FREE FORMATTING CHECKLIST

Your APA 7 Cheat Sheet

Quick-reference formatting checklist for your article

Prestige Academic Editing

This is a guide to APA 7 formatting. It's meant for quick reference and to help you quickly format your article. Tick each box as you go.

1 Page setup

- [ ] 1 inch margins on all sides.
- [ ] One readable font throughout: 12 pt Times New Roman, 11 pt Calibri, 11 pt Arial or 11 pt Georgia.
- [ ] Double-spaced everywhere, including block quotes and the reference list.
- [ ] No extra space between paragraphs.
- [ ] First line of each paragraph indented 0.5 inch.
- [ ] Text left aligned, not justified.
- [ ] Page number in the top right corner, starting on the title page.

2 Title page

- [ ] Student paper: title in bold title case, three or four lines down from the top, then your name, department and university, course, instructor, and due date.
- [ ] Running head: not needed for student papers unless your instructor asks.

3 Headings

- [ ] Level 1: centered, bold, Title Case.
- [ ] Level 2: flush left, bold, Title Case.
- [ ] Level 3: flush left, bold italic, Title Case.
- [ ] Level 4: indented, bold, Title Case, ends with a period, text continues on the same line.
- [ ] Level 5: indented, bold italic, Title Case, ends with a period, text continues on the same line.
- [ ] Use Level 1 first and move down in order.
- [ ] Do not skip levels.
- [ ] Do not label the opening section "Introduction."

4 In-text citations

- [ ] Author-date format: (Smith, 2020) or Smith (2020).
- [ ] Two authors: use both names every time, and "&" inside parentheses: (Smith & Jones, 2020).
- [ ] Three or more authors: first author plus "et al." from the first citation: (Smith et al., 2020).
- [ ] Direct quotes need a page number: (Smith, 2020, p. 14).
- [ ] Quotes of 40 words or more: block quote, indented 0.5 inch, no quotation marks.
- [ ] Several sources in one set of parentheses: alphabetical order, separated by semicolons.
- [ ] Secondary sources: (Smith, 2010, as cited in Jones, 2020).
- [ ] Cite only what you actually read.

5 Reference list

- [ ] Starts on a new page. "References" is centered and bold.
- [ ] Alphabetical by first author's surname.
- [ ] Hanging indent of 0.5 inch on every entry.
- [ ] Every in-text citation has an entry, and every entry is cited in the text.
- [ ] Article and chapter titles in sentence case.
- [ ] Book titles in italics.
- [ ] Journal names in Title Case, with the journal name and volume number italicized.
- [ ] DOIs as full links: https://doi.org/...
- [ ] No "Retrieved from" before a link unless the page changes over time.
- [ ] No publisher location.
- [ ] List up to 20 authors.
- [ ] For 21 or more, list the first 19, an ellipsis, then the final author.

6 Tables and figures

- [ ] Label above, in bold: Table 1 or Figure 1.
- [ ] Title on the next line, in italic Title Case.
- [ ] Notes go below, starting with italic "*Note.*"
- [ ] Tables: no vertical lines and only a few horizontal ones.
- [ ] Mention every table and figure in the text before it appears.
- [ ] Number them in the order they are first mentioned.

7 Common errors to catch before you submit

- [ ] "et al." used for two authors.
- [ ] "and" in parentheses where "&" belongs.
- [ ] Missing or uneven hanging indents.
- [ ] Citations with no reference entry, and references never cited.
- [ ] Years that do not match between text and reference list.
- [ ] Title Case article titles in the reference list.
- [ ] Skipped heading levels or a mix of heading styles.
- [ ] Block quotes that are single-spaced.
- [ ] Mixed fonts or sizes after copy and paste.
- [ ] Page numbers that restart in the wrong place.

Need a second set of eyes?

A final read for formatting is the part most writers are too close to see. If you want a second set of eyes, I'm happy to help.

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