Working with APA in Social Sciences
(Psychology, Education, etc.)

General Guidelines
APA (American Psychological Association) style is commonly used to cite sources within social sciences. APA style is used because it is straightforward and spotlights ideas being presented. What sets this apart from other APA papers is that the manuscript structure (abstract, introduction, method, results, and discussion), word choice, punctuation, visuals, and references move the idea forward with minimal distraction. The font type of the draft should be 12 pt., Times New Roman font, double-spaced with 1 inch margins on all sides of the paper.

Cover Page
In the header, the running head should be a shorted version of the paper’s full title. In left-hand corner of the cover page, “Running head” as well as the title should be no more than 50 characters. Additionally, “Running head” should only appear on the cover page. The page number should be placed in the right hand corner.

The title of your paper, your name, and the name of the institution should be listed, centered, and double-space. The title should summarize the paper’s main idea and identify the variables and the relationship between them.

Abstract
Title the page “Abstract.” This should be centered.

The abstract is a brief summary of the paper. The abstract gives readers a quick overview of the main idea and key points of the paper. The abstract might also briefly suggest any implications or applications of the research discussed in the paper.

The abstract should not be indented and should be between 150-250 words. Make clear of any abbreviations or acronyms that will be used throughout the draft.

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Introduction

The title should be centered. The title should not be bolded, underlined, or italicized. The title will be the same as the title on the cover page.

The goal of the introduction is to provide background information on the topic. This may include explaining theories and discussing previous studies related to the topic. You should define important key terms and clearly state your research questions as well as hypothesis.

It is important to cite any information that is taken from different sources within the body.

In-text Citations guide:
https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/

Methods

Title the section Method and center it. This should not be bolded or italicized.

The methods section consists of 3 parts:

The participants section describes who is conducting and who is participating in the experiment. This includes demographics such as age, nationality, and gender.

The materials section describes the materials being used in the experiment.

The procedure section describes what is going on in the experiment, from beginning to end.

*Tip: Be as descriptive as possible. The reader should be able to picture the materials used as well as what is going on in the experiment.
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Results

The results section may consist of several subsections. The results section should summarize the data collected during the experiment, remind readers of the variables used.

To the left is a sample results section consisting of a preliminary and primary analysis.

See your instructor about requirements.

Discussion

Start the discussion section by reminding readers of the purpose and thesis or hypothesis of your paper.

Other parts that may be included in the discussion: your findings compared to previous studies, implications, strengths, limitations, and further research possibly needed.
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References


Figures and Tables

If you have figures and/or tables, place those at the end of the paper, after the references section. Tables should be titled and captioned. See your instructor about these requirements.

For more information on figures and tables:
https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/670/05/

References - The following works were referred to during the creation of this handout: The Online Writing Lab (OWL) at Purdue University