Introduction

We created the CTU APA Writing Style Guide as a tool to help students understand and apply the University’s citation method and writing expectations. CTU has adopted the American Psychological Association (APA) citation style for all classes, graduate and undergraduate. APA establishes a citation system that includes a set of rules and guidelines for manuscript preparation and documentation of sources. When writing assignments of any type, you must document and cite all sources properly using APA style. Citing and referencing sources correctly both indicates your professional ability to include other voices in your work and prevents accusations of plagiarism.

Our CTU APA Writing Style Guide answers some of the common questions CTU students ask about using APA style for formatting documents, including in-text citations and constructing references. However, if you have questions not answered in our guide, please consult either the APA Style for CTU Students or The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 6th ed. (2010).

Along with our guide, use the APA Paper Template when composing essays or other papers. This Microsoft Word document is already formatted for APA style using the expectations outlined in our guide.

Refer to the Introductory APA Writing Style Guide if your assignment advises its use. The introductory style guide emphasizes proper citation of sources and basic formatting but does not require more advanced formatting, including title page, abstract, running head, or page numbers.
Assignment Style Format Checklist

The following checklist outlines the writing format requirements for all assignments unless the assignment specifies different formatting requirements.

Discussion Board/Forum Post

If references are used or required for an assignment, include the following:

☐ In-text citations
☐ References list (at the end of the discussion post)

Essay/Paper/Individual Project

If you are submitting an assignment in essay format using Microsoft Word, include the following:

☐ Title page
☐ Running head and page numbers
☐ Double-spaced throughout without additional spacing between paragraphs
☐ Indent the first line of each new paragraph
☐ 12 point Times New Roman black font
☐ 1-inch margins

If references are used or required for an assignment, include the following:

☐ In-text citations
☐ References list as a separate page at the end of the document

PowerPoint

If references are used or required for an assignment, include the following:

☐ In-text citations
☐ References slide at the end of the presentation
Why Do I Need to Understand and Utilize APA Style When Completing My Assignments?

1. To credit the outside sources, you incorporate into your assignments to avoid plagiarism and situate yourself in the professional discussions occurring in your field.

2. To establish credibility as an author by demonstrating consistent application of a comprehensive and industry-wide system of attribution.

3. To confirm for your audience (peers and faculty) where they can locate the information you cite.

4. To create a uniform document acceptable for both academic and professional purposes and audiences.

How Do I Include Resources in My Assignments to Avoid Plagiarizing?

- Review the requirements for your assignment. You must properly credit any sources you include.

- Use in-text citations and references to acknowledge and cite your sources. Place in-text citations in the body of the paper, usually immediately following information included from outside sources.

- Include a references list on the last page of the paper that includes the complete bibliographical information for each source cited in APA format.

Citing Sources in the Text

When citing a resource in a piece of writing, the basic information is included in the body of the paper and the full information in the reference list. The in-text citation is the author’s last name(s), year of publication, and, if appropriate, the page number. Consult the APA Style for CTU Students guide for more examples on how to use in-text citations.
Outside sources can be included in the text in multiple ways. Use the skills of Direct Quotation, Paraphrase, and Summary as the primary methods to include outside sources.

**Using Paraphrase**

To paraphrase is to use information from one source and re-state the information in your own words. When you paraphrase, you credit your source because the ideas you used are not your own. Paraphrasing allows you to include particular information from a piece of evidence without quoting the language directly while maintaining the original intent of the source. Below are examples of how to cite a source that you have paraphrased in your writing.

Example 1:
According to Booth, Colomb, and Williams (2003), plagiarism should be avoided.

Example 2:
Plagiarism should be avoided (Booth, Colomb, & Williams, 2003).

In both examples, you include the author’s last name(s) and the year of the publication only. Do not include author’s initials unless there are two or more authors with the same last name.

**Using Direct Quotations**

A quotation is a statement or a portion of a statement taken from an original text. Direct quotations should be recorded accurately and used rarely, primarily to emphasize your point. A good rule of thumb is to use a quotation when a paraphrase does not represent the information properly or a better way to state the information is not clear. The more experience you gain with writing and using sources, the better you become at determining which is better: a quotation or paraphrase of the information.
Below are examples of how you could cite a direct quotation within the text of your assignment. Please note: direct quotations that are 40 words or more should start on a new line and be indented without quotation marks to create a block quote.

Example 1:
According to Booth, Colomb, and Williams (2003), “In all fields, you plagiarize when you use a source’s words or ideas without citing that source” (p. 202).

Example 2:
Many authorities have commented on the topic, but this is one of the most effective descriptions: “In all fields, you plagiarize when you use a source’s words or ideas without citing that source” (Booth, Colomb, & Williams, 2003, p. 202).

**Formatting Your Paper**

CTU provides a [template in Microsoft Word](#) that is already in APA format, located on the [APA Style for CTU Students](#). We recommend you use the template when writing papers so you do not need to spend time putting a document into the format unnecessarily. See section 8.03 of the APA Publication Manual for more information on formatting your paper.

An APA formatted paper has:

- 1 inch margins
- double spaced throughout without additional spacing between paragraphs
- 12 point Times New Roman black font

Each page of the document has a running head at the top left in the header. The running head is a shortened version of the title, around 50 characters including spaces, in ALL CAPS.

Each page has a page number at the top right in the header. The title page is page 1, and pages are numbered consecutively from there.
The first line of each paragraph is indented ½ inch (one tab or 5-7 spaces).

If appropriate, use headings as described in section 3.03 of the APA Manual.

Title Page

The first page of your document is the title page. The title of your paper, your name, and the name of the university are centered in the upper half of the page. APA recommends the title “should be fully explanatory when standing alone” (“Publication Manual,” 2010, section 2.01) and be a maximum of 12 words. See section 2.01 of the APA Publication Manual.

On the title page, the running head is preceded by the words “Running head:”—all subsequent pages have only the running head; use Microsoft Word’s “Different First Page” option to maintain the difference.

Example:

Running head: APA WRITING STYLE GUIDE

Abstract

Only include an abstract if the assignment or instructor specifies you should. The abstract is placed on page 2 with the label Abstract centered at the top of the page. The abstract is a short summary of the whole paper rather than a repeat of the introduction. See section 2.04 of the APA Manual for hints on how to write a good abstract.

References

Start the reference list on a new page at the end of your paper. Title the page with the word References centered at the top. See section 2.11 of the APA Publication Manual.

All of the sources you cite in your assignment, and only those sources, must be compiled to create a references list. The References Page is the second step to confirm you’ve cited and documented your sources successfully and avoided plagiarism. You should not have a source
cited in your essay that is not listed on the references page, and you should not have an entry on your references page that is not cited in the body of your essay.

- The references list starts on a new page at the end of the paper and includes the complete reference/bibliographic information for each source cited in the paper or presentation.
- The references list is double spaced without additional spacing between entries.
- All references are listed in alphabetical order by the author’s last name or, if no author is listed, by the title of the source. If you are using multiple works by the same author, place them in order of publication date.
- Each entry is formatted as a “hanging indent,” which means that the first line of each entry is justified to the left margin and the second and following lines are indented 5-7 spaces (one tab). You can format a hanging indent in Microsoft Word by opening the paragraph dialogue box, and in the “Indentation” section under “Special,” selecting “Hanging” from the drop-down menu and under “By” selecting “0.5”.

The specific APA format for a reference depends on the type of source included in your assignment. For more information on specific formatting details, see the reference examples on pages 9-14 of our document or consult the APA Style Guide for CTU students.
Reference Examples


Chapter 7, Reference examples, pp. 193-224

Consult the APA Style Guide for CTU Students for more reference examples.

Electronic/Internet Sources

Non periodical Web document, Web page, or report.

Author’s Last Name, First and Second Initial or Name Corporate Author. (Date of Publication).


Note: When creating references for Web documents and pages, writers frequently need to hunt around for the required information. It is important to include as much of the required information as possible in the reference.

If your source has no publication date.

Use “n.d.” in place of the date in both the references entry and the in-text citation: (Smith, n.d.)

Article from an online newspaper.

Author’s Last Name, First and Second Initial., & Author’s Last Name, First and Second initial.  
(Year, Month Day). Title of article. Title of Newspaper. Retrieved from http://Web address


Note: If the article is available through a search of the source’s website, give just the URL of the home page. If the URL home page is not available by the search box, give the full URL to the article.

Journal article from an online source or library database.

Author’s Last Name, First and Second Initial. (Date of publication). Title of article. Title of Newspaper, Magazine, or Journal, Volume(Issue number if known), page numbers. DOI number or if no DOI is available use the following: Retrieved from the URL for the journal’s home page

With DOI number.


Without DOI number.

Article from an online magazine.

Author’s Last Name, First and Second Initial. (Year, Month Day). Title of article. *Title of Magazine, Volume*(Issue number if known). Retrieved from http://Web address


Corporate author, government report or document.

Name of Government Department or Agency. (Date of publication). Title of document (Report or document number if given). Retrieved from http://Web address


Electronic book.

Author’s Last Name, First and Second Initial. (Year of Publication). *Title of Book* [Electronic version, for example, DX Reader version], doi number or Retrieved from http://Web address

**Entry in an online reference work, no author or editor.**

Title of entry. (Year of Publication). In *Title of reference work* (edition number if given).

Retrieved from http://Web address


**Personal Communication**

Use the following method to cite your instructor's lecture in the classroom or in private communication. These include emails, interviews, letters, or any other communication. Your in-text citation should include the communicator's name, the fact that it was personal communication, and the date of the communication.

"Those zombies, they would control the world, you know? If we allowed it, we would be out of control" (A. Smith, personal communication, January 1, 2000).

A. Smith said zombies would take over the world if we let them (personal communication, January 1, 2000).

Do not include personal communication in the references list.

**Live chat session.**

Instructor/author last name, first initial. (Date). *Title* [type of posting (chat)]. Retrieved from online location, course number and section, course title: http://Web address

Danley, L. (2009, January 9). *APA chat 1: Introduction to APA style* [Chat]. Retrieved from Colorado Technical University, Virtual Campus, APA Style Lab:

https://campus.ctuonline.edu
Course materials.

Author’s Last name. First Initial. (Date). *Name of presentation or document* [type of source (Multimedia presentation)]. Retrieved from Colorado Technical University Virtual Campus, Course Code-Quarter session: http://Web Address


Blog post.

Author’s Last name. First Initial. (Date of blog post). *Title of blog post* [Web log message].

Retrieved from http://Web address

Catspaw. (2009, September 10). So what have you been up to at Google? [Weblog message].


Note: Use the log in/user name if the author’s name is not listed.

Message posted to an online forum, discussion group, or newsgroup.

Author’s Last name. First Initial. (Date of message/post). *Title of message/post* [Type of post, for example, Discussion board post]. Retrieved from http://Web address

Anderson, L. (2009, October 19). Re: Writing is an important skill [Discussion board post].

Retrieved from Colorado Technical University, Virtual Campus, The Writing Center: https://campus.ctuonline.edu
Print Sources

Article from a scholarly/peer reviewed journal.

Author’s Last Name, First and Second Initial. (Year of Publication). Title of the article. *Title of the Journal, Volume* (issue number if known), page numbers. doi number if one is assigned.


Article from a newspaper (no author).

Title of the article. (Year, month day of publication). *Title of the Newspaper*, page numbers.


Book with two authors.

Author’s Last Name, First and Second Initial, & Author’s Last Name, First and Second Initial. (Year of Publication). *Title of Book* (Volume/Edition number). Place of Publication: Publisher.


Chapter from a print book.

Author’s Last Name, First and Second Initial. (Year of Publication). *Title of Book* (Volume/Edition number, page numbers). Place of Publication: Publisher.

References