A Sample Paper for the Purpose of Correct APA Formatting

Student Name

Liberty University
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Abstract

Begin your abstract at the left margin (section 2.04 on p. 27 of your APA manual; see also p. 229). This is the only paragraph that should not be indented. Unless otherwise instructed, APA recommends an abstract be between 150–250 words (p. 27). It should generally not contain any citations or direct quotes. This should be a tight, concise summary of the main points in your paper, not a step-by-step of what you plan to accomplish in your paper. Avoid phrases such as “this paper will,” and just structure your sentences to say what you want to say. The following three sentences exemplify a good abstract style: There are many similarities and differences between the codes of ethics for the ACA and the AACC. Both include similar mandates in the areas of ----, ---, and ----. However, each differs significantly in the areas of ----, ---, and ----. For more detailed information, see “Writing an Abstract” at http://www.liberty.edu/academics/graduate/writing/?PID=12268. This is just now at 171 words, so take a moment to eyeball how brief your abstract must be. Think of your paper as a movie, and the abstract as the summary of the plot that you would share to draw people’s interest into wanting to come and see your movie. Same thing: you want to really hook and intrigue them. What you have to say is important! Still only at 237 words here; remember to try to stay under 250, unless your professor advises otherwise. The keywords noted below highlight the search terms someone would use to find your paper in a database; they should be formatted as shown (indented ½”, with only the word “Keywords” in italics, and the few key words or phrases in normal print, separated by commas.

Keywords: main words, primary, necessary, search terms
A Sample Paper for the Purpose of Correct APA Formatting

The title of your paper goes on the top line of the first page of the body. It should be centered, unbolded, and in title case (all major words—usually those with four+ letters—should begin with a capital letter) --- see figure 2.1 on p. 42 and 4.15 on pp. 101-102 of your APA manual (American Psychological Association [APA], 2010). It must match the title that is on your title page. You can either give a brief introductory paragraph below that or go straight into a Level 1 heading. In APA format, the introduction never has a heading (simply begin with an introductory paragraph without the word "Introduction"); see first paragraph of section 2.05 on page 27, as well as the first sentence under the bolded headings on page 63 of your APA manual. As shown in the previous sentence, use brackets to denote an abbreviation within parentheses (third bullet under 4.10). Write out acronyms the first time mentioned, such as American Psychological Association for APA, and then use the acronym throughout the body of the paper (4.22; note the section on underuse, however, at the top of p. 107).

Basic Rules of Scholarly Writing

Most beginning students have difficulty learning how to write papers and also format papers correctly using the sixth edition of the APA manual (APA, 2010). However, the Liberty University Online Writing Center’s (OWC) mission includes helping students learn how to be autonomous, proficient writers, and thus this sample paper is designed so it cannot be used as a template for inserting the correct parts. The OWC did, however, create video tutorials for specific elements; see the chart with links on the title page of this sample paper.

For the purpose of instruction, this paper will use second person (you, your), but third person (this author) must be used in most student papers. First person (I, me, we, us, our) is not generally permitted in scholarly papers. Students should refrain from using first or second
person in academic courses (even though the APA manual encourages this in other writing venues) unless the assignment instructions clearly permit such (as in the case of personal reflection sections or life histories). Though some written assignments will not require an abstract, understand that APA generally requires one unless otherwise stated in your assignment instructions or grading rubric.

**Heading Levels—Level 1**

This sample paper uses primarily one level of headings (Level 1), so most presented herein are centered and in boldface. APA style, however, has five heading levels, which will be demonstrated briefly for visual purposes. See page 62 of your APA manual (APA, 2010) if employing more than one level. Our [Kaltura video on heading levels](#) provides a good visual. Level 1 headings are bolded and in title case—capitalize each major word (usually those with four or more letters), including hyphenated compound words. *Four-Year Pilot Study on Attachment Disorders, and Self-Awareness of Pollen* are examples of headings with compound words. Do not capitalize articles (a, an, the) in headings unless they begin a title or follow a colon.

**Level 2 Heading**

Level 2 headings are bolded, in title case, and left-justified. The supporting information is posed in standard paragraph form beneath it. Never use only one of any level of heading. You must use two or more of any level you use, though not every paper will require more than one level.

**Level 3 heading.** Level 3 headings are bolded, indented ½”, in sentence case (only the first word should begin with a capital letter in most cases), and end with a period. Add two spaces, then begin typing your content on the same line, as presented in this paragraph.
Level 4 heading. Same as Level 3, except italicized, too.

Level 5 heading. Same as Level 4, but unbolded. Despite heavy writing experience, this author has never used Level 5 headings.

Annotated Bibliographies, Tables of Contents, and Outlines

APA does not regulate every type of paper and some elements in various assignments are not addressed in the APA manual, including outlines, tables of content, and annotated bibliographies. In those cases, follow your professor’s instructions and the grading rubric for the content and format of the outline or annotations, and use standard APA formatting for all other elements (such as running head, title page, body, reference list, 1" margins, double-spacing, Times New Romans 12-point font, etc.). Note that most academic papers will not require a table of contents, nor would one be appropriate. One was included in this paper simply for ease-of-access so students could go directly to the content they want to see. Generally speaking, no table of contents would be necessary for papers less than 20 pages of content, unless otherwise required by your professor.

That being said, when I organize outlines in APA format, I set my headings up in the proper levels (making sure there are at least two subheadings under each level), and then I use those to make the entries in the outline. Level 1 headings become uppercase Roman numerals (I, II, III), Level 2 headings become capital letters (A, B, C), Level 3 headings become numbers (1, 2, 3), Level 4 headings become lowercase letters (a, b, c), and Level 5 headings become lowercase Roman numerals (i, ii, iii). Some courses require “working outlines,” which are designed to have the bones and foundational framework of the paper in place (such as title page, abstract, body with title and headings, and references), without all the supporting “meat” that fills out and forms a completed paper.
Appendices

Appendices, if any, are attached after the reference list (see top of p. 230 of your APA manual). You must refer to them in the body of your paper so that your reader knows to look there (see top of p. 39). The word “Appendix” is singular; use it to refer to individual appendices. I attached a sample Annotated Bibliography as a visual aid (see Appendix). You will see that I included the title “Appendix” at the top of the page and formatted it in standard APA format beneath that. Because I only included one appendix, it is simply titled as such. If there are more appendices, assign a letter to each and denote each by that: “Appendix A” and “Appendix B.”

Crediting Your Sources

Paraphrasing is rephrasing another’s idea in one’s own words. Quoting is using another’s exact words. Both need to be cited; failure to do so constitutes plagiarism. Liberty University also has a strict policy against a student using the same paper (or large portions) in more than one class or assignment, which it deems “self-plagiarism.” Students who want to cite their own prior work must cite and reference it just like any other source; see example in Owen (2012). Include the author(s) and year for paraphrases and the author(s), year, and page or paragraph number for direct quotes. Page numbers should be used for any printed material (books, articles, etc.), and paragraph numbers should be used in the absence of page numbers (online articles, webpages, etc.; see section 6.05, pp. 171-172 of your APA manual). Use p. for one page and pp. (not italicized in your paper) for more than one. Use para. for one paragraph and paras. (also not italicized in your paper) for two or more. For example: (Perigogn & Brazel, 2012, pp. 12–13) or (Liberty University, 2015, para. 8).

Section 6.04 of the APA (2010) manual says, “When paraphrasing or referring to an idea
contained in another work, you are encouraged to provide a page or paragraph number, especially when it would help an interested reader locate the relevant passage in a long or complex text” (p. 171). When naming authors in the text of the sentence itself (called a narrative citation), use the word “and” to connect them. For example, “Allen, Bacon, and Paul (2011) contemplated that . . .” Use an ampersand (&) in place of the word “and” in parenthetical citations and reference lists: (Allen, Bacon, & Paul, 2011).

APA’s (2010) official rule is that you must cite your source every single time you refer to material you gleaned from it (pp. 15-16). You can vary your sentence structure to include both narrative and parenthetical citations in order to avoid redundancy. There is, however, an unofficial trend amongst some professors who require their students to cite their sources only once per paragraph (the first time you refer to it, not merely at the end of the paragraph, which can be interpreted as an afterthought). You will want to clarify which your professor prefers; if in doubt, cite every time.

That being said, APA (2010) has a special rule that excludes the year of publication in narrative in-text citations (when you name the authors in the text of the sentence itself), after the first citation in each paragraph … provided that first citation is narrative (and not parenthetical). It should continue to appear in all parenthetical citations (see sections 6.11 and 6.12, pp. 174-175). If the first citation in the paragraph is parenthetical, then ALL citations must include the year. The two examples in section 6.11 on pp. 174-175 of your APA manual are subtle, but if you look carefully, you will be able to discern this for yourself.

If the material you cited was referred to in multiple resources, separate different sets of authors with semicolons, arranged in the order they appear (alphabetically by the first author’s last name) in the reference list (Carlisle, n.d.; Prayer, 2015). Periods are placed after the closing
parenthesis, except with indented (blocked) quotes. Quotes that are 40 or more words must be blocked, with the left margin of the entire quote indented ½ inch. Maintain double-spacing of block quotes. APA prefers that you introduce quotes, but note that the punctuation falls at the end of the direct quote, with the page number outside of that (which is contrary to punctuation for non-blocked quotes). For example, Alone (2008) claims (note that there are no quotation marks for block quotes, as shown below):

Half of a peanut butter sandwich contains as much bacteria as the wisp of the planet Mars. Thus, practicality requires that Mrs. Spotiker nibble one bit at a time until she is assured that she will not perish from ingesting it too quickly. (p. 13)

Usually quotes within quotes use single quotation marks but use double quotation marks for quotes within blocked quotes, since there are no other quotation marks included within. Also understand that direct quotes should be used sparingly in scholarly writing; paraphrasing is much preferred in APA format. Only use quotes when the original text cannot be said as well in your own words or changing the original wording would change the author’s meaning. You cannot simply change one word and omit a second; if you paraphrase, the wording must be substantially different, but with the same meaning. Regardless, you would need to cite the resource you took this information from.

Authors with more than one work published in the same year are distinguished by lowercase letters after the years, beginning with a. For example, Double (2008a) and Double (2008b) would refer to resources by the same author published in 2008. If there are two different authors with the same last name but different first names who published in the same year, include the first initials: Brown, J. (2009) and Brown, M. (2009).

The names of journals, books, plays, and other long works, if mentioned in the body of
the paper, are italicized in title case (4.21). Titles of articles, lectures, poems, chapters, website articles, and songs should be in title case, encapsulated by quotation marks (4.07). The year of publication should follow the author(s)’s name, whether in narrative or parenthetical format: Perigogn and Brazel (2012) anticipated, or (Perigogn & Brazel, 2012). The page or paragraph number must follow after the direct quote. Second (2015) asserted that “paper planes can fly to the moon” (p. 13). You can restate that with a parenthetical citation as: “Paper planes can fly to the moon” (Second, 2015, p. 13).

Citations in the body of the paper should include only the last names, unless you have two or more resources authored by individuals with the same last name in the same year, such as Brown, J. (2009) and Brown, M. (2009) mentioned above. Numbers one through nine must be written out in word format, with some exceptions (such as ages—see section 4.32 on page 112 of your APA manual). Numbers 10 and up must be written out in numerical format: Section 4.31(a). Always write out in word format any number that begins a sentence: Section 4.32(a).

**Three or More Authors**

When referring to material that comes from three to five authors, include all of the authors’ last names in the first reference. Subsequently, use just the first author’s last name followed by the words *et al.* (without italics). *Et al.* is a Latin abbreviation for *et alii*, meaning “and others,” which is why the word “al.” has a period, whereas “et” does not. Alone, Other, and Other (2011) stipulated that peacocks strut. The second time I refer to their material, I would apply APA’s rule: Alone et al. (2011) or (Alone et al., 2011). Since et al. denotes plural authors, the verb must be plural to match, too: Alone et al. (2009) *are*…

When a work has six or more authors, cite only the last name of the first author in the body of the paper, followed by et al., as if you had already cited all of the authors previously
(Acworth et al., 2011). Note that I had not cited the Acworth et al. (2011) resource previously in this paper. For seven or fewer authors in the reference list, write out all of the authors’ last names with first- and middle initials, up to and including the seventh author. APA has a special rule for resources with eight or more authors: Write out the first six authors’ last names with initials, insert an ellipsis (…) in place of the ampersand (&), and finish it with the last name and initials of the last author. See the examples provided in the chart on page 177 (APA, 2010), as well as this paper’s reference list for visuals of these variances (Acworth et al. 2011; Harold et al., 2014).

**Primary Sources versus Secondary Sources**

APA strongly advocates against using secondary sources; rather, it favors you finding and citing the original (primary) resource whenever possible (6.17, p. 178). On the rare occasion that you do find it necessary to cite from a secondary source, both the primary (who said it) and secondary (where the quote or idea was mentioned) sources should be included in the in-text citation information. Only the secondary source should be listed in the reference section, however. Use “as cited in” (without the quotation marks) to indicate the secondary source. For example, James Morgan hinted that “goat milk makes the best ice cream” (as cited in Alone 2008, p. 117). Morgan is the primary source (he said it) and Alone is the secondary source (he quoted what Morgan said). Only the secondary source is listed in the reference section (Alone, and not Morgan) because if readers want to confirm the quote, they know to go to page 117 of Alone’s book.

**Personal Communications**

The APA manual rationalizes the exclusion of references for information obtained through personal communication (such as an interview, email, telephone call, postcard, text
message, or letter) in the reference list because your readers will not be able to go directly to those sources and verify the legitimacy of the material. Instead, these items are cited only in the body of the paper. You must include the individual’s first initial, his or her last name, the phrase “personal communication,” and the full date of such communication. As with other citations, such citations may be either narrative or parenthetical. For example, L. Applebaum advised him to dip pretzel rolls in cheese fondue (personal communication, July 13, 2015). The alternative is that he was advised to dip pretzel rolls in cheese fondue (L. Applebaum, personal communication, July 13, 2015). Note that there is no entry for Applebaum in the reference list.

**Bible and other Classical Works**

Classical works, such as the Bible and ancient Greek or Roman works, are also cited in the body of the paper but not included in the reference list. If you use a direct quote, you must include the full name of the version or translation you quoted from the first time you quote from it, but then you do not name the version or translation again in subsequent quotes unless you change versions or translations (6.18, pp. 178-179). For example, Philippians 2:14 commands us to “Do everything without complaining and arguing” (New Living Translation). James 1:27 proclaims that “Pure and genuine religion in the sight of God the Father means caring for orphans and widows in their distress and refusing to let the world corrupt you.” Galatians 5:22 says that “the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness” (New American Standard). Note that there is no translation cited for the middle quote, since it was also taken from the NLT, which was specified in the immediately-preceding citation as well.

Technically, it would not be necessary or proper to include any version when you paraphrase the Bible because all versions essentially say the same message in each verse, so a paraphrase of one would apply equally to all versions. However, the APA (2010) manual is not
explicitly clear that this rule only applies to direct quotes, and for the sake of consistency and curbing confusion, the OWC has opted to advise students to include the version the first time, even for paraphrases. Likewise, the APA manual and its Style Experts are inconsistent regarding whether there should be a comma after the verse if the version is included in the same set of parentheses. Because LU is a distinctly-Christian institution and many of its courses require biblical integration, this issue is likely to be experienced often. For the sake of consistency and in keeping with APA’s overall organizational structure in separating elements within a parenthetical citation by commas, the OWC recommends that a comma be included between the verse and version if those are in the same set of parentheses. For example, Jesus “came that they may have life, and have it abundantly” (John 10:10b, New American Standard).

**Lectures and PowerPoints**

Course or seminar handouts, lecture notes, and PowerPoint presentations are generally treated like personal communications unless they are published in material that can be readily retrieved by your audience, like on a public website. When citing a PowerPoint presentation, include the slide number rather than the page number. For purposes of LU course presentations and lectures, however (which are not readily available to the public), the OWC advises students that there are two options. The first and more proper way is to cite it as a video lecture with the URL for the presentation, naming the presenter(s) in the author’s position. Many of LU’s classes are set up through Apple’s iTune University---search for your course and find the specific video by following the podcast download instructions here. Brewers and Peters (2010) is an example in the reference list of this paper.

The second option, if you cannot find it on iTune U, names the course number and enough details for others to identify it within that course, in a sort of book format, with the city,
state, and publisher relating to LU. Peters (2012) is an example of this in the reference list of this paper. You'll note that in this particular case, *iTunes U* included information on a second author that was not readily identifiable in the Blackboard video itself. Usually, you will find the year of publication in the closing screen at the end of the presentation.

**Dictionary Entries**

The proper format for citing and referencing word definitions from dictionaries differs from other citations and references because the word defined is used in the author’s position, followed by the year (if known, or n.d. if not known). This is followed by “In” and the name of the dictionary (i.e., Merriam Webster), and includes a URL to the webpage if searched online. If you used a hard copy book, include the standard city, state, and publisher details. The in-text citation in the body of the paper would also use the word searched in the author’s place, as well as the year: (Heuristic, n.d.).

**Electronic Sources**

The APA—author of the APA manual, of course—published a blog entry on how to cite documents found on the Internet (see [http://blog.apastyle.org/apastyle/2010/11/how-to-cite-something-you-found-on-a-website-in-apa-style.html](http://blog.apastyle.org/apastyle/2010/11/how-to-cite-something-you-found-on-a-website-in-apa-style.html)). Use this for all online resources other than LUO-course lectures. Note that since the APA 6th edition was published in 2010, great strides have been made in online and electronic resource accessibility and APA’s position on electronic resources has shifted slightly to embrace this. DOIs, for example (discussed below), are included for most articles published since about 2012 (and many prior to that); even some books and book chapters.

APA requires inclusion of a Digital Object Identifier (DOI) in the references whenever available. These should be denoted in lower case (doi). Note that there should be no
punctuation after the doi in your reference list, and no space between colon after the initials and the number itself. Students are encouraged to search scholar.google.com and crossref.org to find hidden DOIs but are also warned that there are many errors in both sites’ citation features so those are best used just to glean the hidden DOI numbers.

If you cite “Retrieved from” with a URL, note that APA (2010) specifies not include the date of retrieval “…unless the source material may change over time (e.g., Wikis)” (p. 192).

Some of the hyperlinks in this paper are activated (showing blue, underlined text) for the purposes of visualization, but hyperlinks should be only appear in the reference list of an academic paper. Like DOIs, there should be no period after the URL. APA encourages breaking long URLs with soft returns (hold down the Shift key and press the Enter key) at forward slashes, periods, or underscores to avoid unsightly spacing gaps.

**Final Formatting Tweaks**

APA should be double-spaced throughout, with no extra spacing between lines. It should also include Times New Romans, 12-point font throughout. Sometimes when you format your paper or cut-and-paste material into it, things get skewed. One quick way to ensure that your paper appears correct in these regards is to do a final formatting tweak after you have completed your paper. Hold down the “Ctrl” button and press the “A” key, which selects and highlights all of the text in your paper. Then go to the Home tab in Microsoft Word and make sure that Times New Romans and 12-point font are selected in the Font box. Next, click on the arrow at the bottom of the Paragraph tab. Set your spacing before and after paragraphs to “0 pt” and click the “double” line spacing. If you are more advanced on the computer, you might consider changing the default settings in Word that create some of these formatting errors, but the steps listed here will correct them if you do not have advanced word processing skills.
Exhaustive Reference List Examples & Additional Helpful Resources

The reference list at the end of this paper includes an example of a myriad of different sources and how each is formatted in proper APA format. One example of each of the primary types of resources will be included in the reference list, as cited in the body of paper, for illustrative purposes. Remember that, for purposes of this paper only, most of the sources cited in the body of the paper were provided for illustrative purposes only and thus are fictional, so you will not be able to locate them if you searched online. Nevertheless, in keeping with APA style, all resources cited in the body of the paper are included in the reference list and vice versa (except for personal communications and classical works, per APA’s published exceptions). Be absolutely sure that every resource cited in the body of your paper is also included in your reference list (and vice versa), excepting only those resources with special rules, such as the Bible, classical works, and personal communications.

The reference list in this paper will include a book by person(s), a book whose publisher is the same as the corporate author, a chapter in an edited book, a journal article, a webpage document, a resource with no author, a dictionary entry, one with no year of publication noted, two or more resources by the same author in the same year of publication (arranged alphabetically by the first word in the title, but with the addition of letters in the year to distinguish which one you are referring to in the body of your paper), two or more resources by the same author in different years (arranged by date, with the earlier one first), resources with the same first author but differing others, a paper previously submitted by a student in a prior class, a resource with up to seven authors, and one with more than seven authors.

Lastly, below are a few webpages that address critical topics, such as how to avoid plagiarism and how to write a research paper. Be sure to check out Liberty University’s Online
Writing Center (http://www.liberty.edu/index.cfm?PID=17176) for more tips and tools, as well as its Facebook page (https://www.facebook.com/groups/LUOWritingCenter/). Remember that these are only provided for your easy access and reference throughout this sample paper, but web links and URLs should never be included in the body of scholarly papers; just in the reference list. Writing a research paper (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zaa-PTexW2E or https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KNT6w8t3zDY) and avoiding plagiarism (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VeCrUINa6nU).

Conclusion

The conclusion to your paper should provide your readers with a concise summary of the main points of your paper (though not via cut-and-pasted sentences used above). It is a very important element, as it frames your whole ideology and gives your reader his or her last impression of your thoughts. Be careful not to introduce new content in your conclusion.

After your conclusion, insert a page break at the end of the paper so that the reference list begins at the top of a new page. Do this by holding down the “Ctrl” key and then clicking the “Enter” key. You will go to an entirely new page in order to start the reference list. The word “Reference” or “References” (not in quotation marks—for singular or multiple resources, respectively) should be centered, with no bolding or italics. Items in the reference list are presented alphabetically by the first author’s last name and are formatted with hanging indents (the second+ lines are indented 1/2” from the left margin).
References


Double, C. (2008a). *This is arranged alphabetically by the name of the title*. Banks, MN: Peters.


Appendix
Annotated Bibliography


Weaving spiritual applications throughout the article, the authors incorporate a plethora of references to substantiate that maltreatment has a direct connection to attachment disorders. They provide articulate and heavily-supported reasoning, detailing the specific causes of maternal deprivation individually, and then incorporating them in a broader sense, to answer the article’s title in the affirmative.


This longitudinal study tracked 31 Israeli children from ages 3 months to 13 years (infancy to adolescence). There were direct parallels noted between increased attachment/coherence and the child’s moral cognition, empathy development, and verbal IQ. Toddlers who were able to regulate their own behavior later proved to excel in lead-lag structures and language skills.