APA Sample Paper:

Investigating the Basic Elements of APA Style for College Students

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8/23/2019
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According to the American Psychological Association (APA, 2010), the introductory paragraph should provide an overview of the basic outline of the paper and a purpose statement. The purpose of this sample paper is to present APA style by demonstrating accurate formatting, appropriate headings, various forms of in-text citations, and a correctly formatted reference page.

Formatting

**Page setup.** APA style requires 1-inch margins, Times New Roman 12 point font, and double spacing throughout the paper, with no additional lines except between major paper elements (APA, 2010). A running head is identified on the title page and used throughout the entire paper, while page numbers are placed flush right in the top corner (APA).

**Paper elements.** The basic elements of an APA paper include: a title page, an abstract if required, the body of the paper, and a references section (APA, 2010).

**Title page.** The title page provides basic identifying information including, but not limited to, the running head identifier, the title and subtitle of the work, the author, the affiliated institution, the course information if applicable, and the date (APA, 2010). The title page information is centered, double-spaced, and located approximately one-third from the top of the page, while the running head information is located in the header and is a succinct phrasing of the title (APA).

**Abstract.** An abstract is required for research-oriented papers. It typically includes an overview of the research study, the justification or purpose of the study, the hypothesis, and a brief synopsis of the research results (APA, 2010).

**Body.** The body of the paper is organized with a proper introduction, appropriate level
headings, and a conclusion that mirrors the introduction or answers the question posed in the introduction (APA, 2010).

References. The references section details the complete source information related to the in-text citations (APA, 2010).

Headings

Purpose of headings. In APA style, headings serve to outline the body of the paper (APA, 2010). In effect, if the paragraph sentences were removed, the headings would have all of the basic characteristics of a good outline, including logical flow, grammatical parallelism, and accurate subordination of concepts (APA).

Levels of headings. Level one headings are centered and boldface with upper and lowercase letters, while level two headings are flush left and boldface with upper and lowercase letters (APA, 2010). Level three headings are indented, boldface, and in sentence case ending with a period, while level four headings are indented, boldface, italicized, and in sentence case ending with a period (APA).

Citations

Paraphrasing. While unrelated to the general topic of this paper, the following sentences will demonstrate the three most basic types of in-text citations when paraphrasing concepts from a source. Studies show that children who do not have secure attachment bonds with caregivers are at greater risk for depression (Kaslow, Jones, & Palin, 2005). In 2007, Noffke and Hall explored the connection between attachment theory and God image, focusing on the internal representations from emotional cues provided by caregivers that create a cognitive template for interpreting relational interactions with God. Additionally, research by Clinton and
Straub (2010) suggests that parental attachment patterns are projected onto the personal view of God, impacting beliefs, behaviors, and feelings toward God.

**Quoting.** Direct quotations, while generally discouraged in formal APA style, are permitted when the exact phrasing of the source content is considered critical to expressing the author’s original intent. The following sentences utilize direct quotes in an appropriate APA format. Research highlights the unique pressures of “fishbowl living” for clergy families (Hileman, 2007, p. 119). Meaning-making is described by Patterson (2005) as the assignment of value to difficulty, and is vital to the overall resiliency of families, approaching life’s challenges by “weaving gold out of straw” (p. 542). In his discussion on the divine origin of the Bible, Erickson states, “Revelation is God’s making his truth known to humankind” (1998, p. 272).

**References**

In APA (2010) style, every reference should be cited at least once in the paper. This is in contrast to what is generally referred to as a bibliography page, which may include related literature that was reviewed but not utilized within the writing. A sample reference page that demonstrates the various sources cited in this paper will follow the conclusion.

**Conclusion**

Developing an accurate and efficient APA (2010) writing style requires practice and consistency, but following the basic rules will promote better organization and improved evaluations on papers. Although this process may seem difficult and overwhelming, research by Gostecnik, Repic, and Cvetek (2008) emphasizes the role of pain in the process of redemption as a driving force that prompts the heart to long for comfort and to seek resolution in God. Recommendations for further research include a focus on content enrichment and increased stylistic phrasing for the purpose of presenting papers that demonstrate excellence in writing.
References


Appendix 1

Sample APA Grading Rubric

| Points | APA format (*6th Edition*) is required for ALL COMPONENTS OF THE PAPER | 1 Proper APA style throughout paper (including proper headings and sub-headings that appear throughout the paper (including proper level & use of subheadings that correlate with the required sections) | 2 Proper introduction and conclusion to paper and proper transitions from section to section of the paper | 3 Grammatically (including word choice, syntax, and sentence structure) and typographically correct (including spacing/no extra pages, proper indenting and paragraph length and proper presentation of numbers, charts, abbreviations, quotations, commas, italics, and other punctuation) | 4 Coherent, succinct writing; points are presented with logic and insight | 5 Content is relevant and sufficiently fulfills assignment requirements as outlined in the syllabus | 6 Citations and references: All facts stated in the paper are properly cited (in the body and the reference section). References are up to date, professional, from primary sources (e.g., articles from peer-reviewed journals, text-books) and in proper APA 6th edition manual format (including doi or download information for journal articles). Citations in the body are the only ones on the reference page and the reference page is free of errors | Content: / | Structure: / | Total Points | / |