



Writing Handbook

For Dr. Sonia R. White's Courses
Spring 2026

Contact Information

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Using American Psychological Association (APA) Style

APA Style Preferences and Definitions

Note: The following excerpts under this section are taken from the:

American Psychological Association. (2020). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association (7th ed.)*. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0000165-000>

Additional APA Style help can be found from the [APA Style website and blog](#).

The following definitions are in keeping with APA style:

A **reference list**, in APA style, appears on a separate page at the end of an article, paper or assignment. This list is titled "References," and it documents books and articles actually used in the preparation of an assignment and provides the necessary information to retrieve the sources. The writer should only include the sources that were used in the research and preparation of the assignment or paper and all sources that appear in a reference list should also be cited within the text or body of the paper or assignment. References are listed in alphabetical order, not the order they appear in the text. For this course, any and all assignments in which you refer to sources must be included in a reference list.

A **bibliography**, also called an annotated bibliography in APA style, references works for background or for further reading. This style of bibliography includes a brief objective description of the article or book. Sources included in a annotated bibliography are not necessarily cited within the body of the paper. This course does not require an annotated bibliography, but rather, requires a reference list.

An **in-text citation**, is preferred to footnotes or endnotes in APA style, and briefly identifies the source of information for readers, and enables readers to locate the source in the alphabetical reference list at the end of the article, paper or assignment. Each work cited in the text must appear in the reference list, and each work in the reference list must be cited at least once within the text of the assignment.

APA Style Heading System Examples

APA style uses a **five-level heading system**. For most undergraduate papers or assignments, levels 1-3 are sufficient.

Table 1. Format for the Five Levels of Heading in APA Style

Level	Format
1	Centered, Bold, Title Case Heading Text begins as a new paragraph, indented.
2	Flush Left, Bold, Title Case Heading Text begins as a new paragraph, indented.
3	Flush Left, Bold Italic, Title Case Heading Text begins as a new paragraph, indented.
4	Indented, Bold, Title Case Heading, Ending With a Period. Text begins on the same line and continues as a regular paragraph.
5	Indented, Bold Italic, Title Case Heading, Ending With a Period. Text begins on the same line and continues as a regular paragraph.

APA Style In-Text Citation Examples

Use the author–date citation style.

When **paraphrasing** information, that is stating in your own words the ideas of others, the in-text citation should include the author and date, parenthetical citation (Porter, 1985) or narrative citation, such as, according to Porter (1985). With two authors, it would appear as (Salas & D’Agnostino, 2020) or Salas and D’Agnostino (2020). For three or more authors, (Eisenhardt et al., 2010) or Eisenhardt et al. (2010).

When using a **direct quote**, or word for word, the author must have the entire passage being cited in “quotation marks” and include the specific page number along with the author and year, (Teece, 2007, p. 1321).

When citing multiple sources, list oldest to newest: (Barney, 1991; Teece, 2007; Eisenhardt et al., 2010)

APA Style Reference Examples

In the APA style, capitalization in the title of an article or of a book follows the same rules as capitalization in a common sentence. In APA style, capitalization of each important word applies only to the titles of journals.

APA-formatted reference list should be formatted with hanging indentation style. The reference list should begin on a new page titled, "References" (bold and centered). Each reference should be formatted using a hanging indentation (first line flush left, following lines indented 0.5"). All entries should be alphabetized by author's last name.

Blog Post example:

Klymkowsky, M. (2018, September 15). Can we talk scientifically about free will? Sci-Ed. <https://blogs.plos.org/sciend/2018/09/15/can-we-talk-scientifically-about-free-will/>

Book without a DOI:

Porter, M. E. (1985). *Competitive advantage*. Free Press.

Book with a DOI:

Brown, L.S. (2018). *Feminist therapy*. (2nd ed). American Psychological Association. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0000092-000>

Chapter in an edited book without a DOI example:

Weinstock, R., Leong, G.B., & Silva, J. A. (2003). Defining forensic psychiatry: Roles and responsibilities. In R. Rosner (Ed.), *Principles and practice of forensic psychiatry* (2nd ed., pp.7-13). CRC Press.

Film:

Yakin, B. (Director). (2000). *Remember the Titans* [Film]. Walt Disney Pictures; Jerry Bruckheimer Films.

Journal article examples:

McCauley, S. M., & Christiansen, M. H. (2019). Language learning as language use: A cross-linguistic model of child language development. *Psychological Review*, 126(1), 1-51. <https://doi.org/10.1037/rev0000126>

Teece, D. J. (2007). Explicating dynamic capabilities. *Strategic Management Journal*, 28(13), 1319–1350. <https://doi.org/xxxx>

Magazine article example:

Goldman, C. (2018, November 28). The complicated calibration of love, especially in adoption. *Chicago Tribune*

Code of ethics:

Standards for Excellence Institute (2025). Mission, Impact, and Planning [Resource Packet]. *Standards for Excellence: An Ethics and Accountability Code for the Nonprofit Sector*. <https://www.standardsforexcellence.org/about-the-standards/educational-resources/>

PowerPoint slides or lecture notes examples:

If the slides come from a classroom website, learning management system (e.g. Canvas, D2L), or company intranet and you are writing for an audience with access to that resource, provide the name of the site and its URL (use the login page URL for sites requiring login).

Canan, E., & Vasilev, J. (2019, May 22). [Lecture notes on resource allocation]. Department of Management Control and Information Systems, University of Chile. <https://uchilefau.academia.edu/ElseZCanan>.

Mack, R., & Spake, G. (2018). Citing open source images and formatting references for presentations [PowerPoint slides]/ Canvas@FNS. <https://fnu.onelogin.com/login>

TED Talk examples:

Giertz, S. (2018, April). Why you should make useless things [Video]. TED Conferences. https://www.ted.com/talks/simone_gietz_why_you_should_make_useless_things

TED. (2012, March 16). Brene Brown: Listening to shame [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=psN1DORYYV0>

Website with a group/organization author examples:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2018, January 23). *People at high risk of developing flu-related complications*. https://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/disease/high_risk.htm

U.S. Small Business Administration. (2024, March 15). *Small business trends*. <https://www.sba.gov>

Website with an individual author example:

Martin Lillie, C.M. (2016, December 29). *Be kind to yourself: How self-compassion can improve your resiliency*. Mayo Clinic. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/adult-health/in-depth/self-compassion-can-improve-your-resiliency/art-20267193>

Website with no date or a retrieval date (include retrieval dates if the content changes regularly) examples:

Boddy, J., Neumann, T., Jennings, S., Morrow, V., Alderson, P., Rees, R., & Gibson, W. (n.d.). *Ethics principles*. The Research Ethics Guidebook: A Resource for Social Scientists. <https://www.ethicsguidebook.ac.uk/EthicsPrinciples>

U.S. Census Bureau. (n.d.). *U.S. and world population clock*. U.S. Department of Commerce. Retrieved July 3, 2019, from <https://www.census.gov/popclock/>

Formatting for Research Paper

General Formatting

Font: Use a font such as Times New Roman (12 pt), Calibri or Arial (11 pt).

Spacing: Double-space all text, including references and block quotes.

Margins: 1-inch margins on all sides.

Alignment: Left-aligned, with a ragged right margin.

Indentation: Indent the first line of each paragraph by 0.5 inches.

Page numbering: Top right-hand corner

References: Hanging indentation for each reference (first line, left-aligned, all other lines .5 indentation).

Title Page

Include paper title, student/author name, institution name, course name and number, instructor name, and date.

- Include the title of your paper (bold, centered, title case) about 1/3 of the paper down.
- Your name and institution below the title.
- Course name/number, instructor, and due date, each on a separate line
- Page number: upper-right corner.

Abstract (if required for MBA level paper)

A single paragraph on its own page, 150–250 words, summarizing the purpose of the paper, methods, results, and conclusions.

- Place "Abstract" in bold, centered at the top.
- Do not indent the first line of the abstract.
- Include keywords after the abstract if requested.

Headings

APA uses a five-level heading system. For most undergraduate or MBA papers, levels 1–3 are sufficient:

- Level 1: Centered, Bold, Title Case Heading
- Level 2: Left-aligned, Bold, Title Case Heading
- Level 3: Left-aligned, Bold Italic, Title Case Heading

Credibility of References

The number and credibility of your references is critical. Your references may come from materials provided in the course, such as your textbook, posted materials or course lectures, however, you must also demonstrate that you did outside research and bring in external resources as well. Approximately 1/2 of your references should be from outside of the course resources.

For each point you are making in the paper, I would expect you to have multiple references for that point. For example, if you are making three significant points in your paper, or discussing three distinct concepts, then I would expect at a minimum nine sources, three for each of the points you were discussing. At least four-five of these should be from outside the course materials provided.

References should be academically credible and valid. Your references should come from credible academic sources such as textbooks, academic journals specific to the subject matter (i.e. human resources, nonprofit management, organizational behavior, social enterprise or entrepreneurship, etc.) government agencies (U.S. Small Business Administration; U.S. Health & Human Services), practitioner publications (Harvard Business Review, Forbes, Stanford Social Innovation Review, MIT Sloan Business Review, Dallas Business Journal), or professional associations or alliances (BoardSource, Nonprofit Leadership Alliance, Standards for Excellence). A few (no more than two) of your sources may come from mainstream news outlets or social media, however, if all of your sources or the majority of your sources come from these type of outlets that would not be considered credible.

Generative Artificial Intelligence and Information

Note: *The information in this section comes from the Library Libguide by Amy Scheelke for Salt Lake Community College licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License.*

Generative artificial intelligence (AI) is a relatively new technology that is developing quickly. Like the internet in general, these AI tools, like ChatGPT, Gemini, or Copilot, are neither good or bad when it comes to finding and using information. Instead, they represent a new way in which we can interact with information.

Where does the information used by GAI come from?

Large language models (LLMs), like ChatGPT, are trained on a large body of text which allows them to generate text in response to a prompt. In general, the entire training datasets for the major LLMs are unknown, although some partial lists exist.

When a generative AI tool provides an answer to a question, it typically does not include a reference to where the information came from. This is because it is pulling predictive language from a wide variety of places, so the information usually doesn't come from a single source. Because of this, you typically cannot trace the response back to a single parent source or know where the information came from.

Many generative AI tools have web searching capabilities. This allows the tools to point to websites that ought to contain information similar to what they provided. For instance, as of early August 2025, [Perplexity](#) provides links to sources before providing output and has a "Sources" tab. Similarly, Google's AI Overview includes a list of websites that it connects to its output. Regardless, assuming that the AI's output is directly sourced from those websites is not advisable.

Can generative AI tools provide references?

Yes, when prompted, many generative AI tools can provide references. Some do so without asking (like Perplexity, as mentioned above). However, these references may not be the sources of the information and, more importantly, may not be genuine sources. Despite sounding plausible, generative AI tools can [hallucinate citations](#).

For example, in 2023, ChatGPT provided this citation in response to a prompt asking for an example of an article on a particular topic:

Here's an example of a peer-reviewed journal article on amphetamine abuse and its intersections with social determinants of health:

Stoové, M. A., Dietze, P. M., Jolley, D., Fry, C. L., Brewer, N., & Hellard, M. E. (2008). Increasing access to sterile injecting equipment and syringe exchange in a rural area with a high prevalence of bloodborne viruses. *Australian Journal of Rural Health*, 16(2), 99-106.

This article describes a study conducted in a rural area of Australia with a high prevalence of bloodborne viruses, including those associated with amphetamine use..." OpenAI. (2023, February 17). [ChatGPT response to a prompt about locating an academic journal article]. <https://chat.openai.com/>

Although the summary sounds plausible and the citation looks realistic, this article does not exist. The journal exists, as does the lead author. However, Stoové has not published in this journal.

Appropriate and Inappropriate use of GAI in this course

Generative artificial intelligence (GAI) software is a rapidly emerging tool that students may find useful. If using GAI for course assignments, MSU Texas students are expected to adhere to the same standards outlined in the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities regarding plagiarism and academic integrity. Presenting generative AI software content as your own is a violation of academic integrity. If you use generative AI in your work, you must indicate that you have done so and provide adequate attribution (references and in-text citations) so that the work is not considered plagiarized or is not presented as your original work. Generative Artificial Intelligence (GAI) applications, such as GPT-5, Gemini, or Claude, are valuable tools for enhancing writing and critical thinking skills. However, they should never serve as a substitute for either, and in this course, they cannot.

Think of the help you get from GAI applications as a version of the assistance you receive from a Writing Center or subject matter tutor. That person might ask you a question to jump-start your imagination, steer you away from the passive voice, or identify poorly organized paragraphs or poorly worked problems, but they should not do the writing or the work for you. With this analogy in mind, please adhere to the following guidelines for this class.

Appropriate use of Generative Artificial Intelligence:

- You are free to use spell check, grammar check, and synonym identification tools (e.g. Grammarly and MS Word).
- You are free to use GAI applications to brainstorm ideas and to help generate possible topics to explore. (e.g. What are some possible Organizational Behavior concepts that are important to consider about leadership?).
- You are free to use GAI applications' recommendations when it comes to rephrasing sentences or reorganizing paragraphs you have FIRST drafted yourself.
- You are free to use GAI applications when it comes to editing outlines you have FIRST drafted yourself.

If there is a question about originality or appropriate use of AI, I may request a transcript or copy of the original AI prompt the student used and the AI response to verify the student edited GAI content before submitting it as their own work.

Inappropriate use of Generative Artificial Intelligence would include:

Using AI to generate **substantial content** (entire sentences, paragraphs, passages, entire drafts, etc. and then submitting that content as their own original work.

For example:

- You may NOT cut and paste test questions, homework questions, assignment instructions, instructor prompts, etc., directly into GAI and use the AI-generated response as your own, original response as partial or full assignment submission.
- You may NOT use entire sentences or paragraphs suggested by a GAI application without providing quotation marks and a citation, just as you would for any other source.
- You may NOT have a GAI tool write or compose a draft (either rough or final) of an assignment for you and you submit it as your own original work.

Evidence of inappropriate AI use will be considered a violation of academic integrity and will be addressed in accordance with the Student Handbook. I will utilize multiple tools to scan for plagiarism and unauthorized or inappropriate use of GAI. If any of the tools I use detect significant plagiarism or a high likelihood of GAI use, or if the use of GAI was not disclosed or properly referenced and cited, the student will receive sanctions. Sanctions will range from a zero for the assignment to an F for the course.

There may be some instances or specific assignments when GAI is not allowed. In these instances, the directions provided with the specific assignment and/or within the syllabus overrides these guidelines.

For assignments where the use of AI is not allowed, AI detection software, provided by MSU will be used and if an assignment is flagged as more than "30% likely" to have used AI, it will be considered as inappropriate use of AI since my policy for that assignment is no use of AI.

Any assignment where the AI detection tools indicate “75% or more likely” to have used AI, or other AI detection tools are used and indicate the use of AI, the student will use a zero because **substantial content** was generated and submitted as their own work. This is regardless of whether they have a disclosure statement, in-text citations or references to AI tools.

Referencing and Citing Generative Artificial Intelligence (GAI)

References inform your reader about the sources of your information and how you utilized them in your work, which will protect the integrity of YOUR work and the work of others. If you use content created by a tool like ChatGPT, including it in your references, as you would with any other source, is the responsible and ethical thing to do. If you use the tool to help write or structure your paper, even if you do not otherwise quote or paraphrase its content, you should acknowledge your use of it in some manner. This provides transparency to your reader.

Citation styles continually update their recommendations on how to cite or reference AI-generated content. Checking for the most recent recommendation is advisable; however, I will also provide examples for your convenience. Ultimately, as the author, it is your responsibility to ensure that you are using the latest recommendations for citing and referencing AI-generated content.

Referencing AI-Produced Content Responsibly

Understanding how to ethically use and cite the output of generative AI is an ongoing process. As such, erring on the side of transparency is a best practice when using a generative AI tool. Most AI chat tools now include a sharing option that provide the user with a unique URL and a title for each chat. This makes creating an APA style reference for a specific chat a simple matter of following the author, date, title, source format used in most APA style references.

The **author** is the company responsible for developing the AI tool. For example, OpenAI is the author of ChatGPT, and Google is the author of Gemini.

The **date** in an AI chat reference is the specific year, month and day on which the chat occurred or concluded.

The **title** is the title of the chat (in italic sentence case) followed by a bracketed description [Generative AI chat] to clarify for readers the nature of the source. In most AI tools, users can edit the title of the chat, so before creating the reference, consider editing the title within the AI tool to be something descriptive and helpful for readers.

The **source** begins with the name of the AI tool, which can be general (e.g. ChatGPT or Gemini) or the name of the model (e.g. Chat GPT-5 or Gemini 2.5 Flash). The final piece of the source element is the URL of the chat.

Here is a template for referencing and citing an AI tool generally:

AI Company Name. (Year, Month, Day). Tool Name/Model in *Italics* and Title Case [Description; e.g. Large language model]. URL of the tool

Below is an example following the template:

OpenAI. (2025, December 1). *ChatGPT (GPT-5.2 version)* [Large language model]. <https://chat.openai.com/>

Here are how I expect you to disclose and document responsibly when you use generative AI tools. As a general rule, the more intense or substantial the use of AI, then the more substantial and intense your documentation should be.

1. Have an acknowledgement statement included at the end of your paper. An example of an acceptable statement might be: "Generative artificial intelligence (OpenAI, 2025) was used with drafting and editing the text of this manuscript. All final wording and analysis were created by the author." Please note, that only including a statement is not sufficient by itself to document AI use and must also include at a minimum a reference and in-text citation as well.
2. You should include the AI tool(s) used in your references and cite the tool(s) in-text where appropriate to indicate where and/or how the tool and/or generated content was used within your paper. Acknowledge within the paper how you used the tool and provide an in-text citation for that statement. Even if you only use generative AI to plan your paper or generate ideas, and don't include any of its generated content you should include this step. For example, you might have the following sentence in the body of the paper: "I used ChatGPT (OpenAI, 2025) to edit my paper and provide feedback on clarity and flow." The reference list would then include an entry for the AI tool.
3. Your references and in-text citations should include the date when the response was generated or the date of access. This is important because these tools will be updated regularly. You may wish to note the model (e.g., GPT-5) that you used. This is applicable to the full reference and in-text citation. The date is listed in the reference as year, month, date (e.g. 2025, December 1) for the reference and for the in-text citation, the year only (OpenAI, 2025).
4. For an AI prompt, describe the prompt that generated the specific response and include that in the body of the paper or as part of an appendix. Prompts could be discussed in the body of the paper, such as: "I provided the following prompt to Gemini (Google, 2025): 'Please create a photo image of students in a classroom studying grammar concepts.' After reviewing the initial image, I refined it by specifying to Gemini that the age range should be limited to adolescents".
5. Document AI prompts when using multiple prompts. Researchers should document the prompts used with AI tools for their own records and have

them available to provide upon request by the instructor if there is a question about the integrity or ethics of your AI use.

6. For the highest level of transparency, save a transcript of your chat and include it as an appendix to your work.

Academic Misconduct Policy & Procedures

Academic Dishonesty: Cheating, collusion, and plagiarism (the act of using source material of other persons, either published or unpublished, without following the accepted techniques of crediting, or the submission for credit of work not the individual's to whom credit is given). Additional guidelines on procedures in these matters may be found in the Office of Student Conduct.

[Office of Student Conduct](#)

Writing Resources

Moffett Library

Moffett Library provides resources and services to support student's studies and assignments, including books, peer-reviewed journals, databases, and multimedia materials accessible both on campus and remotely. The library offers media equipment checkout, reservable study rooms, and research assistance from librarians to help students effectively find, evaluate, and use information. Get started on this [Moffett Library webpage](#) to explore these resources and learn how to best utilize the library.

Grade Appeal Process

Update as needed. Students who wish to appeal a grade should consult the Midwestern State University [MSU Catalog](#)