

## A research Paper Template for Professions & Professionalism Based on APA6

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## Abstract

This is a document template which is based on the APA6 style guidelines. It will also serve as a guide or user manual. The authors and editors, henceforth denoted as users, using this template should apply the paragraph styles in this template for and different content. What styles to use, and how to use them will be detailed in the main part of this document. The styles in this template are designed to comply with the APA6 style guidelines, but are also defined with an automatic document conversion process in mind. After the editor has approved the article for publication and final formatting is done, the manuscript is sent to the Digital Services Department for conversion to fulltext in the following formats: XML (JATS), HTML, EPUB and MOBI. This allows readers to enjoy the article in a flexible and accessible manner. By properly applying styles in this document template, you are not only saving yourself time since you don't have to think too much about formatting. Instead you will be able to focus on the content and structure of your manuscript. At the same time greatly assisting in the document conversion workflow. This will allow us to produce accessible formats in a timely manner.

*Keywords:* apa6, style, outline, document-conversion, formatting

## Introduction

Using a document template with predefined styles and formatting rules can be a huge timesaver for the author. It is a great advantage not having to worry too much about all the formatting rules of a publication style such as apa6. Instead the author should focus on the document content, flow and structure, and just apply the pre-defined styles that fit the content.

The reader of this document will learn how to use tools such as outline/navigation, that will let the user visualize the document structure based on the heading hierarchy.

Learning how to properly apply styles will also be important in this work.

## Main motivation

1. Aid authors and editors in producing a consistent document adhering to the apa6 style formatting guidelines.
2. Let the users focus on content, flow and structure. The formatting should be built into the paragraph and header styles, and should not be something the user has to worry too much about.

3. A properly structured and styled manuscript based on this template will be possible to automatically and programmatically convert to accessible formats in a timely manner.

The third motivation is especially important in letting us produce the file formats that will enable readers to access the article the way they prefer. The users can then read it online as a fulltext webpage, download the PDF for digital reading or print, download EPUB or MOBI formats for reading on an electronic book reader device using such as Kindle, tablets, smartphones.

That we can supply alternative and accessible file formats is important especially for users with different disabilities. A reader with visual impairments for instance could have the text read out loud using text to speech software.

## Method

A document template based on apa6 style formatting guidelines has been developed. The styles in this document template are based on the formatting guidelines in the apa6 style.

This document template will also serve as a user guide for applying the paragraph and header styles, as well as informing the user of helpful word processing features such as the navigation pane to better visualize the document structure.

### Setting up the workspace

Before beginning to use this document template, it's helpful to set up the workspace in your chosen word processor. You want to be able to see the *document outline* and *the list of the styles* you can apply to the document. The *document outline* will let you see if your document is properly structured. The *styles and formatting* will let you structure your document with the right header and paragraph styles.

Also it is sometimes useful to see the *non-printing characters*. Then you can easily spot if you inserted superfluous whitespace such as spaces, tabs and empty paragraphs. In general you should avoid inserting extra whitespace such as spaces, tabs or empty paragraphs because they will introduce non-consistent spacings to your document. It can be very hard to spot unless display of non-printing characters is turned on.

The spacing rules should be defined in the paragraph and header styles. If you are not happy with the defined style rules, you are welcome to discuss with the author of this document template.

**Table 1**  
*Setting up the workspace*

Item to set up/display	Microsoft Word 2013	Libre Office 5.0
Navigation/Outline view	View Pane > Navigation Pane checkbox	View > Navigator (F5)
Styles and formatting	Home Pane > Small arrow in the styles section (Ctrl+Alt+Shift+S)	Format > Styles and Formatting (F11). Note that you can filter which styles will be shown from the drop down menu at the bottom of Styles and Formatting
Non-printing characters	In the Home Pane, toggle non-printing characters with the paragraph mark: ¶	View > Non-printing Characters (F10), or find the paragraph mark icon: ¶

*Note.* Please remember to supply a table title and table caption for each table. And remember that table title and table caption goes above the table.

## Document outline

The greatest benefit of properly applying proper header styles is that the document gets a proper outline. The outline can be described as the hierarchy/main structure of all the headings in the document. See table 1 in “Setting up the workspace” above for instructions on how to activate the document outliner/navigation panel.

### *Applying header and paragraph styles*

When applying header styles it is important to consider the document hierarchy/structure. Header styles have an associated outline level. It is very important to avoid skipping heading levels as this results in wrong document structure.

If the document has a good structure, not only will it be easier to read and edit, it will also enable automatic conversion to more accessible formats with less intervention by staff.

When applying header styles, please observe these guidelines:

**Table 2**  
*Guidelines for applying header styles*

Type of heading	Style(s) to apply	Comments
Article title	Heading 1	There should be one and only one use of Heading 1 in the whole document, it is reserved for the Article title.
Author Note	H2_Preamble	This style is based on the default Header 2 style
Abstract References Bibliography Appendix	H2_Abstract_References_Appendix	This style is based on the default Header 2 style. In addition it has a forced page break before, making the heading begin a new page. These headings are part of the major blocks in an article and should have a Header level 2 style.
Introduction Method Results Discussion Conclusion	Heading 2	These are the most common major blocks of a research article, and should be styled using the default Heading 2 style.
All other headings	Heading 2 Heading 3 Heading 4 Heading 5 Heading 6	Use the generic headings for all other headings. This allows the user to promote and demote heading level in the Navigation/Outliner. Consider if you really need to go as deep as Heading 5 or Heading 6.

*Note.* Always use a proper heading paragraph style for headings and never skip a heading level. Also, never use inline formatting to make text look like a heading by altering the font face, increasing the size or making it bold or italic. This causes all sorts of problems down the road, including confusion about what headings content belongs to. Text formatted in such a way will not be identified as a heading and will not be added to the document outline. This would require manual intervention from staff later if discovered.

### ***Multiple heading levels***

The default heading styles in this document template have been redefined to comply with APA6 style guide. The heading above this paragraph has a Heading 4 style.

As described in the table note above, for the main part use the default Heading 2 to Heading 4 header styles. Use Heading 5 and Heading 6 sparingly if you must. It is better than resorting to manually formatting text to look like headings as that will not be reflected in the document outline.

### **A level 5 heading**

You should not need to go so deep that you need to use a level 5 heading.

### *A level 6 heading*

If you find yourself needing to go six levels deep, maybe it's time to rethink the document structure?

## **Example content**

This section includes several common types of content with descriptions on how to apply the styles in this document template.

### **Tables**

Tables, when used properly relationships and data visually that can be easier to read than long passages of text. Please consult section 5.19 Table Checklist in Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, sixth edition.

First, it is important to note that one should create a proper table using the built in tools for creating a table. Do not make some text with manual formatting that makes it look like a table as doing that will not have the proper structure of a table that can be understood by a computer program.

### ***Title and caption above***

Always include a title and caption for each table. According to the Apa6 style guidelines the title and caption should appear above the table.

Please use the styles: *Article\_Table\_Title* and *Article\_Table\_Caption* for styling the title and caption.

### ***Styling the table headers and contents***

Please use the style *Article\_Table\_Heading\_Left*, *Article\_Table\_Heading\_Center* or *Article\_Table\_Heading\_Right* for the table headings, and *Article\_Table\_Contents\_Left*, *Article\_Table\_Contents\_Center* or *Article\_Table\_Contents\_Right* to for table cells. By using these predefined styles, you can ensure that the HTML (web-page) version of the table will have the text aligned as intended.

When using these table styles, you can easily get the table formatted, and at the same time the conversion software will understand which cells are table header cells, and which are table data cells. This makes a huge difference for people relying on assistive technologies.

If using LibreOffice you can have even more control when creating the table and actually define proper table header rows.

### *Example tables*

Which is easier to read, the section about styling the table headers and contents, or the following table?

**Table 2**

*Styles designed for formatting tables*

Type of content	Styles	Comments
Table title	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Article_Table_Title</li> </ul>	This is the title labelled “Table 2” above this table.
Table caption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Article_Table_Caption</li> </ul>	This is the short description above the table, below the table title.
Table headings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Article_Table_Heading_Left</li> <li>Article_Table_Heading_Center</li> <li>Article_Table_Heading_Right</li> </ul>	Table header cells that describe the data-cells in a row or colum.
Table cell contents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Article_Table_Contents_Left</li> <li>Article_Table_Contents_Center</li> <li>Article_Table_Contents_Right</li> </ul>	Regular table data cells.
Table note (optional)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Article_Table_Note</li> </ul>	The optional Note below the table.

*Note.* The table follows the minimum-ink principle and relies on the horizontal and vertical spacings between cells to separate them instead of using borders. An extra margin of 2mm have been added to the table cells using table properties.

**Table 3**

*Approximate values of popular mathematical constants*

Constant	Pronunciation	Approximate value
$\pi$	pi	3.14
<b>e</b>	euler	2.71828

*Note.* An optional table note may appear below the table, describing the data or explaining terms. The Leading word “Note” should be in italics.

## **Figures**

Figures can include different types of charts and plots, and should be used to explain concepts or the data if it would be easier to convey the message with a figure than in a table.

### ***Title and caption below***

Unlike tables, figures should have title and caption below. It is important that the caption has a good description, and that images get an alt description. To give an image a title and an alt description, usually you would right click it and select properties and fill in a descriptive text where appropriate. Also keep in mind that text in the image cannot be easily read by a computer program, so textual content within an image can be inaccessible for visually impaired users.

### ***Example figures***

Figure 1

Navigation panel in Microsoft Word

## **Images/Photographs**

Insert sample image here.

## **Lists**

As with tables, it is very important that the built in tools for generating a list is used, and that the author does not create text that looks like a list. Using the built in tools for creating lists will make sure the list is defined as list content in the document, and a computer program will be able to understand that it is a list.

Nested lists are ok if it makes sense to do that.

## **Quoting others**

When quoting long passages of text...

## **References**

Let's face it. Properly formatting references can be one of the more challenging tasks for authors. But it doesn't have to be! Use a reference manager to assist you in formatting references according to the citation style you want to use.

If you for some reason have to switch to a different citation style later, the reference manager can do this for you in seconds. Compare that to the manual work that might take a full working day if you have a big reference list.

If you still do decide to format references in the reference list by hand, be warned that even one of the following sample common formatting mistakes will make it nearly impossible to correctly understand the reference for a computer program:

### ***Common formatting mistakes in refernces***



1. missing or extra comma
2. missing or extra period
3. missing or extra colon
4. wrong italization
5. forgot to include year in parenthesis
6. author family name and initials reversed
7. forgot that the authors name should be formatted as Author A., Author B. & Author C. and editors names names and initials should be reversed as E. Editor, & D. Editor
8. accidentally introduced paragraph(s) in a reference so that it spans several paragraphs
9. Incorrect usage of [brackets] that is used when translating the title in a different language

### ***Use the manual***

If you still decide to go this route, please consult the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association when you write references. Unless you're very experienced in the latest version of the APA style, they are usually not formatted exactly the way you think.

### ***Using a reference manager***

A reference manager will handle a database for all your references. You will be able to easily insert citations, the software will take care that it is formatted properly in the in-text citations as well as automatically updating your bibliography/reference list depending on the references used in your text.

There are many to choose from. Zotero and EndNote are two good and popular examples. Zotero is free software that integrates with OpenOffice, LibreOffice, Microsoft Word, and several web browsers for automatically adding references to your reference database. EndNote is a commercial add-on to Microsoft Word that has its own set of features.

### ***Styling references***

The references should be formatted a hanging indent where the first line of each reference is flush left with the page margin, and the following lines are indented (1/2 inch or 1.27cm). These rules are built into the style: *Article\_Reference*.

Make sure each reference occupies only one paragraph. The formatting rules defined in the style will take care of the presentation.

### ***Avoid this when formatting references***

Do not manually break a reference on several lines (paragraphs) and indent using spaces. Not only will this make it nearly impossible to achieve consistent spacing, it will also make it impossible for a computer program to understand where each reference begins and ends.

### ***Forcing a linebreak without introducing a new paragraph***

If you absolutely want to force a line break inside a reference because of display purposes, make sure it is not a new paragraph you insert. Accomplish this with the key-combination SHFIT+Enter

### ***Reference examples***

Hanssen, E. (2015). A research Paper Template for Professions & Professionalism Based on APA6. Example Journal of Publishing Workflows, 1(1), 1-10. Retrieved from: <http://www.example.com/documents/pp-template.docx>

## **TODO**

Here I will list some tasks that still have not been completed in this template.

1. Add block citation paragraph style
2. Add figures (screenshots) of how to activate the style pane and navigation pane.
3. Add style rules for figure captions and descriptions
4. Add a “Avoid this” section, with explanations why such practices are problematic
  - a. Avoid text boxes
  - b. Don’t insert extra paragraphs in the bibliography
  - c. Don’t make look like lists, make proper lists
5. Add a section describing proper use of inline formatting.
6. Add appendix describing what formatting rules are used in compliance with the APA6 guidelines.
7. Add instructions for non break space between some words.
8. Formatting of references, do and don’t.
9. Advice the use of a reference manager like Zotero (free) or EndNote (Commercial addon for MS Word)
10. Try to include examples of all imaginable types of content such as figures, block citations, inline citations, footnotes, tables, charts, images.

## **Results**

The results will show with time and usage.

## **Discussion**

The fruits of the efforts in learning to apply proper styles will surely be felt by both the authors and editors who will not need to worry much about the formatting any more since most of that is taken care of in the document template. And the staff who dilligently convert the articles to accessible formats. And last but not least, the readers who will be able to enjoy the paper however they choose, be it as a HTML fulltext web-page, PDF on screen or printed or on an E-Book reader with the EPUB and MOBI formats.

## References

## **Appendix**

### **Table A1**

*Application of header styles*

### **Table A2**

*Application of paragraph styles*