



Archival Documents and Collections

Archival sources include letters, unpublished manuscripts, limited-circulation brochures and pamphlets, in-house institutional and corporate documents, clippings, and other documents, as well as such nontextual materials as photographs and apparatus, that are in the personal possession of an author, form part of an institutional collection, or are stored in an archive such as the Archives of the History of American Psychology at the University of Akron or the APA Archives. For any documents like these that are available on the open web or via a database (subscription or nonsubscription), follow the reference templates shown in Chapter 10 of the *Publication Manual*.

The general format for the reference for an archival work includes the author, date, title, and source. The reference examples shown on this page may be modified for collections requiring more or less specific information to locate materials, for different types of collections, or for additional descriptive information (e.g., a translation of a letter). Authors may choose to list correspondence from their own personal collections, but correspondence from other private collections should be listed only with the permission of the collector.

Keep in mind the following principles when creating references to archival documents and collections:

- As with any reference, the purpose is to direct readers to the source, despite the fact that only a single copy of the document may be available and readers may have some difficulty actually seeing a copy.
- Include as much information as is needed to help locate the item with reasonable ease within the repository. For items from collections with detailed finding aids, the name of the collection may be sufficient; for items from collections without finding aids, more information (e.g., call number, box number, file name or number) may be necessary to help locate the item.
- If several letters are cited from the same collection, list the collection as a reference and provide specific identifying information (author, recipient, and date) for each letter in the in-text citations (see Example 3).
- Use square brackets to indicate information that does not appear on the document.
- Use “ca.” (circa) to indicate an estimated date (see Example 5).
- Use italics for titles of archival documents and collections; if the work does not have a title, provide a description in square brackets without italics.
- Separate elements of the source (e.g., the name of a repository, library, university or archive, and the location of the university or archive) with commas. End the source with a period.
- If a publication of limited circulation is available in libraries, the reference may be formatted as usual for published material, without the archival source.
- Note that private letters (vs. those in an archive or repository) are considered personal communications and cited in the text only.

Learn more

Archival document and collections are not presented in the seventh edition in the [Publication Manual \(/products/publication-manual-7th-edition\)](/products/publication-manual-7th-edition) and the [Concise Guide \(/products/concise-guide\)](/products/concise-guide). This content is available only on the APA Style website.



This guidance has been **expanded** from the 6th edition.

Letter from a repository

Frank, L. K. (1935, February 4). [Letter to Robert M. Ogden]. Rockefeller Archive Center
(GEB Series 1.3, Box 371, Folder 3877), Tarrytown, NY, United States.

- **Paraphrased citation:** (Frank, 1935)
- **Narrative citation:** Frank (1935)

Because the letter does not have a title, provide a description in square brackets.

Letter from a private collection

Zacharius, G. P. (1953, August 15). [Letter to William Rickel (W. Rickel, Trans.)]. Copy in possession of Hendrika Vande Kemp.

- **Paraphrased citation:** (Zacharius, 1953)
- **Narrative citation:** Zacharius (1953)

In this example, Hendrika Vande Kemp is either the author of the paper or the author of the paper has received permission from Hendrika Vande Kemp to cite a letter in Vande Kemp's private collection in this way. Otherwise, cite a private letter as a personal communication ([/style-grammar-guidelines/citations/personal-communications](https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/citations/personal-communications)).

Collection of letters from an archive

Allport, G. W. (1930–1967). *Correspondence*. Gordon W. Allport Papers (HUG 4118.10), Harvard University Archives, Cambridge, MA, United States.

- **Paraphrased citation:** (Allport, 1930–1967)
- **Narrative citation:** Allport (1930–1967)

To cite specific letters in the text, provide the author and range of years as shown in the reference list entry, plus details about who wrote the specific letter to whom and when the specific letter was written.

- **Paraphrased citation:** (Allport, 1930–1967, G. Boring to Allport, December 26, 1937)
- **Narrative citation:** Allport (1930–1967, Allport to G. Boring, March 1, 1939)

Use the parenthetical citation format to cite a letter that E. G. Boring wrote to Allport because Allport is the author in the reference. Use either the parenthetical or narrative citation format to cite letters that Allport wrote.

Unpublished papers, lectures from an archive or personal collection

Berliner, A. (1959). *Notes for a lecture on reminiscences of Wundt and Leipzig*. Anna Berliner Memoirs (Box M50), Archives of the History of American Psychology,

University of Akron, Akron, OH, United States.

- **Parenthetical citation:** (Berliner, 1959)
- **Narrative citation:** Berliner (1959)

Archival/historical source for which the author and/or date is known or is reasonably certain but not stated on the document

Allport, A. (presumed). (ca. 1937). *Marion Taylor today—by the biographer* [Unpublished manuscript]. Marion Taylor Papers, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College, Cambridge, MA, United States.

- **Parenthetical citation:** (Allport, ca. 1937)
- **Narrative citation:** Allport (ca. 1937)

Because the author is reasonably certain but not stated on the document, place the word “presumed” in parentheses after the name, followed by a period.

Because the date is reasonably certain but not stated on the document, the abbreviation “ca.” (which stands for “circa”) appears before the year in parentheses.

Archival source with group author

Subcommittee on Mental Hygiene Personnel in School Programs. (1949, November 5–6). *Meeting of Subcommittee on Mental Hygiene Personnel in School Programs*. David Shakow Papers (M1360), Archives of the History of American Psychology, University of Akron, Akron, OH, United States.

- **Parenthetical citation:** (Subcommittee on Mental Hygiene Personnel in School Programs, 1949)
- **Narrative citation:** Subcommittee on Mental Hygiene Personnel in School Programs (1949)

Interview recorded and available in an archive

Smith, M. B. (1989, August 12). *Interview by C. A. Kiesler* [Tape recording]. President's Oral History Project, American Psychological Association, APA Archives, Washington, DC, United States.

- **Parenthetical citation:** (Smith, 1989)

- **Narrative citation:** Smith (1989)

For interviews and oral histories recorded in an archive, list the interviewee as the author. Include the interviewer's name in the description.

Transcription of a recorded interview, no recording available

Sparkman, C. F. (1973). *An oral history with Dr. Colley F. Sparkman/Interviewer: Orley B. Caudill*. Mississippi Oral History Program (Vol. 289), University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS, United States.

- **Parenthetical citation:** (Sparkman, 1973)
- **Narrative citation:** Sparkman (1973)

For interviews and oral histories recorded in an archive, list the interviewee as the author. Include the interviewer's name in the description.

Newspaper article clipping, historical, in personal collection

Psychoanalysis institute to open. (1948, September 18). [Clipping from an unidentified Dayton, OH, United States, newspaper]. Copy in possession of author.

- **Parenthetical citation:** ("Psychoanalysis Institute to Open," 1948)
- **Narrative citation:** "Psychoanalysis Institute to Open" (1948)

Use this format only if you are the person who is in possession of the newspaper clipping.

Historical publication of limited circulation

Sci-Art Publishers. (1935). *Sci-Art publications* [Brochure]. Roback Papers (HUGFP 104.50, Box 2, Folder "Miscellaneous Psychological Materials"), Harvard University Archives, Cambridge, MA, United States.

- **Parenthetical citation:** (Sci-Art Publishers, 1935)
- **Narrative citation:** Sci-Art Publishers (1935)

Archived photographs, no author and no title

[Photographs of Robert M. Yerkes]. (ca. 1917–1954). Robert Mearns Yerkes Papers (Box 137, Folder 2292), Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library, New Haven, CT, United States.

- **Parenthetical citation:** ([Photographs of Robert M. Yerkes], ca. 1917–1954)
- **Narrative citation:** [Photographs of Robert M. Yerkes] (ca. 1917–1954)

Because the archived photographs do not have a title, provide a bracketed description instead.

Because the archived photographs do not have an author, move the bracketed description to the author position of the reference.

Microfilm

U.S. Census Bureau. (1880). *1880 U.S. census: Defective, dependent, and delinquent classes schedule: Virginia* [Microfilm]. NARA Microfilm Publication T1132 (Rolls 33–34), National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC, United States.

- **Parenthetical citation:** (U.S. Census Bureau, 1880)
- **Narrative citation:** U.S. Census Bureau (1880)

Date created: 2019





Basic Principles of Reference List Entries

A reference list entry generally has four elements: the author, date, title, and source. Each element answers a question:

- **author:** *Who* is responsible for this work?
- **date:** *When* was this work published?
- **title:** *What* is this work called?
- **source:** *Where* can I retrieve this work?

Answering these four questions will help you create a reference entry for any type of work, even if you do not see a specific example in the *Publication Manual* that matches it. Consistency in reference formatting allows readers to understand the types of works you consulted and the important reference elements with ease.

To learn more about content and format of the author, date, title, and source, [visit the page on reference elements \(/style-grammar-guidelines/references/elements-list-entry/\)](/style-grammar-guidelines/references/elements-list-entry/).

Learn more

The basic principles of reference list entries are covered in the seventh edition APA Style manuals in the [Publication Manual \(/products/publication-manual-7th-edition/\)](/products/publication-manual-7th-edition/) Sections 9.4 to 9.6 and the [Concise Guide \(/products/concise-guide/\)](/products/concise-guide/) Sections 9.4 to 9.6



This guidance is the **same** as in the 6th edition.

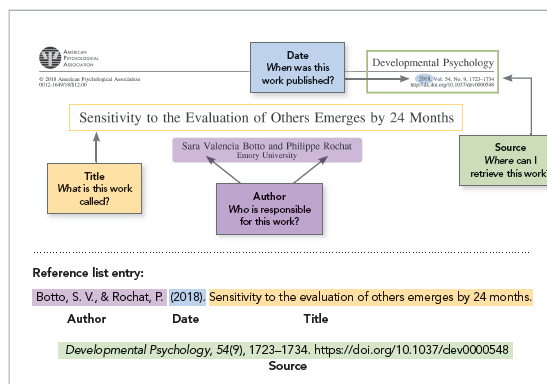
Related handouts

- [Common Reference Examples Guide \(PDF, 107KB\) \(/instructional-aids/reference-examples.pdf\)](#)
- [Creating an APA Style Reference List \(PDF, 179KB\) \(/instructional-aids/creating-reference-list.pdf\)](#)
- [Scaffolded Reference Elements Worksheet \(PDF, 156KB\) \(/instructional-aids/scaffolded-reference-elements-worksheet.pdf\)](#)

Correspondence between source and reference list entry

This figure shows the first page of a journal article. The locations of the reference elements are highlighted with different colors and callouts, and the same colors are used in the reference list entry to show how the entry corresponds to the source.

Figure 9.1 Example of Where to Find Reference Information for a Journal Article



Additionally, the in-text citation for a work corresponds to the reference list entry [\(/style-grammar-guidelines/citations/basic-principles/author-date/\)](/style-grammar-guidelines/citations/basic-principles/author-date/). For example, the in-text citation for the work in the example is Botto and Rochat (2018) or (Botto & Rochat, 2018).

View the reference examples [\(/style-grammar-guidelines/references/examples/\)](/style-grammar-guidelines/references/examples/) to see the basic principles of references in action.

Punctuation in reference list entries

Use punctuation marks in reference list entries to group information.

- Ensure that a period appears after each reference element—that is, after the author, date, title, and source. However, do not put a period after a DOI or URL ([/style-grammar-guidelines/references/doi-urls](#)) because it may interfere with link functionality. And if a title ends with a question mark, the question mark replaces the period.
- Use punctuation marks (usually commas or parentheses) between parts of the same reference element. For example, in a reference for a journal article, use a comma between each author's last name and initials and between different authors' names, between the journal name and the volume number, and between the journal issue number and the page numbers.
- Do not use a comma between the journal volume and issue numbers. Place the issue number in parentheses directly after the volume number instead.
- Italicize punctuation marks that appear within an italic reference element (e.g., a comma or colon within a book title). Do not italicize punctuation between reference elements (e.g., the period after an italic book title or the comma after an italic journal title).

Suggested citations

Some works contain suggested citations. These citations often contain the information necessary to write an APA Style reference but need editing for style. For example, you may need to change the capitalization of the title or the punctuation between elements. You may also need to put elements in the proper order of author, date, title, and source.

From the APA Style blog



Real or fake? Predatory journals and journal hijacking

Not every online article is a trustworthy source.
([/blog/predatory-journals](#))



How to avoid plagiarism

Instructors, teach your students about plagiarism (APA Style On the Go series—Tip 10).
([/blog/10-teaching-avoiding-plagiarism](#))



How to help your students “check their style”

Instructors, help your students become effective writers (APA Style On the Go series—Tip 9).
([/blog/9-teaching-writing-style](#))



Tip 5 Understanding the importance of journal articles ([/blog/5-teaching-journal-articles](#))
Instructors, help your students develop their knowledge of how journal articles work (APA Style On the Go series—Tip 5).



Part 3: Is AI “allowed” in APA Style? ([/blog/cite-generative-ai-allowed](#))
Guidance on whether AI is “allowed” in APA Style (e.g., ChatGPT, ai-allowed) Claude, Gemini, Perplexity).



Part 2: AI as a search engine and AI integrated into common software ([/blog/cite-generative-ai-search-software](#))
Guidance on how to cite AI as a search engine and integrated into common software (e.g., ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, Perplexity).



Citing generative AI in APA Style: Part 1—Reference formats ([/blog/cite-generative-ai-references](#))
Guidance on how to cite generative AI (e.g., ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, Perplexity).



Tip 1 How to evaluate sources ([/blog/1-teaching-evaluate-sources](#))
Instructors, help your students become effective researchers (APA Style On the Go series—Tip 1).



How to cite unpublished works ([/blog/cite-unpublished-works](#))
There are many reasons to cite an unpublished work, including referring to emerging research.



Happy Valentine's Day! ([/blog/writing-love](#))
Odes to our favorite aspects of APA Style, from our experts.



How to cite quotations from speeches ([/blog/cite-speeches](#))
Create a reference that matches the source where readers can retrieve the speech.



The importance of integrating APA Style into high school classrooms ([/blog/high-school-classrooms](#))
Read insights from a recent high school graduate about the value of learning APA Style in high school.



How to cite a chapter written by someone other than the book's authors ([/blog/citing-book-chapter-written-by-other-authors](#))
This post describes how to cite a chapter, foreword, or other part of a book written by someone other than the book's author(s) and how to cite a book that credits additional people on the cover.

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Database Information in References

Database information is seldom provided in reference list entries. The reference provides readers with the details they will need to perform a search themselves if they want to read the work—in most cases, writers do not need to explain the path they personally used.

Think of it this way: When you buy a book at a bookstore or order a copy off the internet, you do not write the name of the (online) bookstore in the reference. And when you go to the library and get a book off the shelf, you do not write the name of the library in the reference. It is understood that readers will go to their bookstore or library of choice to find it.

The same is true for database information in references. Most periodicals and books are available through a variety of databases or platforms as well as in print. Different readers will have different methods or points of access, such as university library subscriptions. Most of the time, it does not matter what database you used, so it is not necessary to provide database information in references.

However, there are a few cases when it is necessary for readers to retrieve the cited work from a particular database or archive, either because the database publishes original, proprietary content or because the work is of limited circulation. This page explains how to write references for works from academic research databases and how to provide database information in references when it is necessary to do so.

Learn more

Database information in references is covered in the seventh edition APA Style manuals in the [Publication Manual](/products/publication-manual-7th-edition) (/products/publication-manual-7th-edition) Section 9.30 and the [Concise Guide](/products/concise-guide) (/products/concise-guide) Section 9.30



This guidance is **new** to the 7th edition.

Related handout

- [Creating an APA Style Reference List \(PDF, 179KB\)](#) (/instructional-aids/creating-reference-list.pdf)

Works from academic research databases

Do not include database information for works obtained from most academic research databases or platforms because works in these resources are widely available. This includes journal articles, books, and book chapters from academic research databases.

- Examples of academic research databases and platforms include APA PsycNet, PsycInfo, Academic Search Complete, CINAHL, Ebook Central, EBSCOhost, Google Scholar, JSTOR (excluding its primary sources collection because these are works of limited distribution), MEDLINE, Nexis Uni, Ovid, ProQuest (excluding its dissertations and theses databases because dissertations and theses are works of limited circulation), PubMed Central (excluding authors' final peer-reviewed manuscripts because these are works of limited circulation), ScienceDirect, Scopus, and Web of Science.
- When citing a work from one of these databases or platforms, do not include the database or platform name in the reference list entry unless the work falls under one of the exceptions described next ([databases with original, proprietary content](https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/references/database-information#content) (https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/references/database-information#content) and [works of limited circulation](https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/references/database-information#work) (https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/references/database-information#work)).
- Likewise, do not include URLs from these academic research databases in reference list entries because these URLs will not resolve for readers.
- Instead of a database URL, include a DOI if the work has one. If a widely available work (e.g., journal article, book, book chapter) from an academic research database does not have a DOI, treat the work as a print version. See the [guidelines for how to include DOIs and URLs in references](https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/references/doi-urls) (style-grammar-guidelines/references/doi-urls) for more information.

The following example shows how to create a reference list entry for a journal article with a DOI from an academic research database.

Hallion, M., Taylor, A., Roberts, R., & Ashe, M. (2019). Exploring the association between physical activity participation and self-compassion in middle-aged adults. *Sport,*

Exercise, and Performance Psychology, 8(3), 305–316.

<https://doi.org/10.1037/spy0000150> (<https://doi.org/10.1037/spy0000150>)

- **Parenthetical citation:** (Hallion et al., 2019)
- **Narrative citation:** Hallion et al. (2019)

If the article did not have a DOI, the reference would simply end after the page range, the same as the reference for a print work.

Databases with original, proprietary content

Provide the name of the database or archive when it publishes original, proprietary works available only in that database or archive (e.g., UpToDate or the Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews). Readers must retrieve the cited work from that exact database or archive, so include information about the database or archive in the reference list entry.

References for works from proprietary databases are similar to journal article references. The name of the database or archive is written in italic title case (*/style-grammar-guidelines/capitalization/title-case*) in the source element, the same as a periodical title, and followed by a period. After the database or archive information, also provide the DOI or URL of the work (*/style-grammar-guidelines/references/doi-urls*). If the URL is session-specific (meaning it will not resolve for readers), provide the URL of the database home page or login page instead.

The following example shows how to create a reference list entry for an article from the UpToDate database:

Stein, M. B., & Taylor, C. T. (2019). Approach to treating social anxiety disorder in adults.

UpToDate. Retrieved September 13, 2019, from

<https://www.uptodate.com/contents/approach-to-treating-social-anxiety-disorder-in-adults> (https://www.uptodate.com/contents/approach-to-treating-social-anxiety-disorder-in-adults?search=anxiety&source=search_result&selectedTitle=8~150&usage_type=default&display_rank=8)

- **Parenthetical citation:** (Stein & Taylor, 2019)
- **Narrative citation:** Stein and Taylor (2019)

Works of limited circulation

Provide the name of the database or archive for works of limited circulation, such as dissertations and theses, manuscripts posted in a preprint archive, and monographs in ERIC. The database may also contain works of wide circulation, such as journal articles—only the works of limited circulation need database information in the reference.

References for works of limited circulation from databases or archives are similar to report references. The name of the database or archive is provided in the source element (in title case without italics ([/style-grammar-guidelines/capitalization/title-case](#))), the same as a publisher name, and followed by a period. After the database or archive information, also provide the DOI or URL of the work. If the URL is session-specific (meaning it will not resolve for readers), provide the URL of the database home page or login page instead.

The following are examples of works of limited circulation from databases or archives (for additional examples, see Section 9.30 of the *Publication Manual*):

- dissertations and theses published in ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global

Risto, A. (2014). *The impact of social media and texting on students' academic writing skills* (Publication No. 3683242) [Doctoral dissertation, Tennessee State University]. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global.

- **Parenthetical citation:** (Risto, 2014)
- **Narrative citation:** Risto (2014)

- manuscripts posted in a preprint archive such as PsyArXiv

Inbar, Y., & Evers, E. R. K. (2019). *Worse is bad: Divergent inferences from logically equivalent comparisons*. PsyArXiv. <https://doi.org/10.31234/osf.io/ueymx>
(<https://doi.org/10.31234/osf.io/ueymx>)

- **Parenthetical citation:** (Inbar & Evers, 2014)
- **Narrative citation:** Inbar and Evers (2014)

- monographs published in ERIC

Riegelman, R. K., & Albertine, S. (2008). *Recommendations for undergraduate public health education* (ED504790). ERIC.
<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED504790.pdf>
(<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED504790.pdf>)

- **Parenthetical citation:** (Riegelman & Albertine, 2008)
- **Narrative citation:** Riegelman and Albertine (2008)

If you are in doubt as to whether to include database information in a reference, refer to the template for the reference type in question (see Chapter 10 of the *Publication Manual*).

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BLOG



Home > Style and Grammar Guidelines > References >

DOIs and URLs

This page addresses when to include digital object identifiers (DOIs) and uniform resource locators (URLs) in APA Style references. Also check out the related topic of when to include database information in references (</style-grammar-guidelines/references/database-information>).

The DOI or URL is the final component of a reference list entry. Because so much scholarship is available and/or retrieved online, most reference list entries end with either a DOI or a URL.

- A **DOI** is a unique alphanumeric string that identifies content and provides a persistent link to its location on the internet. DOIs can be found in database records and the reference lists of published works.
- A **URL** specifies the location of digital information on the internet and can be found in the address bar of your internet browser. URLs in references should link directly to the cited work when possible.

When to include DOIs and URLs

Follow these guidelines for including DOIs and URLs in references:

- Include a DOI for all works that have a DOI, regardless of whether you used the online version or the print version.
- If a print work does not have a DOI, do not include any DOI or URL in the reference.
- If an online work has both a DOI and a URL, include only the DOI.
- If an online work has a URL but no DOI, include the URL in the reference as follows:
 - a. For works without DOIs from websites (not including academic research databases), provide a URL in the reference (as long as the URL will work for readers).
 - b. For works without DOIs from most [academic research databases \(/style-grammar-guidelines/references/database-information\)](/style-grammar-guidelines/references/database-information), do not include a URL or database information in the reference because these works are widely available. The reference should be the same as the reference for a print version of the work.
 - c. For works from databases that publish original, proprietary material available only in that database (such as the UpToDate database) or for works of limited circulation in databases (such as monographs in the ERIC database), include the name of the database or archive and the URL of the work. If the URL requires a login or is session-specific (meaning it will not resolve for readers), provide the URL of the database or archive home page or login page instead of the URL for the work. See the page on including [database information in references \(/style-grammar-guidelines/references/database-information\)](/style-grammar-guidelines/references/database-information) for more information.
 - d. If the URL is no longer working or no longer provides readers access to the content you intend to cite, [follow the guidance for works with no source \(/style-grammar-guidelines/references/missing-information\)](/style-grammar-guidelines/references/missing-information).
- Other alphanumeric identifiers such as the International Standard Book Number (ISBN) and the International Standard Serial Number (ISSN) are not included in APA Style references.

Format of DOIs and URLs

Follow these guidelines to format DOIs and URLs:

- Present both DOIs and URLs as hyperlinks (i.e., beginning with “http:” or “https:”).

Learn more

DOIs and URLs are covered in the seventh edition APA Style manuals in the [Publication Manual \(/products/publication-manual-7th-edition\)](/products/publication-manual-7th-edition) Sections 9.34 to 9.36 and the [Concise Guide \(/products/concise-guide\)](/products/concise-guide) Sections 9.34 to 9.36



This guidance has been **expanded** from the 6th edition.

Related handouts

- [Creating an APA Style Reference List \(PDF, 179KB\)](/instructional-aids/creating-reference-list.pdf) (/instructional-aids/creating-reference-list.pdf)
- [Reference Quick Guide \(PDF, 225KB\)](/instructional-aids/reference-guide.pdf) (/instructional-aids/reference-guide.pdf)

- Because a hyperlink leads readers directly to the content, it is not necessary to include the words “Retrieved from” or “Accessed from” before a DOI or URL.
- It is acceptable to use either the default display settings for hyperlinks in your word-processing program (e.g., usually blue font, underlined) or plain text that is not underlined.
- Leave links live if the work is to be published or read online.
- Follow the current recommendations of the International DOI Foundation to format DOIs in the reference list, which as of this publication is as follows:

<https://doi.org/xxxx>

- The string “<https://doi.org/>” is a way of presenting a DOI as a link, and “xxxx” refers to the DOI number.
- The preferred format of the DOI has changed over time. Although older works use previous formats (e.g., “<http://dx.doi.org/>” or “doi:” or “DOI:” before the DOI number), in your reference list, standardize DOIs into the current preferred format for all entries. For example, use <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0040251> (<https://doi.org/10.1037/a0040251>) in your reference even though that article, published in 2016, presented the number in an older format.
- Copy and paste the DOI or URL from your web browser directly into your reference list to avoid transcription errors. Do not change the capitalization or punctuation of the DOI or URL. Do not add line breaks manually to the hyperlink; it is acceptable if your word-processing program automatically adds a break or moves the hyperlink to its own line.
- Do not add a period after the DOI or URL because this may interfere with link functionality.

DOI and URL shorteners

When a DOI or URL is long or complex, you may use shortDOIs or shortened URLs if desired.

- Use the [shortDOI service provided by the International DOI Foundation \(https://shortdoi.org/\)](https://shortdoi.org/) to create shortDOIs. A work can have only one DOI and only one shortDOI; the shortDOI service will either produce a new shortDOI for a work that has never had one or retrieve an existing shortDOI.
- Some websites provide their own branded shortened URLs, and independent URL shortening services are available as well. Any shortened URL is acceptable in a reference as long as you check the link to ensure that it takes you to the correct location.

From the APA Style blog



Real or fake? Predatory journals and journal hijacking

Not every online article is a trustworthy source.
([/blog/ predatory-journals](https://blog/ predatory-journals))



How to avoid plagiarism

Instructors, teach your students about plagiarism (APA Style On the Go series—Tip 10).
([/blog/10-teaching-avoiding-plagiarism](https://blog/10-teaching-avoiding-plagiarism))



How to help your students “check their style”

Instructors, help your students become effective writers (APA Style On the Go series—Tip 9).
([/blog/9-teaching-writing-style](https://blog/9-teaching-writing-style))



Understanding the importance of journal articles

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Part 3: Is AI “allowed” in APA Style?

Guidance on whether AI is “allowed” in APA Style (e.g., ChatGPT, ai-allowed Claude, Gemini, Perplexity).

([/blog/cite-generative-ai-allowed](https://blog/cite-generative-ai-allowed))



Part 2: AI as a search engine and AI integrated into common software

([/blog/cite-generative-ai-search-software](https://blog/cite-generative-ai-search-software))



Citing generative AI in APA Style: Part 1—Reference formats

([/blog/cite-generative-ai-references](https://blog/cite-generative-ai-references))

Guidance on how to cite AI as a search engine and integrated into common software (e.g., ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, Perplexity).

DOIs and URLs

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How to evaluate sources

Instructors, help your students become effective researchers (APA Style On the Go series—Tip 1).

(/blog/1-teaching-evaluate-sources)



How to cite unpublished works

There are many reasons to cite an unpublished work, including referring to emerging research.

(/blog/cite-unpublished-works)



Happy Valentine's Day!

Odes to our favorite aspects of APA Style, from our experts.

(/blog/writing-love)



How to cite quotations from speeches

Create a reference that matches the source where readers can retrieve the speech. speeches)

(/blog/cite-



The importance of integrating APA Style into high school classrooms

Read insights from a recent high school graduate about the value of learning APA Style in high school.

(/blog/high-school-classrooms)



How to cite a chapter written by someone other than the book's authors

This post describes how to cite a chapter, foreword, or other part of a book written by someone other than the book's author(s) and how to cite a book that credits additional people on the cover.

(/blog/citing-book-chapter-written-by-other-authors)

Last updated: July 2022 Date created: 2019

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STYLE AND GRAMMAR GUIDELINES ▾

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BLOG



Home > Style and Grammar Guidelines > References >

Elements of Reference List Entries

Reference list entries include the four elements of the author, date, title, and source.

This page describes each element in detail:

- the [author element \(#author\)](#), including the format of individual author names and of group author names
- the [date element \(#date\)](#), including the format of the date and how to include retrieval dates
- the [title element \(#title\)](#), including the format of the title and how to include bracketed descriptions
- the [source element \(#source\)](#), including the format of the source and how to include database information

[View the reference examples \(/style-grammar-guidelines/references/examples\)](#) to see the elements of reference list entries in action.

A summary of this guidance is presented on the page about the [basic principles of reference list entries \(/style-grammar-guidelines/references/basic-principles\)](#). Additional information and examples are available in Chapters 9 and 10 of the *Publication Manual*.

If a work does not have an author, date, title, or source, visit the page on how to adjust reference list entries when [reference information is missing \(/style-grammar-guidelines/references/missing-information\)](#).

Learn more

The elements of reference list entries are covered in the seventh edition APA Style manuals in the [Publication Manual \(/products/publication-manual-7th-edition\)](#) Sections 9.7 to 9.37 and the [Concise Guide \(/products/concise-guide\)](#) Sections 9.7 to 9.37



This guidance has been **revised** and **expanded** from the 6th edition.

Related handouts

- [Common Reference Examples Guide \(PDF, 107KB\) \(/instructional-aids/reference-examples.pdf\)](#)
- [Creating an APA Style Reference List \(PDF, 179KB\) \(/instructional-aids/creating-reference-list.pdf\)](#)
- [Scaffolded Reference Elements Worksheet \(PDF, 156KB\) \(/instructional-aids/scaffolded-reference-elements-worksheet.pdf\)](#)

Author

The *author* refers broadly to the person(s) or group(s) responsible for a work. An author may be

- an individual,
- multiple people,
- a group (institution, government agency, organization, etc.), or
- a combination of people and groups.

This element includes not only authors of articles, books, reports, and other works but also others who played primary roles in the creation of a work, such as editors of books, directors of films, principal investigators of grants, podcast hosts, and so on.

When you cannot determine who the author is, [treat the work as having no author \(/style-grammar-guidelines/references/missing-information\)](#).

Format of individual author names

Follow these guidelines to format the author element. Additional guidelines for less common cases are provided in the *Publication Manual*.

- Invert all individual authors' names, providing the surname first, followed by a comma and the author's initials.

Author, A. A.

- Use a comma to separate an author's initials from additional author names, even when there are only two authors. Use an ampersand (&) before the final author's name.

Author, A. A., & Author, B. B.

- Provide surnames and initials for up to and including 20 authors. When there are two to 20 authors, use an ampersand before the final author's name.

Author, A. A., Author, B. B., & Author, C. C.

- When there are 21 or more authors, include the first 19 authors' names, insert an ellipsis (but no ampersand), and then add the final author's name.

Author, A. A., Author, B. B., Author, C. C., Author, D. D., Author, E. E., Author, F. F.,
Author, G. G., Author, H. H., Author, I. I., Author, J. J., Author, K. K., Author, L. L.,
Author, M. M., Author, N. N., Author, O. O., Author, P. P., Author, Q. Q., Author, R.
R., Author, S. S., . . . Author, Z. Z.

- Use one space between initials.

Author, A. A.

- Write the author's name exactly as it appears on the published work, including hyphenated surnames and two-part surnames.

Santos-García, S., & Velasco Rodríguez, M. L.

- Retain the author's preferred capitalization.

hooks, b.

van der Waal, P. N.

Format of group author names

Group authors are often government agencies, nonprofit organizations, and task forces. Follow these guidelines to format the names of group authors in the reference list.

- Look at the title page or cover of the work to determine whether it has a group author or individual authors.
 - a. If the names of individuals are presented on the title page or cover, treat the work as having individual authors.
 - b. If only the name of the group is presented on the title page or cover, treat the work as having a group author, even if individuals are credited elsewhere in the work (e.g., in an acknowledgments section).

- Spell out the full name of a group author in the reference list entry, followed by a period.

National Institute of Mental Health.

- On a page from an organizational or government agency website, the organization or government agency itself is considered the author, unless otherwise specified. The author of a webpage or website may also be located on an “about us” or acknowledgments page.
- An abbreviation for the group author ([/style-grammar-guidelines/abbreviations/group-authors](#)) can be used in the text (e.g., NIMH for National Institute of Mental Health); however, do not include an abbreviation for a group author in a reference list entry.

Correct: National Institute of Mental Health.

Incorrect: National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH).

Incorrect: NIMH.

- When numerous layers of government agencies are listed as the author of a work, use the most specific agency as the author in the reference (e.g., use “National Institute of Nursing Research” rather than “U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health, National Institute of Nursing Research”). The names of parent agencies not present in the group author name appear in the source element as the publisher.

National Institute of Nursing Research. (2020). *A family's perspective: Pediatric palliative care stories* (NIH Publication No. 15-NR-8018). U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health.
https://www.ninr.nih.gov/sites/default/files/docs/NINR_508c_FamilyStories_0.pdf
 (https://www.ninr.nih.gov/sites/default/files/docs/NINR_508c_FamilyStories_0.pdf)

Date

The *date* refers to the date of publication of the work. The date will take one of the following forms:

- year only;
- year, month, and day (i.e., an exact date);
- year and month;
- year and season; or
- range of dates (e.g., range of years, range of exact dates).

When you cannot determine the date of publication, [treat the work as having no date \(/style-grammar-guidelines/references/missing-information\)](#).

Format of the date

Follow the date format for the reference type as shown in the *Publication Manual*. Most references use only the year. Additional guidelines for less common cases are provided in the *Publication Manual*.

- Enclose the date of publication in parentheses, followed by a period

(2020).

- For works from a reference category that includes the month, day, and/or season along with the year, put the year first, followed by a comma, and then the month and date or season.

(2020, August 26).

(2018, July).

(2019, Winter).

- For unpublished, informally published, or in-progress works, provide the year the work was produced. Do not use "in progress" or "submitted for publication" in the date element of a reference.
- If a work has been accepted for publication but is not yet published, use the term "in press" instead of a year.

(in press).

- If a work is an advance online publication, use the year of the advance online publication in the reference.
- When the date of original publication is approximate, use the abbreviation "ca." (which stands for "circa").

(ca. 1999).

If a date of last update is available (such as for a webpage), use it in the reference. Do not include a date of last review in a reference because content that has been reviewed has not necessarily been changed.

Retrieval dates

Include a retrieval date only if the work is unarchived and designed to change over time. Most references do not include retrieval dates. Examples of some that do are in Chapter 10 of the *Publication Manual* and on the [reference examples \(/style-grammar-guidelines/references/examples\)](https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/references/examples) page.

When a retrieval date is needed, use the following format for it.

Retrieved September 30, 2020, from <https://xxxxx>

Title

The *title* refers to the title of the work being cited. Titles fall into two broad categories:

- works that stand alone (e.g., whole books, reports, gray literature, dissertations and theses, informally published works, data sets, videos, films, TV series, albums, podcasts, social media, and works on websites) and
- works that are part of a greater whole (e.g., periodical articles, edited book chapters, TV and podcast episodes, and songs).

When a work stands alone (e.g., a report), the title of that work appears in the title element of the reference. When a work is part of a greater whole (e.g., a journal article or edited book chapter), the title of the article or chapter appears in the title element of the reference and the title of the greater whole (the journal or edited book) appears in the source element.

When the title of the work cannot be determined, [treat the work as having no title \(/style-grammar-guidelines/references/missing-information\)](#).

Format of the title

Follow these guidelines to format the title element. Additional guidelines for less common cases are provided in the *Publication Manual*.

- For works that are part of a greater whole (e.g., journal articles, edited book chapters), capitalize the title using [sentence case \(/style-grammar-guidelines/capitalization/sentence-case\)](#). Do not italicize the title or use quotation marks around it.

Happy fish in little ponds: Testing a reference group model of achievement and emotion.

- For works that stand alone (e.g., books, reports, webpages), italicize the title, and [capitalize it using sentence case \(/style-grammar-guidelines/capitalization/sentence-case\)](#).

Becoming brilliant: What science tells us about raising successful children.

- For book and report references, enclose edition information, report numbers, and volume numbers in parentheses after the title. Do not add a period between the title and the parenthetical information. Do not italicize the parenthetical information. If both edition and volume information are included, separate these elements with a comma, placing the edition number first.

The psychology of music (3rd ed.).

Nursing: A concept-based approach to learning (2nd ed., Vol. 1).

- If a numbered volume has its own title, the volume number and title are included as part of the main title, rather than in parentheses.

APA handbook of industrial and organizational psychology: Vol. 1. Building and developing the organization.

- Finish the title element with a period. However, if the title ends with a question mark or exclamation point, that punctuation mark replaces the period.

Late-onset unexplained epilepsy: What are we missing?

Bracketed descriptions

To help identify works outside the peer-reviewed academic literature (i.e., works other than articles, books, reports, etc.), provide a description of the work in square brackets after the title and before the period. Capitalize the first letter of the description, but do not italicize the description.

Comprehensive meta-analysis (Version 3.3.070) [Computer software].

Examples of works that include bracketed descriptions are some audiobooks, gray literature (e.g., press releases), audiovisual works (e.g., films, [YouTube videos \(/style-grammar-guidelines/references/examples/youtube-references\)](#) , photographs), software and mobile apps, data sets, manuscripts in preparation, and dissertations and theses. Bracketed descriptions are also used in social media references to indicate attached links or images.

The examples in the *Publication Manual* and on the [reference examples page \(/style-grammar-guidelines/references/examples\)](#) include bracketed descriptions where they are needed. When in doubt, include a description. Consistency of wording is helpful, but you may alter the wording shown in the examples to best convey the information readers need to understand the nature of the work.

Source

The *source* indicates where readers can retrieve the cited work. As with titles, sources fall into two broad categories: works that are part of a greater whole and works that stand alone.

- The source for a work that is part of a greater whole (e.g., journal article, edited book chapter) is that greater whole (i.e., the journal or edited book), plus any applicable DOI or URL.
- The source for a work that stands alone (e.g., whole book, report, dissertation, thesis, film, TV series, podcast, data set, informally published work, social media, webpage) is the publisher of the work, database or archive, social media site, or website, plus any applicable DOI or URL.
- A location is not required in the source element for most works (e.g., do not include the publisher location for book references).
- Works associated with a specific location (e.g., artwork in a museum, conference presentations) include location information in the source and, depending on the work, may also include a DOI or URL.

If a work is not recoverable, [treat it as having no source \(/style-grammar-guidelines/references/missing-information\)](#) .

Format of the source

The format of the source varies depending on the reference type. The most common cases are presented next. Additional guidelines for less common cases are provided in the *Publication Manual*.

Reference type	Components of the source	Example source element
Journal article	Periodical title, volume, issue, page range, and DOI or URL	<i>Couple and Family Psychology: Research and Practice</i> , 8(3), 137–151. https://doi.org/10.1037/cfp0000121 (https://doi.org/10.1037/cfp0000121)
Journal article with article number	Periodical title, volume, issue, article number, and DOI or URL	<i>PLoS ONE</i> , 14(9), Article e0222224. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0222224 (https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0222224)
Authored book or whole edited book	Publisher name and DOI or URL	Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-25513-8 (https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-25513-8)
Edited book chapter	Information about the whole book (including editor name, book title, edition and/or	In G. R. Samanez-Larkin (Ed.), <i>The aging brain: Functional adaptation across adulthood</i> (pp. 9–43). American Psychological Association.

	volume number, page range, and publisher name) and DOI or URL	https://doi.org/10.1037/0000143-002 (https://doi.org/10.1037/0000143-002)
Webpage on a website (when authors are different from the site name)	Website name and URL	Mayo Clinic. https://www.mayoclinic.org/drugs-supplements-acidophilus/art-20361967 (https://www.mayoclinic.org/drugs-supplements-acidophilus/art-20361967)
Webpage on a website (when authors are the same as the site name)	URL	https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/types/ (https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/types/)

Database information in the source

Database and archive information is seldom needed in reference list entries. For example, if you retrieved a work from an academic research database, the reference very rarely includes the name of the database or the URL of the work on the database.

Visit the page on [database information in references \(/style-grammar-guidelines/references/database-information\)](#) to learn when and how to include database information in references.

Visit the page on [DOIs or URLs \(/style-grammar-guidelines/references/doi-urls\)](#) to learn how to include DOIs and URLs in references.

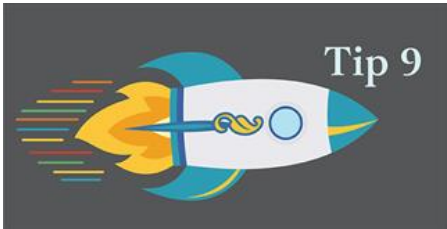
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Read insights from a recent high school graduate about the value of learning APA Style in high school.



How to cite a chapter written by someone other than the book's authors

(/blog/citing-book-chapter-written-by-other-authors)

This post describes how to cite a chapter, foreword, or other part of a book written by someone other than the book's author(s) and how to cite a book that credits additional people on the cover.

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Missing Reference Information


Sometimes the information needed to create a reference list entry is missing or unknown. When this is the case, there are various strategies to adapt the reference.

This table shows the basic structure of an APA Style reference to a published work, adapted for missing information, along with the corresponding in-text citations. [Refer to the reference examples \(/style-grammar-guidelines/references/examples\)](#) and Chapters 9 and 10 of the *Publication Manual* for specific details for the type of work being cited.

Missing element	Solution	Template	
		Reference list entry	In-text citation
Nothing—all elements are present	Provide the author, date, title, and source of the work.	Author. (Date). Title. Source.	(Author, year) Author (year)
Author	Provide the title, date, and source.	Title. (Date). Source.	(Title, year) Title (year)
Date	Provide the author, write “n.d.” for “no date,” and then provide the title and source.	Author. (n.d.). Title. Source.	(Author, n.d.) Author (n.d.)
Title	Provide the author and date, describe the work in square brackets, and then provide the source.	Author. (Date). [Description of work]. Source.	(Author, year) Author (year)
Author and date	Provide the title, write “n.d.” for “no date,” and then provide the source.	Title. (n.d.). Source.	(Title, n.d.) Title (n.d.)
Author and title	Describe the work in square brackets, and then provide the date and source.	[Description of work]. (Date). Source.	([Description of work], year) [Description of work] (year)
Date and title	Provide the author, write “n.d.” for “no date,” describe the work in square brackets, and then provide the source.	Author. (n.d.). [Description of work]. Source.	(Author, n.d.) Author (n.d.)
Author, date, and title	Describe the work in square brackets, write “n.d.” for “no date,” and then provide the source.	[Description of work]. (n.d.). Source.	([Description of work], n.d.) [Description of work] (n.d.)

Learn more

Missing reference information is covered in the seventh edition APA Style manuals in the [Publication Manual \(/products/publication-manual-7th-edition\)](#) Section 9.4 and the [Concise Guide \(/products/concise-guide\)](#) Section 9.4

 This guidance is the same as in the 6th edition.

- Related handouts**
- [Common Reference Examples Guide \(PDF, 107KB\) \(/instructional-aids/reference-examples.pdf\)](#)
 - [Creating an APA Style Reference List \(PDF, 179KB\) \(/instructional-aids/creating-reference-list.pdf\)](#)
 - [Scaffolded Reference Elements Worksheet \(PDF, 156KB\) \(/instructional-aids/scaffolded-reference-elements-worksheet.pdf\)](#)

Source	Cite as a personal communication (/style-grammar-guidelines/citations/personal-communications) or find another work to cite (see the <i>Publication Manual</i> for more information).	No reference list entry	(C. C. Communicator, personal communication, month day, year) C. C. Communicator (personal communication, month day, year)
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Anonymous authors

For a missing author, do not use “Anonymous” as the author unless the work is actually signed “Anonymous.” If the work is signed “Anonymous,” use “Anonymous” in the reference and in-text citation.

Anonymous. (2017). *Stories from my time as a spy*. Bond Publishers.

- **Parenthetical citation:** (Anonymous, 2017)
- **Narrative citation:** Anonymous (2017)

If the work is not actually signed “Anonymous,” the title moves to the beginning of the reference and is used in place of the author name, as shown in the table.

Presentation of the date

The [date in the reference list entry](#) (<https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/references/elements-list-entry#date>) for a work with a publication date may be a year only, and month and year, or a specific date (e.g., a month, day, and year); however, in the [in-text citation](#) ([/style-grammar-guidelines/citations/basic-principles/author-date](#)), provide the year only.

For an in-press work, use “in press” for the date in both the reference list entry and in-text citation.

For a work with no date, use “n.d.” in both the reference list entry and the in-text citation.

Italics in the title and source

Italic formatting within the title or source varies by reference and is not shown in the table. In general, the title is italicized for a work that stands alone (e.g., book, report, webpage on a website), and some part of the source is italicized for a work that is part of a greater whole (e.g., journal article, newspaper article).

See the [reference examples](#) ([/style-grammar-guidelines/references/examples](#)) and Chapters 9 and 10 of the *Publication Manual* for information on what to italicize within a reference.

From the APA Style blog



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(/blog/9-teaching-writing-style)



How to paraphrase

Instructors, teach your students the importance of paraphrasing (APA Style On the Go series—Tip 7).

(/blog/7-teaching-paraphrasing)



Heading levels and the benefits of citing personal communications sources

Instructors, learn how to teach APA Style basics inside and outside the classroom (APA Style On the Go series—Tip 6).

(/blog/6-teaching-headings-personal-communications)



Understanding the importance of journal articles

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(/blog/writing-love)



How to cite quotations from speeches

Create a reference that matches the source where readers can retrieve the speech. speeches)

(/blog/cite-

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Reference Lists Versus Bibliographies


References are used to document and substantiate statements made in the paper.

APA publications and other publishers and institutions using APA Style generally require reference lists, not bibliographies. A [reference list \(https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/paper-format/reference-list\)](https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/paper-format/reference-list) contains works that specifically support the ideas, claims, and concepts in a paper; in contrast, a bibliography provides works for background or further reading and may include descriptive notes (e.g., an annotated bibliography).

The *Publication Manual* (see Section 9.51) provides formatting guidance and examples for annotated bibliographies. Annotated bibliographies can also be created with APA's cloud-based writing and research software called [Academic Writer \(https://academicwriter.apa.org/\)](https://academicwriter.apa.org/).

Learn more


Reference lists versus bibliographies is covered in the seventh edition APA Style manuals in the [Publication Manual \(/products/publication-manual-7th-edition\)](/products/publication-manual-7th-edition) Chapter 9 and the [Concise Guide \(/products/concise-guide\)](/products/concise-guide) Chapter 9

 This guidance is **new** to the 7th edition.


Related handout

- [Creating an APA Style Reference List \(PDF, 179KB\) \(/instructional-aids/creating-reference-list.pdf\)](#)

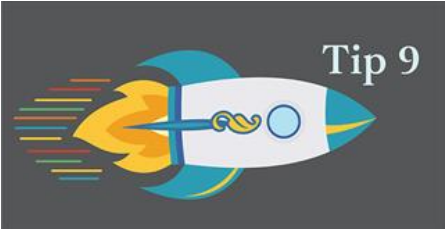
From the APA Style blog




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Tip 10
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Part 2: AI as a search engine and AI integrated into common software [\(/blog/cite-generative-ai-search-software\)](/blog/cite-generative-ai-search-software)
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Last updated: July 2022 Date created: 2019

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References in a Meta-Analysis

References for the studies included in a meta-analysis should be incorporated alphabetically into the paper’s reference list and not presented in a separate list. Although this often creates a long list, including all the references in one reference list helps ensure that they will be discovered by abstracting and indexing services, giving proper credit to the original researchers. For this reason, we discourage authors from creating a separate reference list in supplemental materials.

Learn more

References included in a meta-analysis are covered in the seventh edition APA Style [Publication Manual \(/products/publication-manual-7th-edition\)](#) Section 9.52

Formatting

In your reference list, place an asterisk at the beginning of each reference list entry that was included in the meta-analysis. On the first page of the reference list, below the “References” section label, insert the following statement (indented as a new paragraph) describing the purpose of the asterisks: “References marked with an asterisk indicate studies included in the meta-analysis.”



This guidance is the **same** as in the 6th edition.

Related handouts

- [Creating an APA Style Reference List \(PDF, 179KB\) \(/instructional-aids/creating-reference-list.pdf\)](#)
- [Scaffolded Reference Elements Worksheet \(PDF, 156KB\) \(/instructional-aids/scaffolded-reference-elements-worksheet.pdf\)](#)

Example

35

References

References marked with an asterisk indicate studies included in the meta-analysis.

*Angel, L., Bastin, C., Genon, S., Balteau, E., Phillips, C., Luxen, A., Maquet, P., Salmon, E., & Collette, F. (2013). Differential effects of aging on the neural correlates of recollection and familiarity. *Cortex*, 49(6), 1585–1597.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cortex.2012.10.002>

Finley, J. R., Tullis, J. G., & Benjamin, A. S. (2010). Metacognitive control of learning and remembering. In M. S. Khine & I. M. Saleh (Eds.), *New science of learning: Cognition, computers and collaboration in education* (pp. 109–131). Springer.
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4419-5716-0_6

*Hanaki, R., Abe, N., Fujii, T., Ueno, A., Nishio, Y., Hiraoka, K., Shimomura, T., Iizuka, O., Shinohara, M., Hirayama, K., & Mori, E. (2011). The effects of aging and Alzheimer’s disease on associative recognition memory. *Neurological Sciences*, 32(6), 1115–1122. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10072-011-0748-4>

Hargis, M. B., & Castel, A. D. (2018). Younger and older adults’ associative memory for medication interactions of varying severity. *Memory*, 26(8), 1151–1158.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09658211.2018.1441423>

In-text citations

References included in the meta-analysis do not have to be cited in the text. However, they can be cited at the author’s discretion (e.g., in a table for comparison; for an example see *Publication*

Manual Chapter 7, Table 7.4).

Any in-text citations that correspond to these references do not include asterisks.

From the APA Style blog



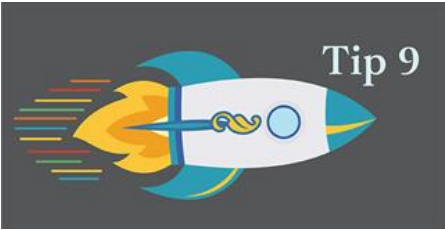
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BLOG



Home > Style and Grammar Guidelines > References >

WORKS INCLUDED IN A REFERENCE LIST

The reference list provides a reliable way for readers to identify and locate the works cited in a paper. APA Style papers generally include reference lists, not [bibliographies](/style-grammar-guidelines/references/lists-vs-bibliographies).

In general, each work cited in the text must appear in the reference list, and each work in the reference list must be cited in the text. Check your work carefully before submitting your manuscript or course assignment to ensure no works cited in the text are missing from the reference list and vice versa, with only the following exceptions.

Learn more

Information on works included in a reference list is covered in the seventh edition APA Style manuals in the [Publication Manual](/products/publication-manual-7th-edition) Sections 2.12 and 8.4 and the [Concise Guide](/products/concise-guide) Sections 1.12 and 8.4



This guidance has been **expanded** from the 6th edition.

Works excluded from a reference list

There are a few kinds of works that are not included in a reference list. Usually a work is not included because readers cannot recover it or because the mention is so broad that readers do not need a reference list entry to understand the use.

- [Personal communications](/style-grammar-guidelines/citations/personal-communications) such as emails, phone calls, or text messages are cited in the text only, not in the reference list, because readers cannot retrieve personal communications.
- [General mentions of whole websites](/style-grammar-guidelines/references/examples/whole-website-references), whole periodicals, and common software and apps in the text do not require in-text citations or reference list entries because the use is broad and the source is familiar.
- The source of an epigraph does not usually appear in the reference list unless the work is a scholarly book or journal. For example, if you open the paper with an inspirational quotation by a famous person, the source of the quotation does not appear in the reference list because the quotation is meant to set the stage for the work, not substantiate a key point.
- [Quotations from research participants](/style-grammar-guidelines/citations/quoting-participants) in a study you conducted can be presented and discussed in the text but do not need citations or reference list entries. Citations and reference list entries are not necessary because the quotations are part of your original research. They could also compromise participants' confidentiality, which is an ethical violation.
- References included in a meta-analysis, which are marked with an asterisk in the reference list, may be cited in the text (or not) at the author's discretion. This exception is relevant only to authors who are conducting a meta-analysis.

Related handouts

- [Common Reference Examples Guide \(PDF, 107KB\)](/instructional-aids/reference-examples.pdf)
- [Creating an APA Style Reference List \(PDF, 179KB\)](/instructional-aids/creating-reference-list.pdf)
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