases quotations of <40 words are presented in double quotation marks within the text. A quotation of ≥40 words is presented in a block quotation below the text, it is indented 0.5 inch and it is not enclosed in quotation marks.

Figures and tables

https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/tables-figures

Figures and tables enable text author to present a large amount of information at-a-glance – in a concise, efficient and more comprehensible way.
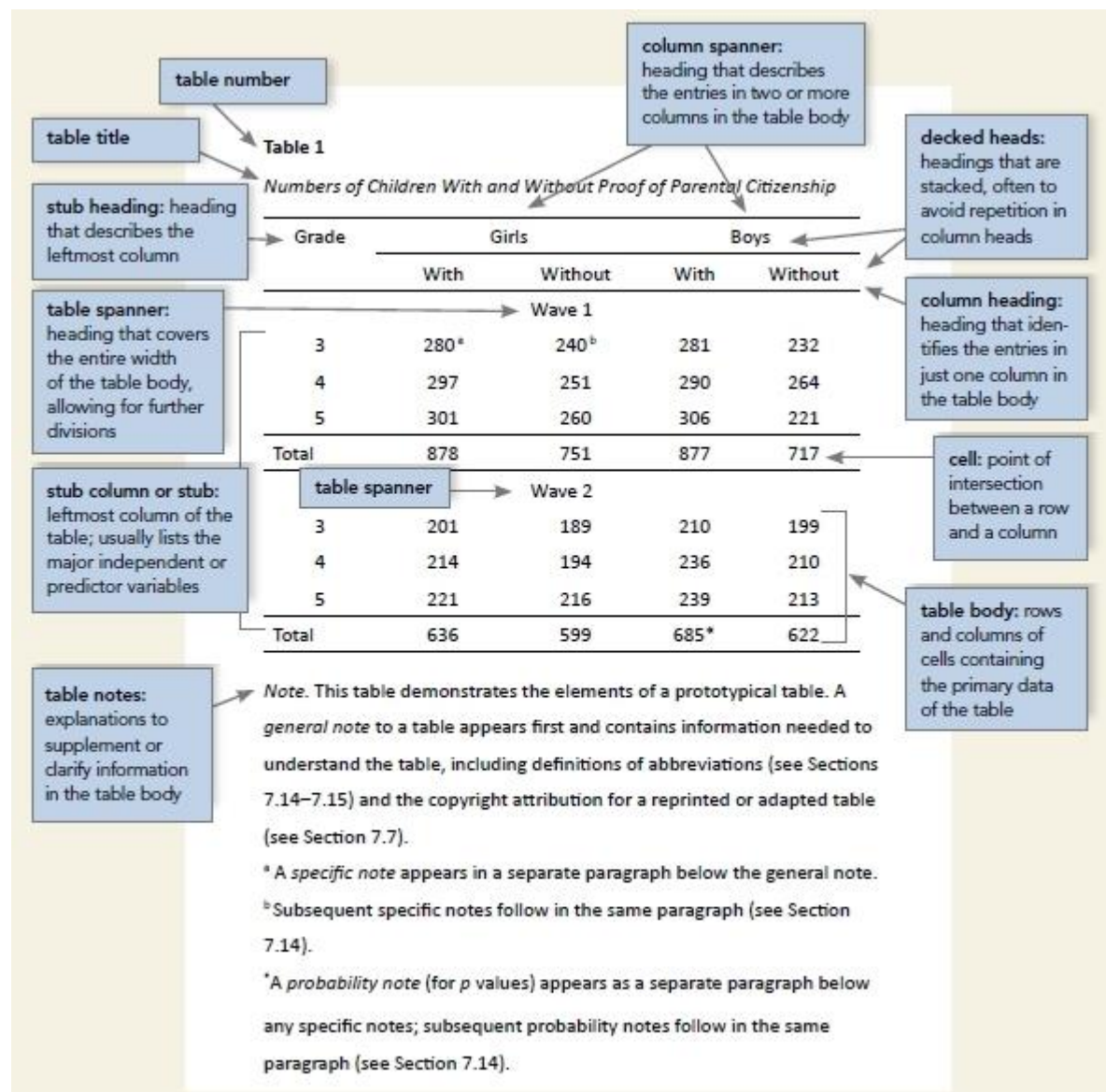
Common types of figures include line graphs, bar graphs, charts (e.g., flowcharts, pie charts), drawings, maps, plots (e.g., scatterplots), photographs, infographics, and other illustrations.

See the following diagram for an illustration of the basic APA **figure components**.
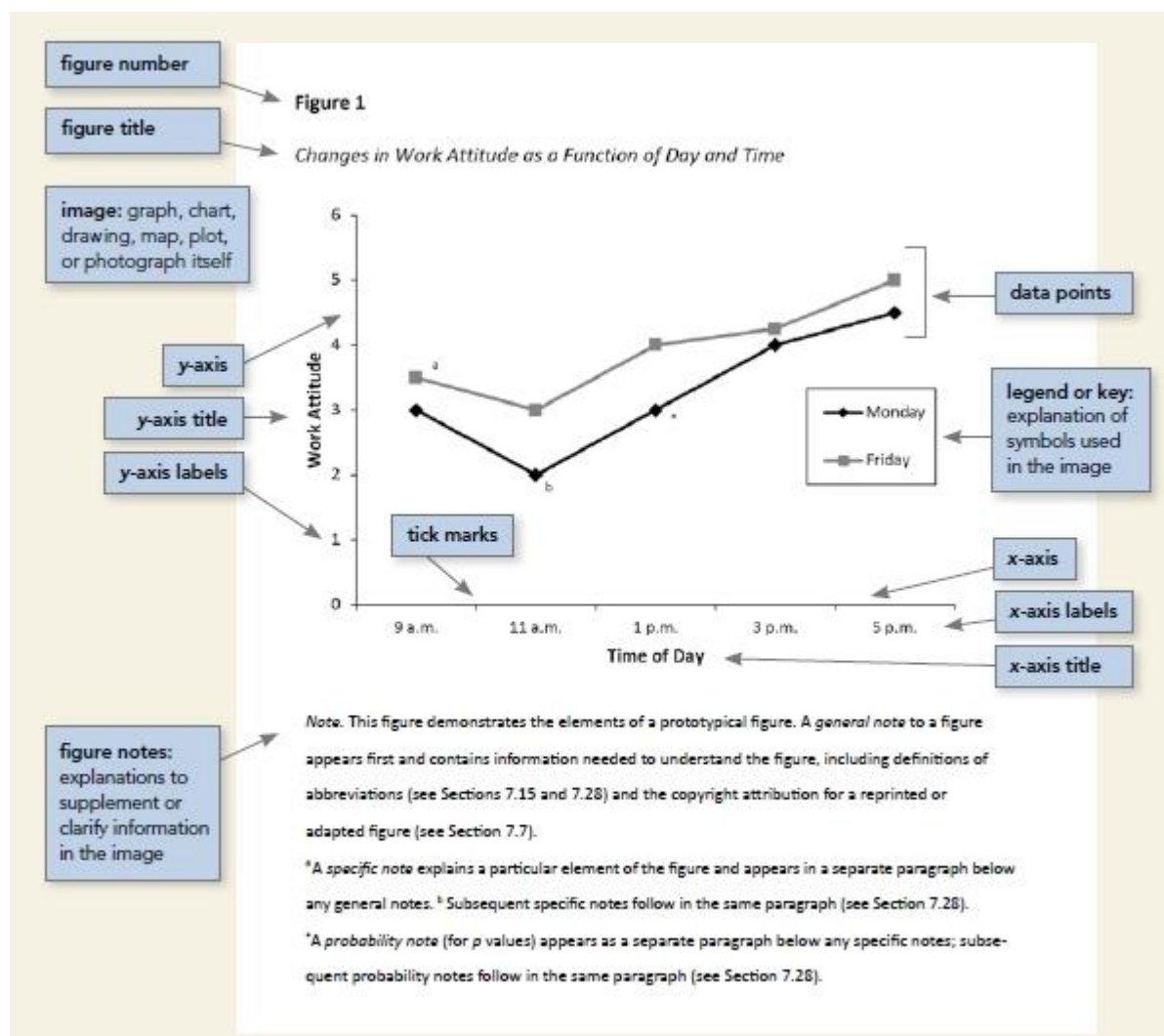
A table shows numerical values arranged in columns and rows and/or textual information. Tables with numeric information may contain outcomes of descriptive analysis (e.g. means and standard deviations) and outcomes of inferential statistics tests (correlation tables, factor analysis tables, analysis of variance tables, and regression tables. Tables with textual information can present demographic characteristics of participant sample; specific of the employed stimuli (e.g. lists of the used words); lists of reviewed studies (in meta-analysis and systematic analysis).

See the following diagram for an illustration of the basic APA **table components**.

column spanner: heading that describes the entries in two or more columns in the table body

table number

table title

decked heads: headings that are stacked, often to avoid repetition in column heads

stub heading: heading that describes the leftmost column

table spanner: heading that covers the entire width of the table body, allowing for further divisions

column heading: heading that identifies the entries in just one column in the table body

stub column or stub: leftmost column of the table; usually lists the major independent or predictor variables

cell: point of intersection between a row and a column

table body: rows and columns of cells containing the primary data of the table

table notes: explanations to supplement or clarify information in the table body

Table 1

Numbers of Children With and Without Proof of Parental Citizenship

Grade	Girls		Boys	
	With	Without	With	Without
Wave 1				
3	280[a]	240[b]	281	232
4	297	251	290	264
5	301	260	306	221
Total	878	751	877	717
Wave 2 (table spanner)				
3	201	189	210	199
4	214	194	236	210
5	221	216	239	213
Total	636	599	685*	622

Note. This table demonstrates the elements of a prototypical table. A *general note* to a table appears first and contains information needed to understand the table, including definitions of abbreviations (see Sections 7.14–7.15) and the copyright attribution for a reprinted or adapted table (see Section 7.7).

[a] A *specific note* appears in a separate paragraph below the general note.

[b] Subsequent specific notes follow in the same paragraph (see Section 7.14).

*A *probability note* (for p values) appears as a separate paragraph below any specific notes; subsequent probability notes follow in the same paragraph (see Section 7.14).

References and referencing format

Referencing is very important because it allows one to **refer to other research as supporting evidence and theories or hypotheses**. Referencing indicates that your paper is informed by broad and deep reading, and allows you to situate your work in the context of previous research. In addition, correct and full referencing enables readers to find these sources if they would wish to consult the original, cited work.

Any academic work needs to be referenced appropriately – use **primary sources**, i.e. original study reports (unlike secondary sources, such as textbooks or review articles, that "re-tell" the original reports). Exceptions are cases when the original source is in a language that the academic work's author does not know or if the source is out of reach (e.g. an old manuscript that is not accessible). It is important to evaluate the quality and validity of any sources that you cite in your academic work. You are strongly encouraged to rely upon peer reviewed academic journal articles wherever possible. Where you do have to use a secondary source, because the original paper is unavailable, you should note that the original paper was cited in a paper you read. For example (Pitt, 1883, as cited in Johnson, 2020).

Where it is desired to use a **web-based source**, it is incumbent upon you to **evaluate the quality and academic rigour** of the website, as well as to check on the validity of web sources. You should only rely on web-based material from authors and/or organisations that are qualified to comment upon the subject matter. The web domain gives a good indication as to a reputable source, e.g. gov.uk (UK Government), ac.uk (UK universities), org.uk (UK-based non-governmental organisations).

The referencing format implies an in-text citation and a full list of references. There are different rules for each, as outlined below. It is imperative that every source referred to in the main text appears in the References list; conversely, the References list should not include anything extraneous to what is in the text.

Format of in-text referencing

You should include an in-text citation each time you refer to a theory, hypothesis, model, or you make an assertion that is based on evidence provided in earlier studies of other researchers. **In-text citations include the author's/authors' surname(s) and the year of publication**. Direct **quotations** should, in addition, include the **page number**(s) after the publication years, i.e. "p. X" (if the quotation is on one page) or "pp. X-Y" (if the quotation stretches across two pages).

Below are examples of in-text citations for different cases when the number of authors varies. Please note that all examples represent recent research publications of the current academic staff at the LHU Department of Psychology. Below, under each rubric, we provide two examples, where one presents the author's/authors' name(s), as part of a sentence, followed by the bracketed year of publication and the other illustrates the fully bracketed reference.

One author:

- A study by Cousins (2020) showed that …
- The authors (Cousins, 2020, p. 1) assume that impairment of face emotion recognition in people with Parkinson's disease "can be explained in terms of a configural processing deficit".

Two authors:

If there is more than one author you should use "and" between the authors' surnames followed by the bracketed year of the publication. If, however, the referenced source is given in brackets, between the two authors' names you should use "&" instead, followed by the comma and year of the publication.

- Ferguson and McAuley (2020) concluded that …
- … the results of the study (Paramei & Bimler, 2021) are in accord with the current theoretical view on …

Three and more authors:

If there are three or more authors, in the in-text referencing, you should only include the first author's surname followed by "et al." and the year of publication ("et al." is an abbreviation of the Latin phrase "et alia" meaning "and others").

- López-Pérez et al. (2021) demonstrated that …
- … were the results of the study (Santiesteban et al., 2020) revealed that …

Multiple bracketed references

If you support your assertion by more than one reference, in the brackets you should list the sources in **alphabetical order** according to the surname of the first author of the publication (e.g. Binks & Cambridge, 2017; Lingwood et al., 2020; Palumbo, 2016; Palumbo & Bertamini, 2016).

References list

At the end of your paper, you need to include a list of all the references that you have cited in the text and nothing more. The reference list should be started on a new page after the text of the paper and before any tables, figures or appendices. **The list should be titled "References", be bold and centred on the page**. All references must be double spaced (within and between references). There should also be **a hanging indent of 0.5 inches**. This means that the first line is aligned flush left and all subsequent lines of each references are indented by 0.5 inches.

The References list is to be compiled using the bibliographic information found on the source itself and any supporting website, e.g. publisher's website, journal database, OneSearch, etc.

The references should be listed **alphabetically** by the first author's surname. Authors' **all initials are to be indicated** (not just the first one).

You should not alter the order of the authors' names in any given reference: it is the reference list that should be in alphabetical order, not the order of the authors within a reference. Note that author names' order has a certain meaning: the first author is a researcher who has mostly contributed to the reported study; other names are listed according to their descending contribution. However, in the authorship order, the last author's position is significant: usually it signals the leader of the research project or originator of the study idea.

If you reference more than one work of the **same author(s)**, these sources should be listed in **chronological order** [e.g. Paramei (1996) on the list should precede Paramei (2020)].

If there is a case of one reference with a single author and another with this same author but with one or more co-authors, initially a single-author reference is listed, followed by a multi-author source. Note that if several publications with the same first author are referred to, these should be listed according to the alphabetical order of the 2nd, or 3rd etc. author (e.g. Cousins, **A**ndo, & Young, 2017; Cousins, **P**ettigrew, Ferrie, & Hanley, 2020).

There are specific formatting rules for different types of information sources: articles, books, book chapters, academic or governmental reports, PhD or Masters theses, websites, repositories etc. Examples are given below.

Note that good referencing practice implies adding a DOI or URL to a publication that appeared in the hardcopy format or on the publication website. For electronic sources, a document object identifier (DOI) or uniform resource locator (URL) should be provided. The use of a DOI is preferred over a URL wherever possible. The article DOI can usually be found on the journal database. URLs can be found in the address bar of your browser.

Please take the note that since recently some journals are published in the **electronic-only format** – in these cases including **DOI** or **URL** in the referenced article source is the **"must"**. Here are some e-only journals that publish Psychology articles: *Frontiers in Psychology, i-Perception, Cognition, PLoS ONE, Nature Communications, Scientific Reports, Neuroimage, Humanity and Social Sciences Communications* etc.

Titles of articles or book chapters are to be in **plain font**. In the title, all first letters are to be lowercase, apart from the first word, proper nouns, or the first word after a colon, if this is part of the title. Note that the lowercase first letters are the APA style regardless of whether these upper-or lowercase in the published version of the title.

Titles of journals and the **journal volume number** are **italicised**. In the journal titles, conventionally all **first letters are capitalised** (apart from articles and conjunctives). Apart from the volume number, the first and the last pages of the article are to be provided. Below, on the example list, you will also notice that some articles by now are published electronically ahead of publishing as hardcopies. In such cases, instead of the volume number and page numbers, one needs to indicate "Published online on [date]" and provide the article DOI.

Titles of books are **italicised**, too. In comparison, in the book titles all **first letters are to be lowercase**, apart from the first word, the first word after a colon, if this is part of the title, as well as proper names (e.g. British; Northern Ireland; Baddeley's model of working memory) or names of the established psychological tools (e.g. the Stroop task; the Depression Anxiety Stress *S*cale). References to books and chapters in books need to indicate the **name of the publisher** (e.g. Cambridge University Press). If a book chapter was published in an edited book, **surnames of all book editors** are to be provided prior to the book title, as well as the chapter pages.

At the end of the example list below, you will see how to refer to websites and repository entries. Important, the latter should be either academic, or governmental, or of professional institutions. You may also need to refer to blogs – for their content-analysis or illustrative purposes: an example of referencing a blog is provided too.

We advise you to **be consistent** in your referencing format throughout the list of the sources:

(i)   if an author has more than one initial, the initials are to be separated by a space;

(ii)   if you decide to indicate, along with the volume number, also the issue number (in plain font, bracketed), insert it in all sources;

(iii)   if you decide to provide DOI or URL for the sources published as hardcopies, do this for all such sources on your References list. (You will notice through that not all journals provide the issue number and/or DOI/URL; in such cases provide the source information that is available.)

Examples of APA referencing

Below are referencing examples that represent publications of the current academic staff at the LHU Department of Psychology (highlighted in bold). To give you an idea what to look at for the required information source, along with the referencing example, we insert a screenshot of the corresponding first page of the referenced publication.

Journal article (one author)
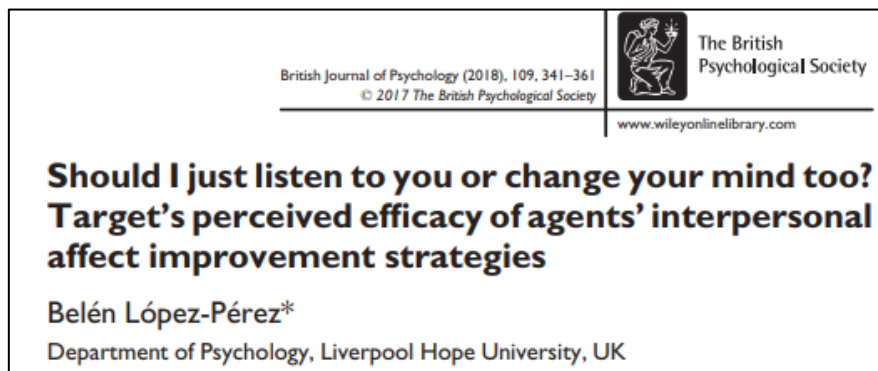
López-Pérez, B. (2017). Should I just listen to you or change your mind too? Target's perceived efficacy of agents' interpersonal affect improvement strategies. *British Journal of Psychology, 109*(2), 341-361. https://doi.org/10.1111/bjop.12265

Journal article (two authors)

Binks, E., & Cambridge, S. (2017). The transition experiences of British military veterans. *Political Psychology, 39*(1), 125-142. https://doi.org/10.1111/pops.12399

Ferguson, N., & McAuley, J. W. (2020). Staying engaged in terrorism: Narrative accounts of sustaining participation in violent extremism. *Frontiers in Psychology, 11*:1338. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.01338

(Note that *Frontiers in Psychology* is an e-only journal, hence, the volume number is followed by a colon and the article number, not the page numbers, and is accompanied by DOI)

Journal article (three or more authors)

Ando, H., **Cousins, R.**, & Young, C. A. (2020). Flexibility to manage and enhance quality of life among people with motor neurone disease. *Disability and Rehabilitation.* Published online 23.11.2020. https://doi.org/10.1080/09638288.2020.1846797
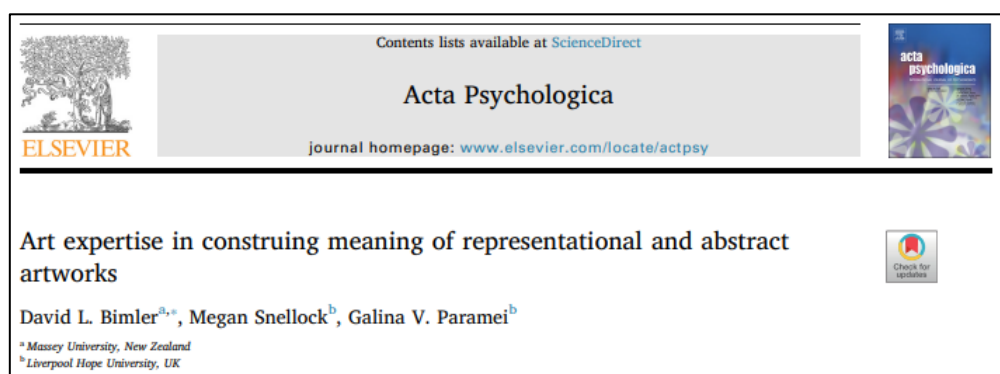
Bimler, D. L., Snellock, M., & **Paramei, G. V.** (2019). Art expertise in construing meaning of representational and abstract artworks. *Acta Psychologica, 192*, 11-22. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.actpsy.2018.10.012

The Relationship Between Working Memory and the Dual-Target Cost in Visual Search Guidance

Tamaryn Menneer
University of Exeter

Kyle R. Cave and Elina Kaplan
University of Massachusetts

Michael J. Stroud
Merrimack College

Junha Chang
University of Massachusetts

Nick Donnelly
Liverpool Hope University

Menneer, T., Cave, K. R., Kaplan, E., Stroud, M. J., Chang, J., & **Donnelly, N.** (2019). The relationship between working memory and the dual-target cost in visual search guidance. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Human Perception and Performance, 45*(7), 911-935. https://doi.org/10.1037/xhp0000643

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The processing of images of biological threats in visual short-term memory

Philip T. Quinlan, Yue Yue, Dale J. Cohen

Published 23 August 2017. DOI: 10.1098/rspb.2017.1283

Article   Figures & Data   Info & Metrics   eLetters   PDF   Previous

Quinlan, P. T., **Yue, Y.**, & Cohen, D. J. (2017). The processing of images of biological threats in visual short-term memory. *Proceedings of the Royal Society B, 284*:1861. doi:10.1098/rspb.2017.1283

Check for updates

Writing with imagination: the influence of hot and cold executive functions in children with autism characteristics and typically developing peers

Lorna Bourke[1] · Megan Marriott-Fellows[1] · Amanda Jones[1] ·
Lorna Humphreys[1] · Simon J. Davies[1] · Antonio Zuffiano[1] · Belén López-Pérez[1]

Bourke, L., Marriott-Fellows, M., Jones, A., Humphreys, L., **Davies, S. J.**, Zuffiano, A., & **López-Pérez, B.** (2019). Writing with imagination: The influence of hot and cold executive functions in children with autism characteristics and typically developing peers. *Reading and Writing, 33*(4), 935-961. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11145-019-09989-w

Curve Appeal: Exploring Individual Differences in Preference for Curved Versus Angular Objects

Katherine N. Cotter and Paul J. Silvia
Department of Psychology, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, NC, USA

Marco Bertamini
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Liverpool Hope University, UK

Oshin Vartanian
University of Toronto, ON, Canada

Cotter, K. N., Silvia, P. J., Bertamini, M., **Palumbo, L.**, & Vartanian, O. (2017). Curve appeal: Exploring individual differences in preference for curved versus angular objects. *i-Perception*, 8(2):2041669517693023. https://doi.org/10.1177/2041669517693023

Gharibi, V., Mokarami, H., **Cousins, R.**, Jahangiri, M., & Eskandari, D. (2020). Excessive daytime sleepiness and safety performance: Comparing proactive and reactive approaches. *The International Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine, 11*(2), 95-107. https://doi.org/10.34172/ijoem.2020.1872

Lingwood, J., Billington, J., & Rowland, C. (2020). Evaluating the effectiveness of a 'real-world' shared reading intervention for preschool children and their families: A randomised controlled trial. *Journal of Research in Reading, 43*(3), 249-271. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9817.12301

López-Pérez, B., Zuffianò, A., & Benito-Ambrona, T. (2021). Cross-cultural differences in children's conceptualizations of happiness at school. *European Journal of Developmental Psychology*. Published online: 6.1.2021. https://doi.org/10.1080/17405629.2020.1865142
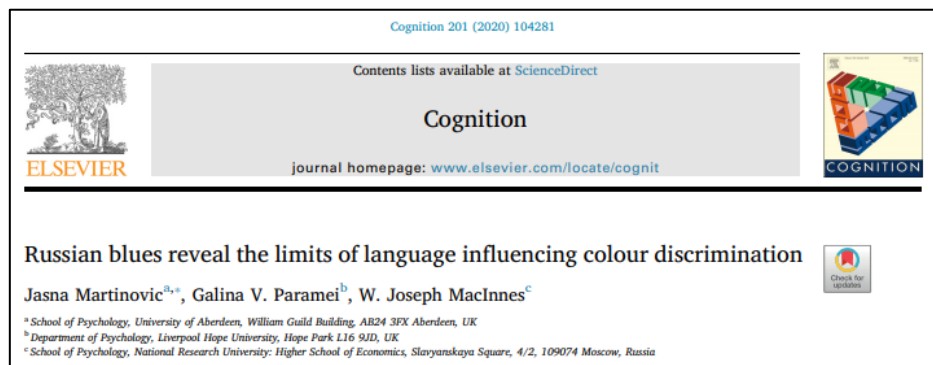
Martinovic, J., **Paramei, G. V.**, & MacInnes, W. J. (2020). Russian blues reveal the limits of language influencing colour discrimination. *Cognition, 201*:104281. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cognition.2020.104281
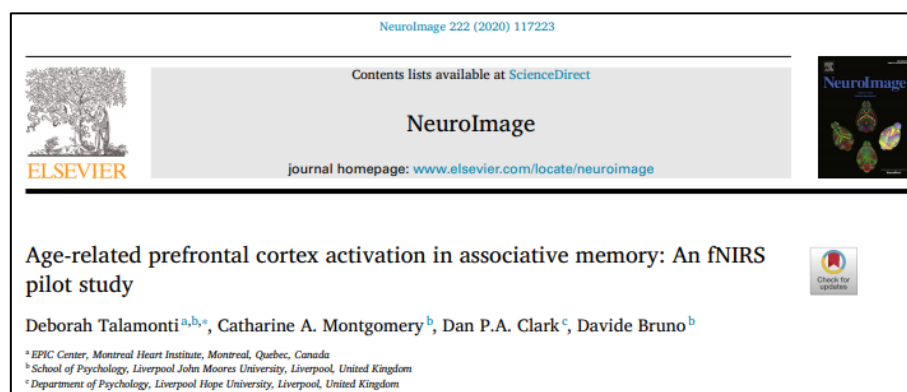
Talamonti, D., Montgomery, C. A., **Clark, D. P. A.**, & Bruno, D. (2020). Age-related prefrontal cortex activation in associative memory: An fNIRS pilot study. *NeuroImage, 222*: 117223. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.neuroimage.2020.117223

Asymmetric effects of graspable distractor disks on motor preparation of successive grasps: A behavioural and event-related potential (ERP) study

Stefano Uccelli [a,*], Letizia Palumbo [b], Neil R. Harrison [b], Nicola Bruno [a]

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Uccelli, S., **Palumbo, L., Harrison, N. R.**, & Bruno, N. (2020). Asymmetric effects of graspable distractor disks on motor preparation of successive grasps: A behavioural and event-related potential (ERP) study. *International Journal of Psychophysiology, 158*, 318-330. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijpsycho.2020.10.007

Original Paper | Published: 28 May 2020

Individuals with Autism Share Others' Emotions: Evidence from the Continuous Affective Rating and Empathic Responses (CARER) Task

Idalmis Santiesteban ✉, Clare Gibbard, Hanna Drucks, Nicola Clayton, Michael J. Banissy & Geoffrey Bird

Santiesteban, **I.**, Gibbard, C., Drucks, H., Clayton, N., Banissy, M., & Bird, G. (2020). Individuals with autism share others' emotions: Evidence from the Continuous Affective Rating and Empathic Responses (CARER) task**.** *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*. Published 28.5.2020. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-020-04535-y

Nowadays it is not infrequent that a publication is authored by a big group of researchers (e.g. in medicine, genetics, cross-cultural studies etc.). The APA 7th edition instructs to list all authors' names and initials if the number of authors is up to 20. However, where there are > 20 authors, the first 19 are listed, followed by an ellipsis […] and ended with the final author's name (no ampersand, i.e. "&", before it). For the latter case see an example below.

Universal Patterns in Color-Emotion Associations Are Further Shaped by Linguistic and Geographic Proximity

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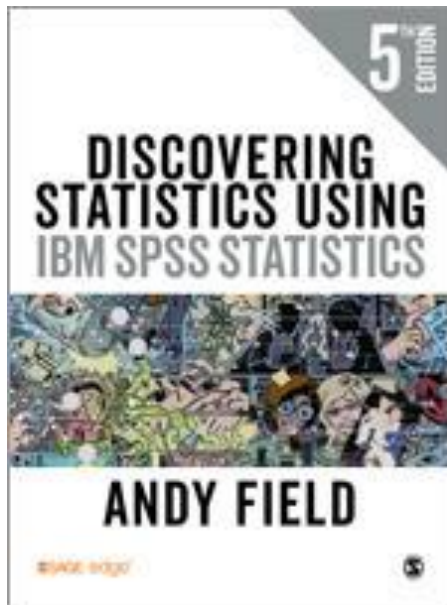
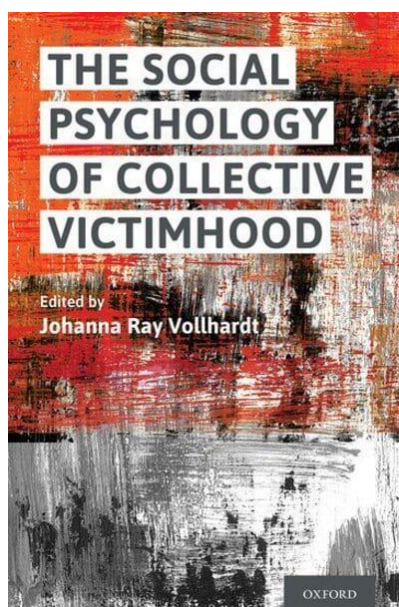Field, A. (2017). *Discovering statistics using IBM SPSS statistics*. 5th ed. Sage.
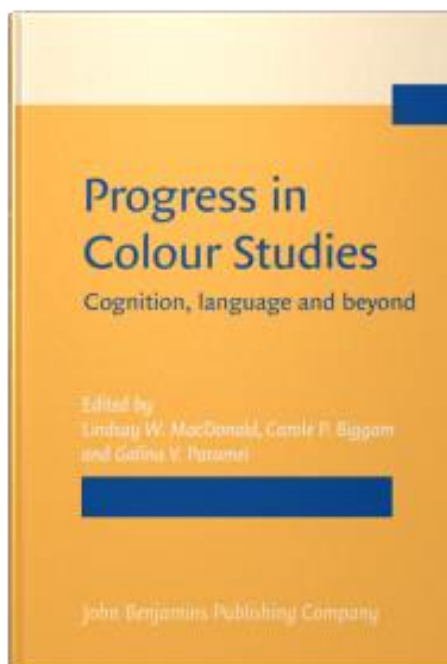
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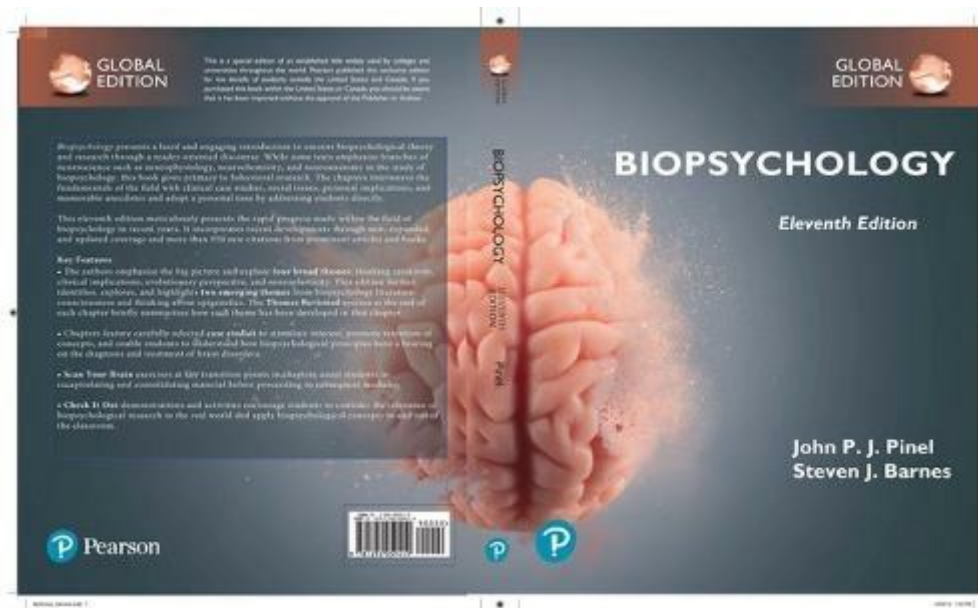
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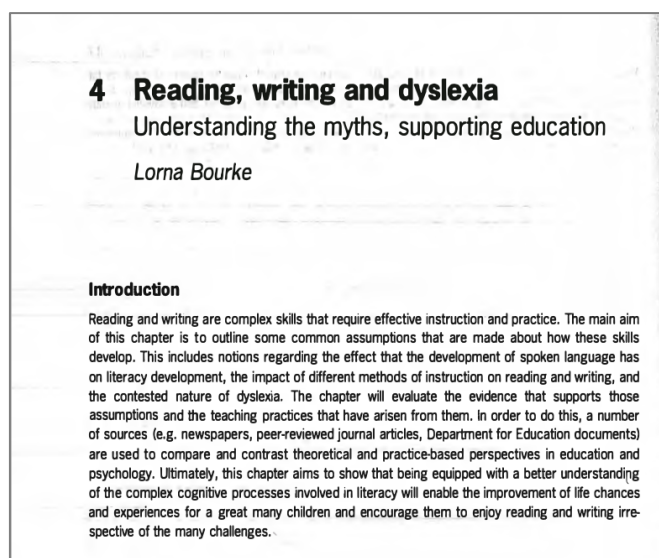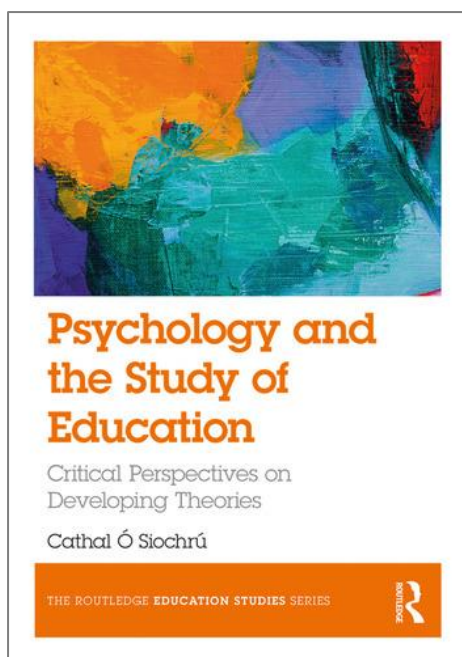
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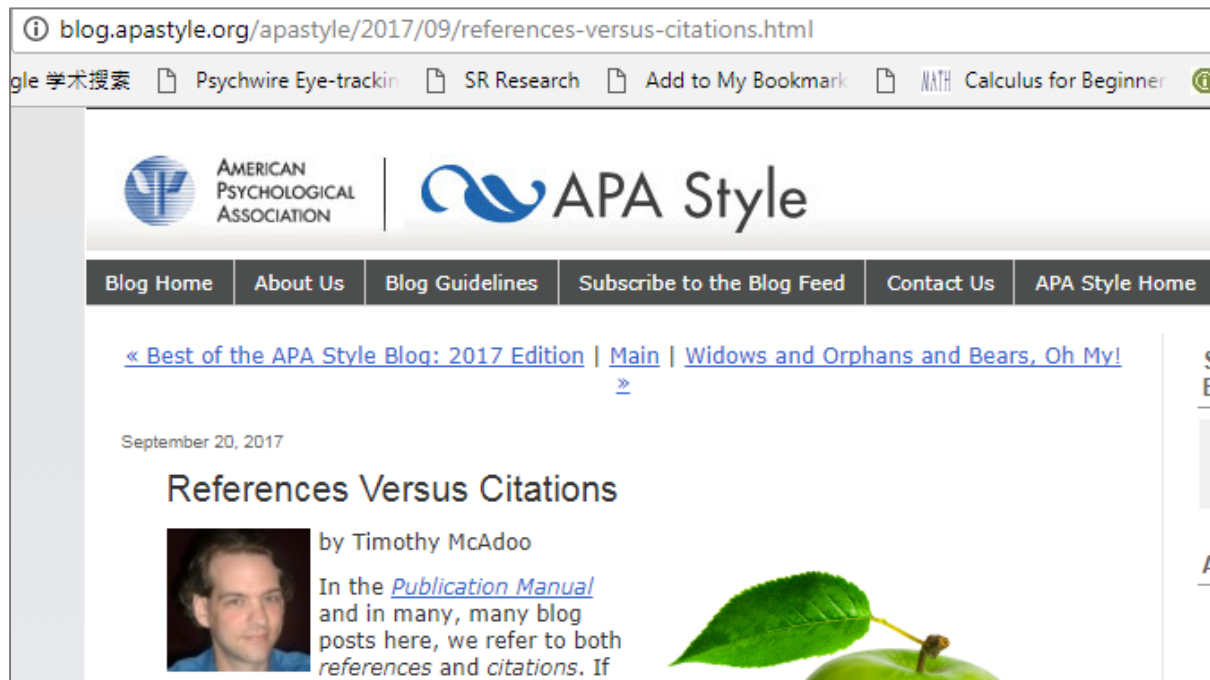
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