

## The 7<sup>th</sup> Edition APA System (page 1 of 4)

By Dr. Karen Petit

Writers in social science courses often use the APA system, from the American Psychological Association, to document (describe) their source(s) of information. By correctly using the APA system, a writer can give credit to the person, organization, or website that first created an idea, word(s), visual, or sound. If readers of a paper will not know which words or ideas were written by which author, then the writer should revise the paper for correct, clear use of the APA system, as well as for any other problems, such as grammar errors.

### Parts of the APA System

The APA documentation system requires the use of in-text citations in the body of a paper; each of these citations (except for personal interviews) should connect to the first word of a reference page entry at the end of the paper. The three elements that often are included in the body of a paper are described in this section, followed by examples of parenthetical citations, a listing of helpful websites, information about reference pages, and an example of a reference page with entries that connect to the in-text citations on pages one to three of this handout.

1. A **lead-in phrase** lets the reader of a paper know that the upcoming ideas or words were first expressed by someone other than the writer of the paper. A lead-in phrase can show agreement, disagreement, or some other logical method of moving smoothly between two different authors' ideas. Past tense or present perfect tense verbs should be used in the APA system when signaling another author's research.
2. A **quotation, a paraphrase, or a summary** states the ideas or words that have been borrowed.
3. An **in-text parenthetical citation** "cites" a single author's or multiple authors' last names, the publication date, and the page number(s). If the lead-in phrase already states the source's name(s) and the date, the parenthetical citation that follows the quote, paraphrase, or summary only needs to include the page number(s). When citing from a website, if no page number is available, then you can use different information (such as a paragraph number) to let your readers know which section of the source you're referencing.

### Examples of In-text Parenthetical Citations

#### A Quotation with Parentheses Enclosing an Author's Name, Publication Year(s), and a Page Number

In the following example, quotation marks enclose the words that were borrowed from a poem by Frost. The slash in the quotation indicates where a line break occurs in the poem. At the end of the quote is a citation with source information:

"I took the one less traveled by, / And that has made all the difference" (Frost, 1916/2008, p. 836).

#### A Quotation Compared to a Paraphrase or a Summary with Source Information in the Lead-in Phrase

When a source's ideas are rephrased (a paraphrase) or rephrased and condensed (a summary), an in-text citation and a reference page entry both are required, as this quotation from the APA website indicates:

According to the American Psychological Association (2020), "A paraphrase restates another's idea (or your own previously published idea) in your own words. . . . When you paraphrase, cite the original work using either the narrative or parenthetical citation format."

A paraphrase or a summary has no quotation marks because only the information or ideas—not the words—are borrowed.

A citation that is connected to a reference page entry is still required:

The American Psychological Association (2020) has stated that a source should be identified, even when ideas are rephrased.

#### A Quotation from a One-Page Source with the Author's Name and the Date in the Lead-in Phrase

If a citation comes from a one-page source, the page number only needs to be listed on the reference page.

Since the author's name and the date are in the lead-in phrase, no parentheses are needed:

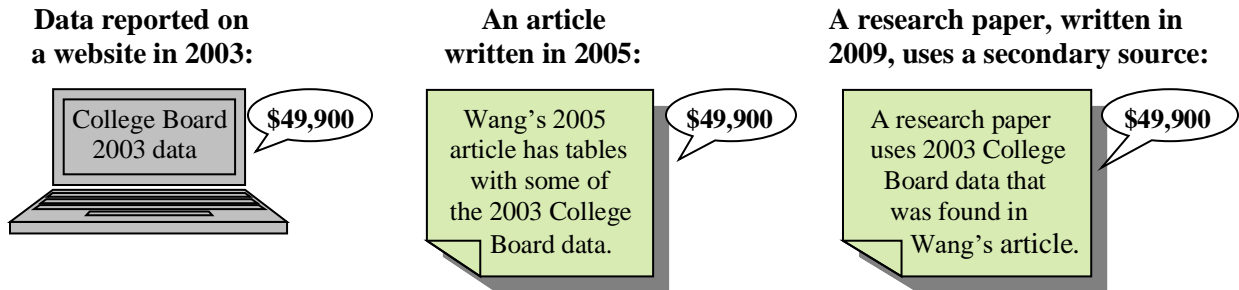
In "Four Myths About College Costs," Wang (2005) said, "Over a working lifetime, the typical college graduate earns about 75% more than a high school grad does."

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### A Secondary Source

Occasionally, the writer of a paper might use a “secondary source,” which quotes, summarizes, or paraphrases information from someone else’s quote, summary, or paraphrase:



When a secondary source is used, the reference page only includes data from the primary source, as page four of this handout illustrates. The in-text citation, on the other hand, includes information about both sources: the lead-in phrase often has secondary-source information (the author’s name). The parenthesis after the quote/summary/paraphrase usually will include primary source information after the phrase “as cited in”:

According to the College Board (2003), “median annual earnings” were \$49,900 for college graduates with a Bachelor’s degree and \$30,800 for high school graduates (as cited in Wang, 2005).

### A Unified, Coherent Paragraph with Three Multiple-Author Sources and an Organization as a Source

Every paragraph that contains quotations, paraphrases, and/or summaries should be coherently written. The following example of a paragraph illustrates how ideas from four sources can be logically connected to the paragraph writer’s own ideas with a topic sentence, organization of supporting details, and the use of transitions. The paragraph also illustrates the use of citations for sources with multiple authors, as well as an organization as an author. When a source has three or more authors, the first author’s name will be stated, followed by the abbreviation “et al.”

Writing is an important skill necessary for success both in college and at work. In college courses, writing can help participants to learn a course’s content, as well as to communicate effectively and to prepare for a career position. In health profession courses, for example, “a core skill required of health professionals [. . .] is the ability to write about scientific content concisely and accurately for their colleagues” (Rawson et al., 2005, p. 234). Effective writing is also needed in other courses; one article explained the importance of writing skills in different kinds of community college courses: “Writing essays and papers that meet academic standards translates into receiving passing or acceptable grades in all types of community-college courses” (Hennessy & Evens, 2005, p. 263). Not only is writing important in college courses, but it is also important at work. Writing has been “deemed essential for success in the workplace” (Baker et al., 2003, p. 109). More than an effective resume is needed because, once an appropriate career position has been located, a job applicant will have to not only attain but also hold onto the position. The National Commission on Writing (2004) surveyed 120 large American companies “employing nearly 8 million people”; the survey data showed: “Writing is a ‘threshold skill’ for both employment and promotion, particularly for salaried employees” (p. 3). Thus, to prepare for, to acquire, and to be promoted in a career position all require effective writing skills.

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### A Paraphrase or a Summary with an Unknown Author and No Page or Paragraph Numbers

If the author's name is not known, an organization's name or a short version of the title is used, along with the publication year. No page or paragraph numbers were stated on the original webpage, so none are listed here:

In 2019, 96% of the students who attended the Community College of Rhode Island in the spring were Rhode Island residents (Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, 2019).

### An Online Reference Source with a Paragraph or a Section Number

When no page number is available, a heading's title, a paragraph number, or a section number can be included in the parentheses:

*Dictionary.com* (2020) defines "plagiarism" as "an act or instance of using or closely imitating the language and thoughts of another author without authorization and the representation of that author's work as one's own, as by not crediting the original author" (para. 1).

### Changes within Quotations: Deletions, Additions, and Letters

When a writer changes an original source's words, an ellipsis (. . .) should be used to indicate deleted words; square brackets indicate additions or show a change in a letter's capitalization. Square brackets often are used with an ellipsis to clarify that the writer of a paper, rather than an original author, added the ellipsis:

"[I]mitating the language and thoughts of another author without authorization and . . . not crediting the original author" is "plagiarism" (*Dictionary.com*, 2020, para. 1).

### Helpful Websites

The website for the Community College of Rhode Island's Writing Center has many helpful resources for research, writing, and other tasks: <https://www.ccri.edu/writingcenter/resources>.

The American Psychological Association's website ([www.apa.org](http://www.apa.org)) has information about APA Style (<https://apastyle.apa.org>).

Purdue University's Online Writing Lab can help with research, documentation, and APA format: <https://owl.purdue.edu/>.

### Reference Pages

A **reference page** alphabetically lists information about all of the sources that have been "referenced" or cited in the body of a paper. (Exception: While personal interviews are referenced in the body of a paper, they cannot be retrieved by other people and hence do not have to be listed on a reference page.) Each of a reference page's entries should include these items: the author's name (or authors' names), the publication date (When no date is available, the abbreviation "n.d." is used.), a partial work's title (articles, stories, poems, essays, songs, or webpages), a whole work's title in an italic font (books, websites, databases, films, paintings, or performances), printed source data, electronic source data, an access date, a digital object identifier (DOI), and a web address. Words such as "In," "retrieved," and "from" are included. A web address does not have to be listed if a DOI has been stated. When no DOI is available, the name of an article's database with any identifying numbers should be listed immediately before the web address. If a source has more than twenty authors, the first nineteen authors' names should be stated, followed by an ellipsis and the last author's name.

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