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*https://www.***apa***.org*

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**Overview of APA references**

While writing a research paper, it is always important to give credit and cite your sources; this lets you acknowledge others’ ideas and research you’ve used in your own work. Not doing so can be considered [plagiarism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plagiarism), possibly leading to a failed grade or loss of a job.

APA style is one of the most commonly used citation styles used to prevent plagiarism. Here’s more on [crediting sources](https://libguides.mit.edu/citing).

Let’s get this statement out of the way before you become confused: An APA format reference and an APA format citation are two different things! We understand that many teachers and professors use the terms as if they’re synonyms, but according to this specific style, they are two separate things, with different purposes, and styled differently.

A reference displays all of the information about the source — the title, the author’s name, the year it was published, the URL, all of it! References are placed on the final page of a research project.

Here’s an example of a reference:

**Wynne-Jones, T. (2015). *The emperor of any place*. Candlewick Press.**

An APA format citation is an APA format in-text citation. These are found within your paper, anytime a quote or paraphrase is included. They usually only include the name of the author and the date the source was published.

Here’s an example of one:

Hypertrophic cardiomyopathy is even discussed in the book, *The Emperor of Any Place*. The main character, Evan, finds a mysterious diary on his father’s desk (the same desk his father died on, after suffering from a hypertrophic cardiomyopathy attack). Evan unlocks the truth to his father and grandfather’s past (Wynne-Jones, 2015).

Both of the ways to credit another individual’s work — in the text of a paper and also on the final page — are key to preventing plagiarism. A writer must use both types in a paper. If you cite something in the text, it must have a full reference on the final page of the project. Where there is one, there must be the other!

Now that you understand that, here’s some basic info regarding APA format references (pp. 281-309).

1. Each reference is organized, or structured, differently. It all depends on the source type. A book reference is structured one way, an [APA journal](https://www.easybib.com/guides/citation-guides/apa-format/how-to-cite-a-journal-apa/) is structured a different way, a newspaper article is another way. Yes, it’s probably frustrating that not all references are created equal and set up the same way. [MLA works cited](https://www.easybib.com/guides/citation-guides/mla-format/how-to-format-a-mla-works-cited-list/) pages are unique in that every source type is formatted the same way. Unfortunately, this style is quite different.
2. Most references follow this general format:

Author’s Last name, First initial. Middle initial. (Year published). *Title of source*. URL.

Again, as stated in the above paragraph, you must look up the specific source type you’re using to find out the placement of the title, author’s name, year published, etc.

For more information on APA format for sources and how to reference specific types of sources, use the other guides on EasyBib.com. Here’s another [useful site](https://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/DocAPA.html).

Looking for a full visual of a page of references? Scroll down and take a peek at our APA format essay example towards the bottom of this page. You’ll see a list of references and you can gain a sense of how they look.

Bonus: here’s a link to more about the [fundamentals](https://libguides.usc.edu/APA-citation-style) related to this particular style. If you want to brush up or catch up on the Modern Language Association’s style, here’s a great resource on how to [cite websites in MLA](https://www.easybib.com/guides/citation-guides/mla-format/how-to-cite-a-website-mla/).

**In-text APA citations**

Did you find the perfect quote or piece of information to include in your project? Way to go! It’s always a nice feeling when we find that magical piece of data or info to include in our writing. You probably already know that you can’t just copy and paste it into your project, or type it in, without also providing credit to the original author.

Displaying where the original information came from is much easier than you think.Directly next to the quote or information you included, place the author’s name and the year nearby. This allows the reader of your work to see where the information originated.

APA allows for the use of two different forms of in-text citation, *parenthetical* and *narrative* Both forms of citation require two elements:

1. author’s name
2. year of publication

The only difference is the way that this information is presented to the reader.

Parenthetical citations are the more commonly seen form of in-text citations for academic work, in which both required reference elements are presented at the end of the sentence in parentheses. Example:

**Harlem had many artists and musicians in the late 1920s (Belafonte, 2008).**

Narrative citations allow the author to present one or both of the required reference elements inside of the running sentence, which prevents the text from being too repetitive or burdensome. When only one of the two reference elements is included in the sentence, the other is provided parenthetically.

Example:

**According to Belafonte (2008), Harlem was full of artists and musicians in the late 1920s.**

If there are two authors listed in the source entry, then the parenthetical reference must list them both:

**(Smith & Belafonte, 2008)**

If there are three or more authors listed in the source entry, then the parenthetical reference can abbreviate with “et al.”, the latin abbreviation for “and others”:

**(Smith et al., 2008)**

The author’s names are structured differently if there is more than one author. Things will also look different if there isn’t an author at all (which is sometimes the case with website pages). For more information on APA citation format, check out this page on the topic: [APA parenthetical citation](https://www.easybib.com/guides/citation-guides/apa-format/how-to-cite-a-parenthetical-citations-apa/) and [APA in-text citation](https://www.easybib.com/guides/citation-guides/apa-format/apa-in-text-citation/).

If it’s [MLA in-text and parenthetical citations](https://www.easybib.com/guides/citation-guides/mla-format/in-text-citations/) you’re looking for, we’ve got your covered there too! You might want to also check out his guide on [parenthetical citing](https://www.ccis.edu/~/media/Files/Academic-Resources/Writing-Center/mla_examples.pdf).

Would you benefit from having a tool that helps you easily generate citations that are in the text?

Check out EasyBib Plus!

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