

Basics of APA in-text citation

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APA style in-text citation is a method of giving credit to sources within the text of a paper by including the author's last name, publication year, and page number for direct quotes, and the author's last name and publication year for paraphrases or summaries, in conjunction with a reference list at the end of the paper.

Objectives

After reading this articles, you will be able to:

1. Understand the purpose and importance of in-text citations in academic writing.
2. Learn the proper format for citing direct quotes, paraphrases, and summaries in APA style 7th edition.
3. Understand how to cite sources with multiple authors and no authors.
4. Learn how to cite sources with no date.
5. Understand how to create a reference list at the end of a paper.
6. Learn how to use citation management tools to help create in-text citations and reference lists.
7. Understand the difference between primary and secondary sources and how to cite them in APA style.
8. Understand the ethical implications of plagiarism and how to avoid it through proper in-text citation.

Basic principles

APA style 7th edition in-text citation refers to the way in which sources are cited within the text of a paper. In-text citations are used to give credit to the sources that were used to support the author's ideas or arguments.

In APA style 7th edition, in-text citations are formatted as follows:

- For a **direct quote**, include the author’s last name, the publication year, and the page number. For example: (Smith, 2020, p. 5)
- For a **paraphrase** or summary, include the author’s last name and the publication year. For example: (Smith, 2020)
- For 2 authors, include the last names of both authors and the publication year. For example:
 - According to Smith and Jones (2020), ...
 - ... (Smith & Jones, 2020)
- For 3+ authors, include the first authors’ last name followed by **et al.** and the publication year. For example: (Smith, et al., 2020)
- For sources with no author, include the title and the publication year. For example: (“Title of the Article,” 2020)
- For sources with no date, include the author’s last name and the date the source was accessed. For example: (Smith, n.d.)

Examples:

- According to Smith (2020), “the use of technology in education has increased significantly in recent years” (p. 10).
- The study found that students who use technology in the classroom tend to have better learning outcomes (Smith, 2020).
- According to Smith and Jones (2020), physical activity helps memory optimization.
- The research conducted by Smith et al. (2020) suggests that technology can be an effective tool for enhancing student engagement.
- According to the article “The Impact of Technology on Learning” (2020), the use of technology in education can lead to improved student achievement.
- The study by Smith (n.d.) found that students who use technology in the classroom tend to have better learning outcomes.

It is important to note that in-text citations should be used in conjunction with a reference list at the end of the paper, where all sources cited in the text are listed in alphabetical order by author’s last name. The reference list should include all the information needed to locate the source, such as the author’s name, publication date, title, and publication details.

Parenthetical vs. Narrative citations

In APA style, there are two main types of in-text citations: parenthetical and narrative.

Parenthetical citations are brief citations that are included within parentheses in the text of the paper. They include the author’s last name and the publication year. For example: (Smith, 2020).

Narrative citations are integrated into the text of the paper, rather than being enclosed in parentheses. They include the author’s last name and the publication year. For example, according to Smith (2020), ...

The main difference between the two is how they are presented within the text, with Parenthetical citations appearing within the parentheses and Narrative citations being integrated into the text. Both types of citation provide the necessary information for the reader to locate the source in the reference list. It is important to note that Parenthetical citations are preferred in APA style, but the narrative citations are also acceptable as long as they are clear and consistent throughout the paper.

Author type	Parenthetical citation	Narrative citation
One author	(Furtado, 2020)	Furtado (2020)
Two authors	(Furtado & Gallagher, 2020)	Furtado and Gallagher (2020)
Three or more authors	(Furtado et al., 2020)	Furtado et al. (2020)
Organization	(Quarto, 2020)	Quarto (2020)

Uses of page numbers

Page numbers are an essential component of APA Style 7th edition when citing sources in academic writing. They serve a crucial function in in-text citations and reference list entries.

In in-text citations, page numbers allow readers to locate the exact spot within a source where the information being cited can be found. This is especially important for direct quotes and paraphrased material. Examples of in-text citations with page numbers include: (Smith, 2019, p. 27) and (Jones & Lee, 2020, pp. 45-46).

In reference list entries, page numbers allow readers to locate the specific pages or range of pages on which the information being cited appears. Examples of reference list entries with page numbers include:

- Journal article: Smith, J. D. (2019). The effects of caffeine on sleep patterns. *Journal of Sleep Research*, 28(3), 25-34.
- Book chapter: Jones, T. K., & Lee, S. M. (2020). The impact of technology on education. In P. Singh (Ed.), *Trends and issues in education for the 21st century* (pp. 45-68). Sage Publications.

In both cases, page numbers provide readers with the information they need to locate and verify the accuracy of the information being presented. When including page numbers in citations, use “p.” or “pp.” to indicate a single page or range of pages, respectively.

Secondary sources

In APA style 7th edition, when citing a source that was found within another source, it is known as a “secondary source.” The in-text citation for a secondary source includes the author’s last name and the year of publication of the original source, in parentheses, followed by the page number (if applicable) where the information was found. Here is an example:

Original source: Jones, T. (2020). The effects of exercise on mental health. *Journal of Psychology*, 55(3), 189-202.

Secondary source: Smith, J. (2021). The benefits of regular exercise. In J. Smith, *The complete guide to physical and mental wellness* (pp. 45-56). New York: Random House.

In-text citation:

- According to Jones (2020), regular exercise has positive effects on mental health (as cited in Smith, 2021, p. 50).
- According to Jones (2020), cited in Smith (2021), the rise of obesity has become a growing concern.

Note that in the reference list of your paper, you only need to include the original source, Jones (2020) and not the secondary source, Smith (2021).

Common mistakes

& or and

& is used with parenthetical citations while and is used with narrative citations.

Furtado and Gallagher (2000) noted that....

... FMS are the building block of further motor skill development (Furtado & Gallagher, 2000).

Period placement

The period is placed after the parentheses (parenthetical citations), not before.

... FMS are the building block of further motor skill development (Furtado & Gallagher, 2000).

... FMS are the building block of further motor skill development. (Furtado & Gallagher, 2000)

Secondary sources

Refer to Section .

Improper use of et al.

Use the last of the first author followed by **et al.** when the source has 3+ authors.

Warning

Use comma after **et al.** when parenthetical citations and omit comma in narrative citations.

Example:

Furtado **et al.** (2002) noted that...

... (Furtado **et al.**, 2002).

Verbs in narratives

Below are some examples of verbs commonly used in signal phrases.

Acknowledges	Adds	Admits
Addresses	Argues	Asserts
Believes	Claims	Comments
Compares	Confirms	Contends
Declares	Denies	Disputes
Emphasizes	Endorses	Grants
Illustrates	Implies	Insists
Notes	Observes	Points out
Reasons	Refutes	Rejects
Reports	Responds	Suggests
Thinks	Writes	Adds

Reference lists

In-text citations are used in conjunction with a reference list. Every source cited in the text must appear in the reference list.

Scribbr has a useful tool that helps you create list of references. Click the link below to access the tool.

[Scribbr APA Citation Generator](#)