

## APA Formatting Checklist

Today we are checking each other's documentation drafts for correct formatting and documentation. This is a difficult process because, despite there being entire books on the subject, there's still a lot of ambiguity about particular situations—it seems no matter how hard we try, some part of any paper will be an exception to the rules. Thus, it is important for you to be wide awake as you do this, to be strict and fair and flexible in deciding what is and is not acceptable. Please consult your handbook, your peers, and me as you run into questions while completing the following steps.

### Step 1: General Formatting

First, check that the paper gets the following formatting guidelines correct. Mark any errors or inconsistencies you see.

<b>Title</b> (2.01):	No more than 12 words, centered, appears on upper half of cover page.
<b>Author's Name</b> (2.02):	Author's name appears under title on cover page.
<b>Institution</b> (2.02):	Where the research was conducted, or a city and state of residence. Appears under author's name on cover page.
<b>Author Note</b> (2.03):	Not necessary for student papers, but can appear on cover page
<b>Margins</b> (8.03):	One-inch all the way around. Paragraphs indented one-half inch.
<b>Text Formatting</b> (8.03):	Readable typeface, normal size (12 pt. Times is preferred). Left-aligned, double-spaced throughout, no extra spaces between paragraphs.
<b>Headers</b> (8.03 and p. 41):	Page numbers are right-aligned, one-half inch from the top (recommended in examples, but not specified), no last name. Running head left-aligned on each page, all caps (max 50 characters). On cover page the words "Running Head:" appear before the running head.

### Step 2: Quotations and Citations

Now read through the paper slowly, pausing every time there is some quoted or paraphrased material. For each of these, do the following:

- Highlight or underline the quoted or paraphrased material.
- If a quote, is it long enough to be a block quote (40 words or more), and if so is it formatted correctly (indented, no quotation marks, citation *after* the final period; see 6.03)?
- Does the quote use ellipses correctly (see 6.08)?
- For *both* quotes and paraphrases, is the in-text citation correct (see 6.11–6.21)?
- Look up the citation for this source on the References page. Put a tally mark in the left margin next to the source cited.

### Step 3: References Formatting

Now flip to the References page and check to see that it gets the following formatting guidelines correct. Mark any errors or inconsistencies you see.

<b>Placement of List</b> (2.11):	Reference list begins on top of a new page; continues page numbers from before. Centered "References" as title (no bold, quotation marks).
<b>Spacing</b> (p. 180):	Double-spaced throughout, no extra spaces between title and entries or between entries.

- Arrangement** (6.25): Entries are in alphabetical order. Each entry has a hanging indent of 1/2”.
- Consistency:** Look at the tally marks you put next to the sources. Are there any cited sources that were never actually used in the paper? Is one source used lots of times and all the others used only once or twice?

## Step 4: References Page Entries

Now comes the really hard part. Go through each entry on the References page and try to determine whether it was cited correctly. Be extremely specific, checking every comma and period for accuracy. I suggest following this process:

1. Identify what kind of source the citation is documenting (scholarly journal, magazine, book, website, other, etc.?).
2. Look up that type of source in the handbook.
3. Check the citation word by word, dot by dot, against the book taking into account that without the actual source in front of you it may be impossible to determine whether the citation is 100% correct. Still, you can figure out whether the necessary elements are there, whether they are in the right order, whether authors' names, dates, and publishers are correctly arranged and/or abbreviated, etc.
4. Make notes to the paper's author about what could be wrong.

## Step 5: Source Integration

If you still have time, go back and consider the way each source is integrated into the paper (you highlighted them before, so they should be easy to find). Look at the following things and make suggestions to the author about how they can be improved if at all:

- **Attributive Tags:** How is each source introduced? Are things like the source's credentials, a study's time or location of completion, and other details provided? Should they be?
- **Clarity:** Do attributive tags or other indicators make it clear what information comes from a source and what is the addition of the paper's author? If there is ambiguity about this, how can the author make it more clear?
- **Summary:** Is the summary objective and coherent? Is the level of detail appropriate, or does the reader require more (or fewer) details? Was a summary the right choice for this source in this spot, or would a paraphrase or quotation work better?
- **Paraphrase:** Is the paraphrase objective and coherent? Is it clear where the paraphrased material begins and ends and where the author's own ideas or commentary begin and end? Was a paraphrase the right choice for this source in this spot, or would a summary or quotation work better?
- **Quotation:** Is the quotation well chosen and apt? Is the quotation longer than it needs to be, or could the author get the same effect by quoting fewer words of the original and embedding them within a paraphrase? Was a quotation the right choice for this source in this spot, or would a summary or paraphrase work better?

## Step 6: Give It a Grade

Now give the paper a grade based on how you think it did on all these things. Circle one:

√-

√

√+