APA Style Basics and Checklist

What is APA Style?

The American Psychological Association (APA) refers to the style guidelines and expectations for how you write, organize, and research academic work, especially within the social sciences.

VERY IMPORTANT: Ask your professors what aspects of APA they prioritize. Not all professors have the same requirements!

Why Use APA?

APA is common in the fields of nursing, business, and the social sciences, such as psychology and sociology. APA style makes it easier for professors and other experts in those fields to understand your writing by using a familiar structure they can follow. It also establishes your credibility as a writer.

BEFORE YOU WRITE

- Familiarize yourself with APA style as a reader & researcher.
- Are the published journals articles you're using in your research also in APA? If so, as you read these texts, pay attention to the writing itself:
    - What sections are included and how are they labeled or organized?
    - What do you notice about the language?
    - How is the main idea developed and supported with evidence?
- Evaluate your own outside sources for credibility, relevance, and timeliness.

WHILE YOU ARE WRITING:

- Make sure you are writing in the 3rd person (she, he, they), not the 1st person (I, me, mine) or the 2nd person (you, yours).
- Use signal words to introduce outside research & evidence; alternate between paraphrases & direct quotes.
- Include in-text citations for all direct quotes, paraphrases, and summaries.
- Interpret, analyze, synthesize and/or reflect on the significance or implications of your research (i.e, This is important because_____.)

AFTER YOUR PAPER IS COMPLETE:

- Double check your running head, title page, double-spacing, and other formatting.
- Confirm that all of your in-text citations are also listed in your References.
- Consult sample APA papers for formatting for Tables, Figures, etc.

APA Style Checklist

Common

- ☐ Running head
- ☐ Page numbers
- ☐ Title page
- ☐ 12-pt font, Times New Roman, 1" margins
- ☐ Indented paragraphs
- ☐ In-text citations
- ☐ References page

Less Common

- ☐ Multiple headings/subheadings
- ☐ Author's notes
- ☐ Abstract
- ☐ Table of contents
- ☐ Footnotes
- ☐ Tables
- ☐ Figures