

APA 7th Edition: In-Text Citations

In APA format, when including another person's work or ideas, either through direct quotations or paraphrasing/summarizing, you must use a brief parenthetical in-text citation that directs the reader to an entry in your reference list (see WLDC Tip Sheet on [*APA 7th Edition: Reference Page*](#)). For this tip sheet, numbers for pages, chapters, tables, or any similar item that you may reference have been replaced with the letter "x," and "Lastname" refers to the author's last name for simplicity.

The Basics

1. APA uses the author-date method of in-text citations
 - a. (Lastname, Year)
2. In-text citation should be placed before the final period of the sentence.
3. Each in-text citation should have a corresponding entry in the references at the end of your paper.
4. If you are referring to an idea from another work (not directly quoting), or referencing an entire book, article, or other source, you do not need to include page numbers in your in-text citation.
5. If you are directly quoting, you should include the page number at the end of the in-text parenthetical citation.
 - a. (Lastname, Year, p. x) for one page
 - b. (Lastname, Year, pp. xx–xx) for a range of pages
6. If the author's last name is included in the sentence (narrative citation), only the year is included in parentheses.
7. If there is no date provided for the source, use "n.d." ("no date").

Citing a Work by One Author

If possible, this format is also used for electronic sources.

Example:

(Lastname, Year)

Direct Quotations

If quoting directly from a source, you will need to include the author, year of publication, and the page number for the reference (remember: “p.” for a single page and “pp.” for a range of pages, separated by an en dash)

Short Quotations (fewer than 40 words):

Incorporate into the text using quotation marks

Example:

“Text of quote” (Lastname, Year, p. x)

Long Quotations (40 words or more):

Use a block quote: begin on a new line, indent the entire quote 0.5 inches from the left margin, and do not include quotation marks. Place the citation after the punctuation.

Example:

Lastname (Year) states:

Text of long quotation... (pp. xx–xx)

Quotations From Sources Without Page Numbers:

If a source does not include page numbers, use another identifying element such as a paragraph (para. x), a chapter (ch. x), a section number (sec. x), a table number (Table x), or something similar. Older works, such as religious texts, may use identifiers such as verse numbers (Verse x). This also applies to sources such as webpages.

Examples:

Lastname (Year) found that “in the beginning students often struggle with APA format” (para. 3).

OR

(Lastname, Year, Table x)

Paraphrasing/Summarizing

Even when paraphrasing or summarizing, the original idea must be cited; however, you only need to include the author and year of publication in your in-text citation. However, APA guidelines do encourage that you include a page range if possible or when it will help the reader find the information easier.

Example:

According to Lastname (Year), formatting in APA can be difficult and overwhelming for first-time writers.

OR

APA in-text citation format is difficult and overwhelming for first-time writers (Lastname, Year, pp. xx–xx)

Non-Standard Author Categories

Although APA's author-date system for citations is fairly straightforward, there may be times when the standard "one author, one source" configuration does not apply. The following outlines common variations.

Work by Two Authors

Use an ampersand (&) in parenthetical citations and "and" in narrative format.

Parenthetical Example:

(Lastname & Lastname, Year)

Narrative Example:

Lastname and Lastname (Year) argue that...

Work by Three or More Authors

Use only the first author's last name followed by "et al." Notice that "et al." includes a period after "al." but not after "et" and there is no comma following the author's last name.

Parenthetical Example:

(Lastname et al., Year)

Narrative Example:

Lastname and colleagues (Year) found that...

Unknown or Unidentified Author

If no author is listed, use the title of the work in place of the author. Short titles use quotation marks, whereas long titles are italicized.

Example for short title:

("Short Title," Year)

Example for long title:

(*Long Title*, Year)

Unknown Date

In the event that the publication date is unknown, use the abbreviation “n.d.” (for “no date”).

Parenthetical Example:

(Lastname, n.d.)

Narrative Example:

According to Lastname (n.d.) students tend to struggle with formatting for APA in-text citations when there is no date provided.

Organization as an Author

The first time that you introduce an organization within the body of your paper, you will spell out the full name within the in-text citation. If the organization is well known, you can include the abbreviation within brackets of the first in-text citation and only include the abbreviation in subsequent citations.

1st Example:

(American Psychological Association [APA], Year)

2nd Example:

(APA, Year)

Authors With Same Last Names

Use first initials with last names to prevent confusion.

Example:

(A. Lastname, Year; B. Lastname, Year)

Two or More Works by the Same Author in the Same Year

Following the year, use lower-case letter suffixes (e.g. a, b, c) in the in-text citation that correspond to the entries in your reference list

Two or More Works in the Same Parentheses

List sources alphabetically (the same way they would appear in your references) and separate them with semicolons. You do not include an ampersand or “and.”

Example:

(Lastname A, Year; Lastname B, Year; Lastname C, Year)

Personal Communication

Personal communications include sources such as emails, interviews, text messages, and conversations which are only cited in-text. You do not include an entry in your references because the reader cannot access these sources.

Example:

(F. Lastname, personal communication, Month Date, Year)

Traditional Knowledge of Indigenous Peoples

If you are citing information gathered from a conversation with an Indigenous person who was not a research participant, you will use a variation of the personal communication citation.

Example:

(Indigenous person's full name, Indigenous nation or community, location they live or reside, personal communication, Month Date, Year)

Indirect Sources

Generally, you are encouraged to locate the original source. However, if this is not possible you will need to name the original source, and include only the secondary source in your reference list.

Example:

(Original Lastname, Original Publication Year, as cited in Secondary Lastname, Year)

Other Sources

If you come across a source or author category that the *APA Publication Manual* does not explicitly describe how to cite, it is typically acceptable to apply the general principles of APA citation in a way that is consistent and sensible. You may also look into whether another third-party organization has provided directions for how to cite the new source that you found.