APA 7th edition cheat sheet

In-text citations, paper format and the reference list, from the APA guides.

The two ways to cite

Parenthetical: Cognitive load theory has been widely applied in instructional design research (Sweller, 1988).

Narrative: Sweller (1988) introduced the framework that would become cognitive load theory.

How many authors, and the edge cases

Case	In the text	
One author	(Garcia, 2021)	Garcia (2021) found that…
Two authors	(Garcia & Lee, 2021)	Garcia and Lee (2021) discovered that…
Three or more authors	(Garcia et al., 2021)	Garcia et al. (2021) argued that…
Group author, first use	(National Institute of Mental Health [NIMH], 2024); then (NIMH, 2024)	
No author	(*Climate Change and Public Health*, 2022)	("New Policies for Remote Learning," 2023)
No date	(National Institutes of Health, n.d.)	
Same author, same year	(Johnson, 2019a, 2019b)	
Several works at once	(Alhola & Polo-Kantola, 2007; Lim & Dinges, 2010; Walker, 2017)	
Secondary source	Bandura's social learning theory (as cited in Zimmerman, 2000) emphasizes the role of observational learning.	
Personal communication (in text only, no reference entry)	J. Smith (personal communication, March 10, 2024) confirmed the project timeline.	

Quotations

Short quotation (under 40 words): The researchers noted that "retrieval practice produced significantly better long-term retention than restudy" (Roediger & Karpicke, 2006, p. 249).

Long quotation (40 words or more): a block, indented 0.5 inches, no quotation marks, the citation after the final period: (p. 249)

Paraphrase: Recent studies suggest that spaced repetition leads to stronger memory consolidation than massed practice (Cepeda et al., 2006).

No page numbers

Source type	What to use	Example
Web page	Paragraph number or section heading	(para. 4) or ("Methods" section)
Video or audio	Timestamp	(01:23:45)
Slide deck	Slide number	(Slide 12)
Religious or classical text	Standard divisions	(Chapter 3, Verse 16)
E-book without fixed pages	Section heading or chapter	(Chapter 4, "Findings" section)

The page

- **Margins:** 1-inch (2.54 cm) margins on all four sides.
- **Font, one of:** Times New Roman 12 pt · Calibri 11 pt · Arial 11 pt · Lucida Sans Unicode 10 pt · Georgia 11 pt. Stick with it everywhere.
- **Double-space everything.** Don't add extra blank lines before or after headings or between paragraphs.
- **Indent the first line** of every paragraph by 0.5 inches (1.27 cm). Not indented: the abstract paragraph, block quotations, titles and headings, table and figure notes, reference entries.
- **Page number** in the top-right corner of every page, starting with the title page as page 1.
- **Student title page,** centered in the upper half, each on its own line: Paper title (bold, title case) · Your name · Institutional affiliation · Course information · Instructor name · Due date. No running head is required for student papers unless your instructor specifically asks for one.
- **Professional papers** add a running head: a shortened version of the title (50 characters max), in ALL CAPS, left-aligned in the page header; on the title page only, preceded by "Running head:".
- **Abstract, if required:** a single paragraph of 150–250 words on its own page, the word Abstract centered in bold, no first-line indent.

Heading levels

Level	Formatting
1	Centered, Bold, Title Case
2	Left-Aligned, Bold, Title Case
3	Left-Aligned, Bold Italic, Title Case
4	Indented, Bold, Title Case, ending with a period. Text begins on the same line.
5	Indented, Bold Italic, Title Case, ending with a period. Text begins on the same line.

The reference list

`Author. (Date). Title. Source.` — every entry, whatever the source, in that order.

Ground rules

1. Start on a new page. Center the word References in bold at the top.
2. Double-space every entry, with no extra space between entries.
3. Use a hanging indent — the first line of each entry sits flush against the left margin, and every subsequent line is indented 0.5 inches (1.27 cm).
4. Alphabetize entries by the first author's last name. If there's no author, alphabetize by the first meaningful word of the title (skip "A," "An," and "The").
5. Only list sources you actually cited.

DOIs and URLs

- Always include a DOI when one is available — even for works you accessed in print. Format it as a full URL: https://doi.org/10.1037/amp0000255
- Don't put a period after a DOI or URL.
- For online sources without a DOI, provide the direct URL.
- "Retrieved from" is gone for most sources. The one exception is content that changes over time (like a wiki article), where you include the retrieval date: Retrieved January 5, 2025, from https://...

The four building blocks

Scenario	How to format	Example
Author		
One author	Last name, First initial(s).	Garcia, M. L.
Two authors	Connect with &	Garcia, M. L., & Lee, J.
Three to twenty authors	List all, with & before the last	Garcia, M. L., Lee, J., & Park, S.
Twenty-one or more	First 19, then … then the last author	Garcia, M. L., Lee, J., … Zimmerman, T.
Group/organization	Full name	World Health Organization.
No author	Move the title into the author position	
Date		
Standard (most works)	Year in parentheses, followed by a period	(2023).
Exact date (magazine, newspaper, blog)	Year, Month Day	(2023, September 14).
No date available	Use n.d.	(n.d.).

Title and source

- Journal titles and volume numbers are italicized. Book and report titles are italicized and in sentence case. Article and chapter titles are in sentence case but not italicized.
- Sentence case: capitalize the title as if it were a regular sentence: only the first word and any proper nouns. Spaced retrieval practice in higher education: A meta-analysis — not Spaced Retrieval Practice in Higher Education: A Meta-Analysis.
- "Et al." does not appear anywhere in the reference list (spell out all author names).

Eight references, as they should look

Journal article	Garcia, M. L., & Lee, J. (2021). Spaced retrieval practice in higher education: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 113*(4), 718–735. https://doi.org/10.1037/edu0000612
Book	Walker, M. (2017). *Why we sleep: Unlocking the power of sleep and dreams*. Scribner.
Edited book chapter	Sweller, J. (2011). Cognitive load theory. In J. P. Mestre & B. H. Ross (Eds.), *The psychology of learning and motivation* (Vol. 55, pp. 37–76). Academic Press. https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-387691-1.00002-8
Web page, individual author	Thompson, R. A. (2024, June 15). *How early attachment shapes adult relationships*. Greater Good Magazine. https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/how-early-attachment-shapes-adult-relationships
Web page, author is the site	World Health Organization. (2024, March 1). *Mental health: Strengthening our response*. https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/mental-health-strengthening-our-response
Conference paper	Park, S., & Chen, Y. (2023, August 10–13). *Adaptive learning algorithms for diverse classrooms* [Paper presentation]. Annual Meeting of the American Psychological Association, Washington, DC, United States.
Dissertation or thesis	Rodriguez, A. L. (2022). *Bilingual language development in early childhood: A longitudinal study* [Doctoral dissertation, University of Texas at Austin]. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.
Social media post	National Geographic [@NatGeo]. (2024, February 12). *The deepest cave in the world just got deeper* [Instagram photograph]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/example

When information is missing

Missing element	What to do	Example
Author	Move the title into the author position	*Climate change and public health*. (2022). …
Date	Use (n.d.)	Garcia, M. L. (n.d.). …
Title	Provide a description in square brackets	Garcia, M. L. (2023). [Untitled blog post]. …
DOI or URL	Simply omit it — no placeholder needed for print-only sources	

Final checklist

- ☐ Every in-text citation has a corresponding reference list entry
- ☐ Every reference list entry has at least one in-text citation
- ☐ Entries are alphabetized by first author's last name (or by title if there's no author)
- ☐ Hanging indent is applied to all entries
- ☐ DOIs are present wherever available and formatted as https://doi.org/…
- ☐ No period follows a DOI or URL
- ☐ Journal titles and volume numbers are italicized
- ☐ Book and report titles are italicized and in sentence case
- ☐ Article and chapter titles are in sentence case but not italicized
- ☐ "Et al." does not appear anywhere in the reference list (spell out all author names)

Keep reading

APA citation style	`archivero.net/guides/citations/apa`
APA in-text citations	`archivero.net/guides/citations/apa/in-text-citations`
APA reference list	`archivero.net/guides/citations/apa/reference-list`