

APA Citing References

January 13,2014

Typed from *Understanding Research Methods*

While there are a number of methods (or *styles*) for citing references, the Harvard Method is the most widely used one in the social and behavioral sciences. This method is also known as the author-date referencing system.

The American Psychological Association (APA) has adopted and modified the Harvard Method, and the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* describes in detail how to use this method. In this topic, we will consider some of the basics for citing sources and preparing a reference list using the Harvard method.

In the text, the last name(s) for a reference can be made the subject of the sentences, as in Example 1, or referred to parenthetically, as in Example 2. The form shown in Example 1 obviously emphasizes the authorship, while the form shown in Example 2 emphasizes the content of the statement (in this case, by making “ managerial sociology” the subject of the sentence)

EXAMPLE 1

Doe (2004) has pointed out that despite being a relatively new field of inquiry, managerial sociology has made important contributions to our understanding of this issue. Specifically...

EXAMPLE 2

Despite being a relatively new field of inquiry, managerial sociology has made important contributions to our understanding of this issue (Doe, 2004)

Making the authors' surnames the subjects of the sentences is helpful when you want to compare and contrast the findings (or thoughts) of two or more authors, as shown in Example 3

EXAMPLE 3

While Lopez (2003) reported that X increased as a function of Y, Jones (2004) reported no increase. The reason for this discrepancy is difficult to determine. However, Jones used a larger sample and better...

As you know from the previous topic, it is often a good idea to group authors together when they make a common point. However, except for school assignments where you might be required to show all references, long strings of references for a single point should usually avoided. To do this, use the abbreviation “e.g.,” meaning “for example”, which is done in Example 4. Note that the author points out there are more studies but is citing only some of the most important ones.

EXAMPLE 4

The superiority of X over Y in the treatment of Z has been widely reported in the literature. The strongest evidence to date has been obtained by numerous researchers who have used large, national samples (e.g., Solis, 2001; Wong, 2002; Smith & West, 2003; Brett, 2004). These studies tend to confirm the principle that....

The reference list at the end of a research report should include references for only those citations that were cited in the body of the report. (Do not include all relevant references, as you might in a bibliography or suggested reading list.)

The items in a reference list should be listed alphabetically by authors' surnames as shown in Example 5. Note that the first two references in Example 5 are for journal articles, the third one is for a book, and the last one is for material found on a Web site.

EXAMPLE 5

Adams, J. G. (2003). The effects of anything on everything. *Journal of Behavior Therapy and Analysis*, 23, 55-72.

Brennan, K. P., and Strang, T.S. (2002). The reliability of popular measures of depression. *Personality and Social Disorders in Education*, 44,145-157.

Chin, W. D. (2002). *The art of being kind from the ancient time to modern times*. New York: Brooks Publishing.

Lopez, F. L. (2003). "Cognitive structure of intelligence." Retrieved February 23, 2003, from
[www. Apa.org/info/st 1445](http://www.Apa.org/info/st 1445)

If you are following APA style when writing for a journal or class project, it is important to note details such as the following:

For a journal article: the title of the article is in lowercase except for the first word (or first word following a colon), and the title of the journal is in upper and lowercase and is italicized. It is followed by the volume number, which is also italicized.

For a book: The title of the book is in lowercase except for the first word (or first word following a colon) and is italicized.

For material found on the Web: Provide the date on which the material was accessed because the content of a Web site might vary from day to day.

For all sources: Follow the punctuation used in the examples carefully. For instances, when writing in English, a comma is not necessary between two elements in a list. However, in APA style, a comma is used between the names of two authors (e.g., Brennan, K. P., & Strang, T.S.).

Regardless of the particular style you are following, apply it accurately and consistently. Failure to do so will raise questions about the care you have taken with other aspects of your research project.