A Microsoft Word Guide to the Formatting of APA Style for Students

Ryleigh Byrne

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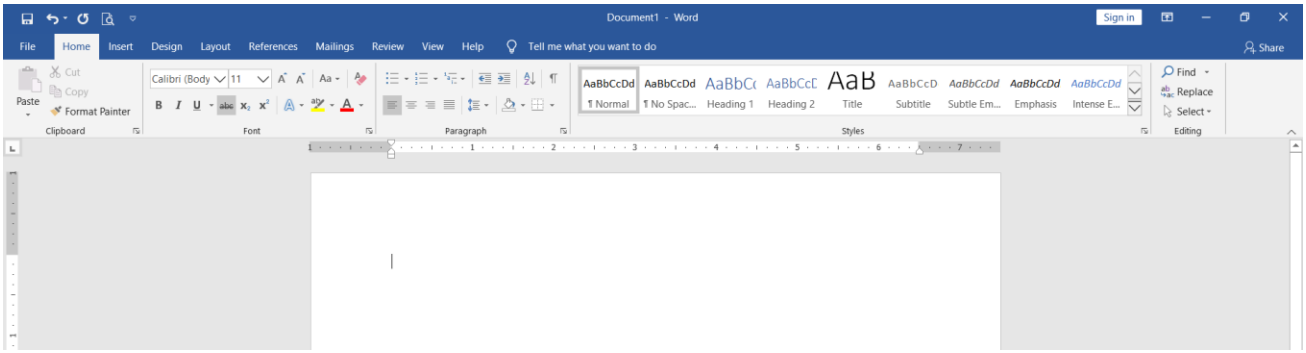
To be used by students as a supplement to the *7th Edition Publication Manual of the American Psychology Association*



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Brief Contents

How to use this Guide to your Advantage	4
Detailed Contents	5
Elements for Student Papers	8
Uniform Formatting	9
Page Numbers	15
Running Head	17
Title Page	19
Author Note	22
Abstract	24
Main Text	25
Reference List	26
Appendices	29
Tables and Figures	31
More on Tables	33
More on Figures	40
Other Formatting	41
Tips and Tricks	44

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE TO YOUR ADVANTAGE

If you are looking for a specific formatting rule, search for it in this document (ctrl + f).

This is especially helpful when you do not know what section the rule falls under or you cannot locate it in the table of contents.

WAYS TO VIEW THIS GUIDE

Professors: Project it in front of your class as you would a slideshow to teach formatting rules.

Consultants: Open it on a computer to show writers, and show them where they can find it.

Students: Bookmark it on your computer or print any pages useful to you.

*Note: this guide focuses on formatting and layout aspects of APA style. For content, grammar, mechanics, and publishing standards, see *The Official Guide to APA Style.*

Detailed Contents

Elements of Student Papers 8

Required Elements

Optional Elements

Conditional Elements

Uniform Formatting 9

Order of Paper

Elements That Start on a New Page

Capitalization

Layout 10

Font 13

Page Numbers 15

Layout

Consistency 16

Running Head 17

Layout

Consistency 18

Title Page 19

Order of Components

Title

Author 20

Affiliations

Course

Professor 21

Date

Author Note 22

Title

Layout

Abstract 24

Title

Layout

Main Text 25

Title

Layout

Reference List 26

Title

Layout

Reference Components

Appendices 29

Labels

Titles

Labels Within an Appendix

Tables and Figures 31

Placement

Label

Title

Inner Text

Notes 32

More on Tables 33

Indentation

Column Headings 34

Entries in the Stub Column 35
Alignment of all Other Cells
Special Types of Headings
Comparisons 37
Citations within Tables
Borders and Lines
Avoid Shading 38
Tables Larger Than One Page 39

More on Figures **40**
Legend
Other Rules

Other Formatting **41**
Equations
Codes
Footnotes 42
Block Quotes
Numbered and Bulleted Lists

Tips and Tricks **44**
Difference Between Minus, Hyphen, and Dashes
Post Writing Checks 46
Convert from Google Docs
Enabling the Ruler 47
Format Painter and Format Eraser
Track Changes
Free Microsoft Word Through Your School

Elements of Student Papers

Required Elements

Title page

Page numbers

Main text

Reference list

Optional Elements

Appendices

Tables

Figures

Conditional Elements (Included When Required by Instructor)

Running head

Author's note

Abstract

*Note: these elements are separated without these titles in the APA Manual. I have provided this categorization to simplify the explanation of when to include each element.

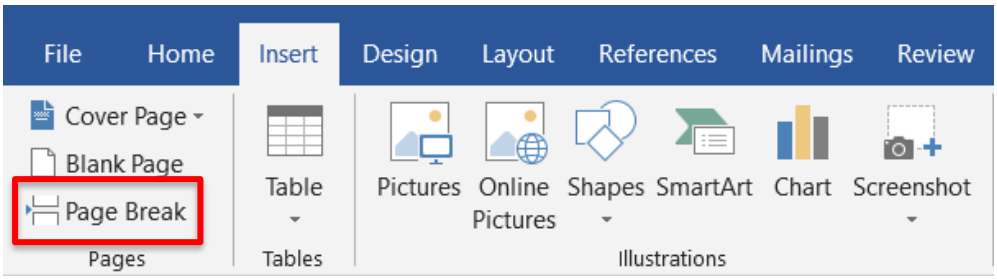
Uniform Formatting

Order of Paper

1. Title page
2. Abstract
3. Main text
4. Reference list
5. Footnotes
6. Table appendices
7. Figure appendices
8. Other appendices

Elements That Start on a New Page

Do **not** insert blank lines to get to the end of the page. Select Page Break in the Pages section of the Insert tab or (ctrl + enter).



Capitalization

When *sentence case* is required, only capitalize:

- The first word of the heading
- The first word of a subtitle
- A word directly following a colon, em dash, or end punctuation in a heading

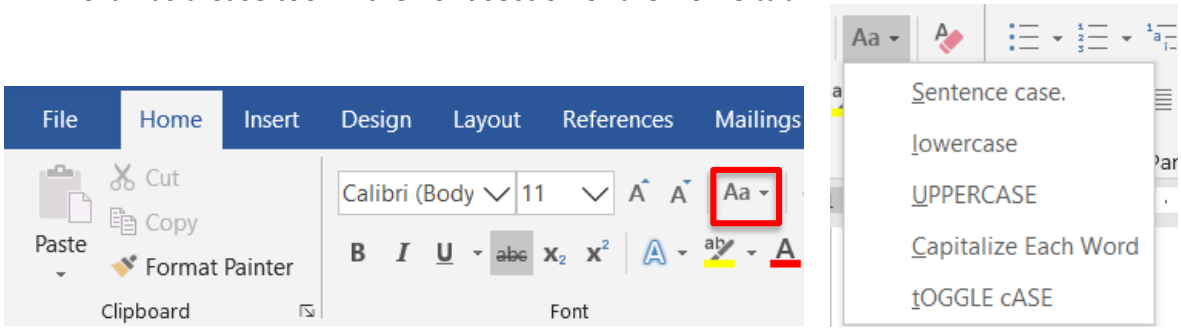
- Nouns followed by numbers or letters
- Proper nouns

When *title case* is required, capitalize all words except for:

- Conjunctions containing three letters or fewer
- Prepositions containing three letters or fewer
- All articles

Unless the word begins the title, in which case, it is capitalized

Word has a Case tool in the Font section of the Home tab.



Avoid manually capitalizing several letters in a long title case heading by using the Capitalize Each Word option, then edit to uncapitalize any minor words to follow the title case rules.

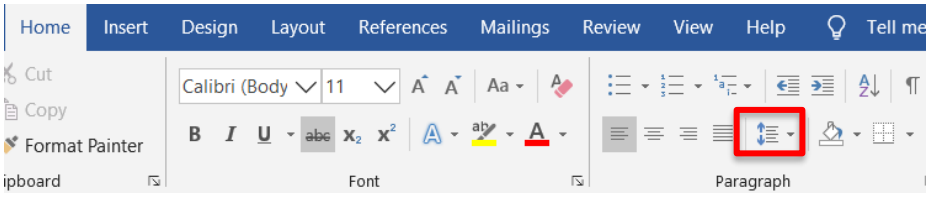
Layout

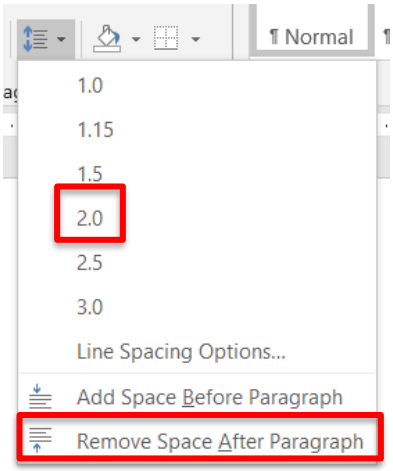
Line spacing: 2.0, including around blank lines used for separation within elements

Except for

- **Within** tables, figures, and footnotes
- **Around** equations

Change line spacing in the Paragraph section of the Home tab. Make sure there is no space before or after paragraphs.

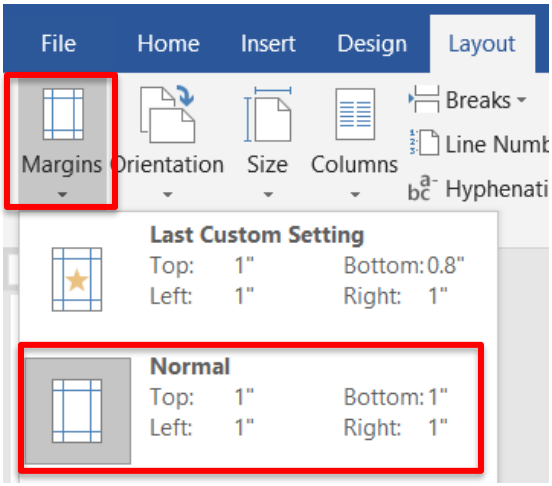




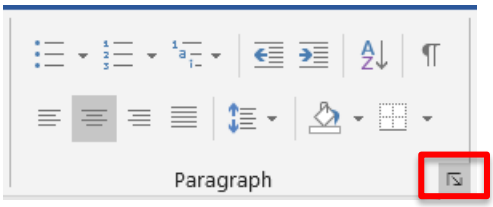
Use only **one** space after sentence-ending punctuation.

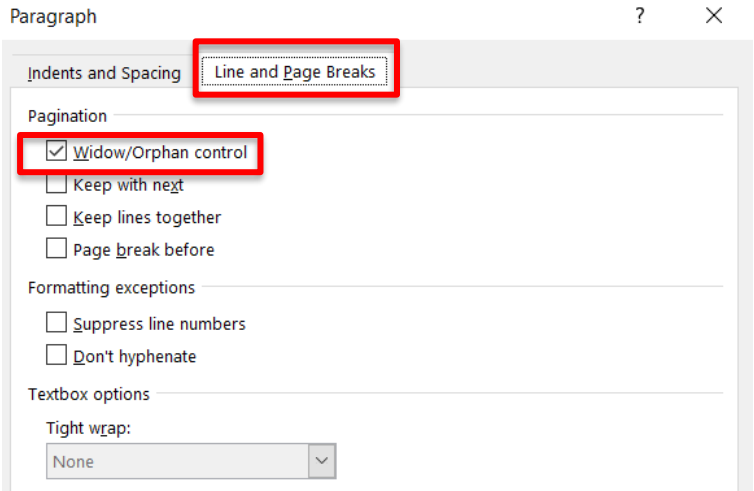
Margins: one inch

In the Page Setup section of the Layout tab:



Turn off Widow/Orphan control to Prevent bottom margins from being more than an inch. In the Home tab, open the Paragraph window, select Line and Page breaks, and uncheck the box.



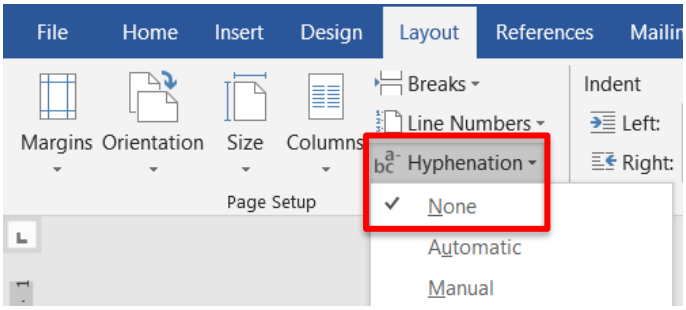


Alignment: Blocks of text are left aligned. The right edge is unaligned.

In the Paragraph section of the Home tab:

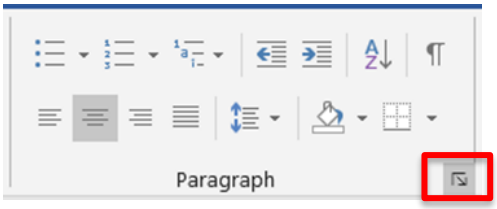
or (ctrl + L)

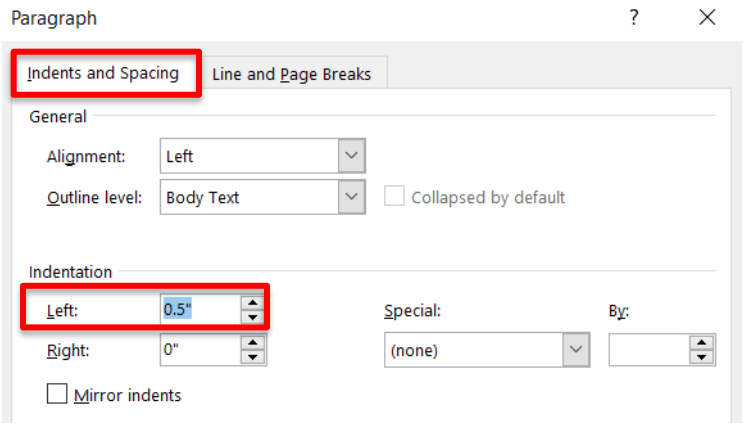
Do not break words between lines with a hyphen. In the Page Setup section of the Layout tab, select Hyphenation then None.



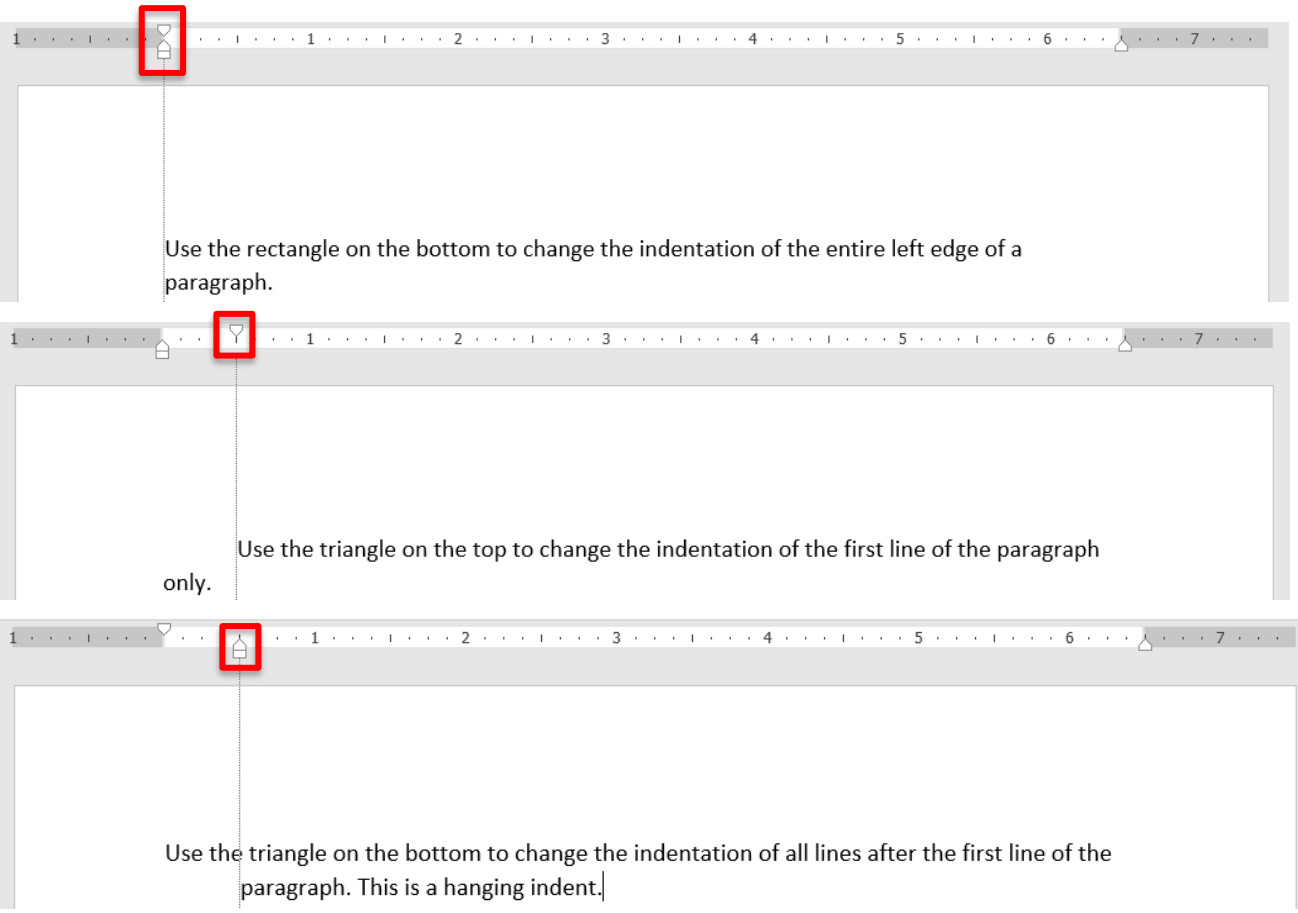
Indentation: 0.5 inches

In the Home tab, open the Paragraph window.





You can also use the shapes on the ruler.



Font

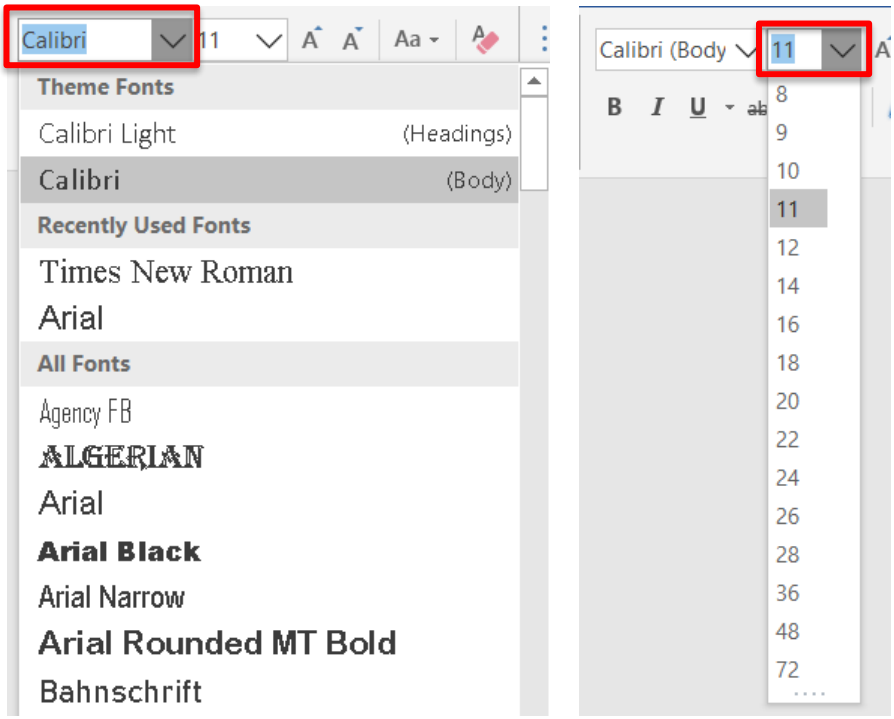
The same all throughout, including within tables

Easily legible serif or sans serif font

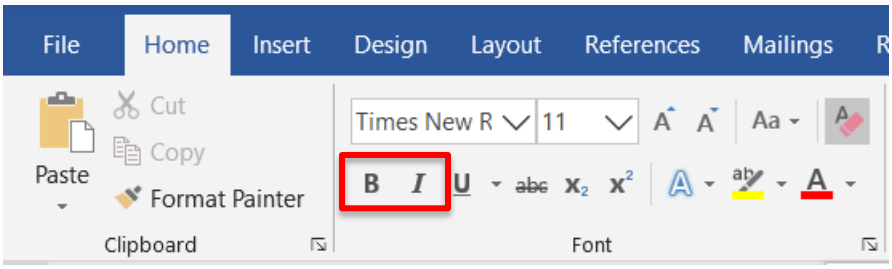
Fonts suggested by APA:

- 11 pt. Calibri
- 11 pt. Arial
- 10 pt. Lucida
- 12 pt. Times New Roman
- 11 pt. Georgia

Change the font and size in the Font section of the Home tab.



Change bold and italics in the Font section of the Home tab.



Page Numbers

Required Element

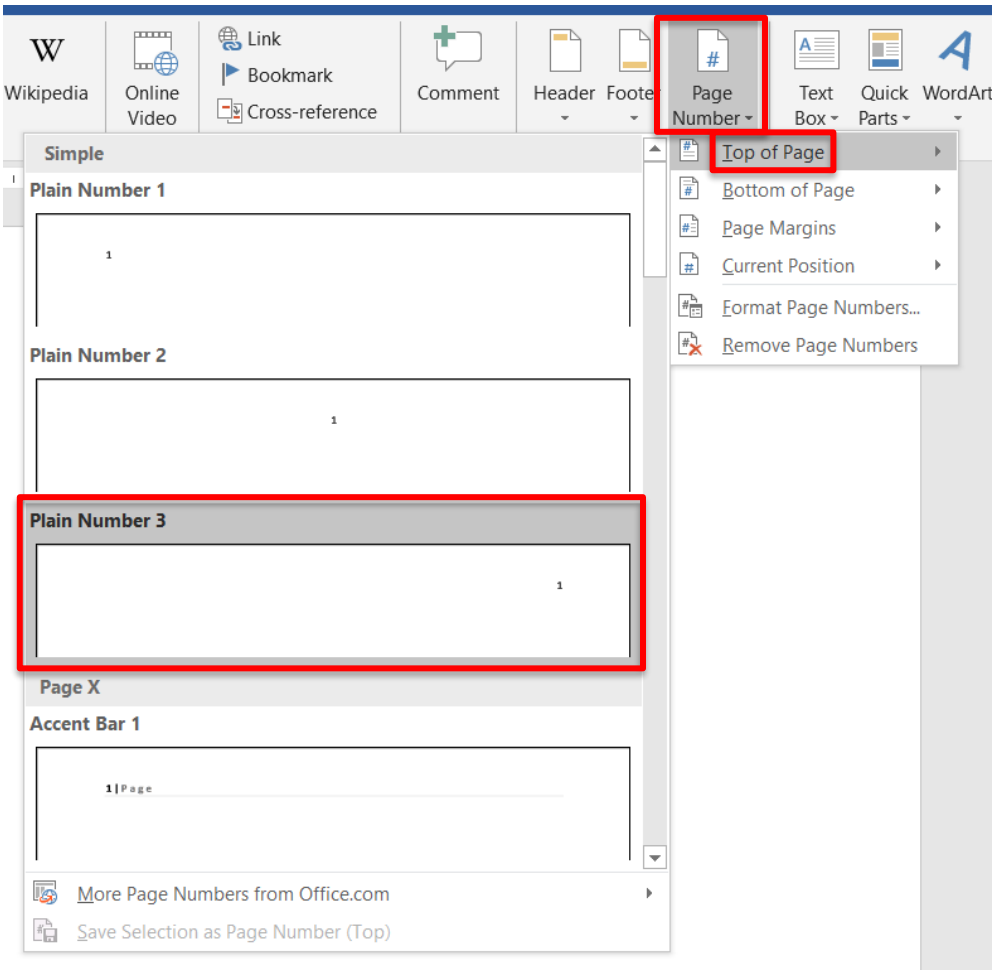
Layout

In Header

Flush right

On the same line as the running head if there is one

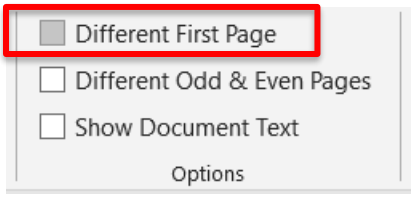
In the Header & Footer section of the Insert tab:



Consistency

Every page is numbered, starting with 1 on the title page.

A second Design tab will appear once you have inserted the page number. Make sure Different First Page in the Options section is not checked.



Running Head

Conditional Element

The *running head* is a short version of the title of the paper.

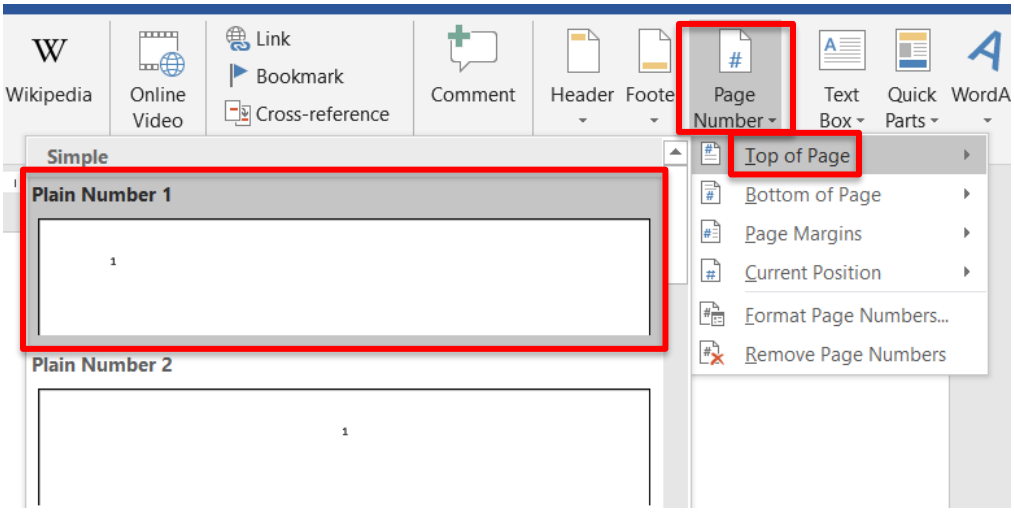
Layout

In Header

Flush left

On the same line as the page number

In the Header & Footer section of the Insert tab:



Place the cursor to the left of the number, and type your running head.

Hit the tab key twice to right align the number only.

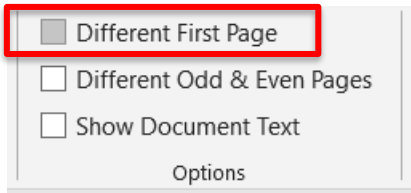
Lastly, check that they are the same font and size as the rest of your paper.

Consistency

All letters capitalized

Same on every page including title page

A second Design tab will appear once you have made the header. Make sure Different First Page in the Options section is not checked.



Title Page

Required Element

The *title page* is the first page of the document.

Order of Components

1. Title
2. Author
3. Affiliations
4. Course
5. Professor
6. Date

Title

Preceded by three to four blank lines at the top of the page

Title case

Bold

Centered

In the Paragraph section of the Home tab:

or (ctrl + E)

Followed by one blank line before the author

Author

Centered

First name, middle initial, a period, then last name

"George F. Huges"

Place multiple authors on the same line separated by commas with "and"

"George F. Huges, Mary L. Johnson, and Sam R. Haven"

Affiliations

Title case

Centered

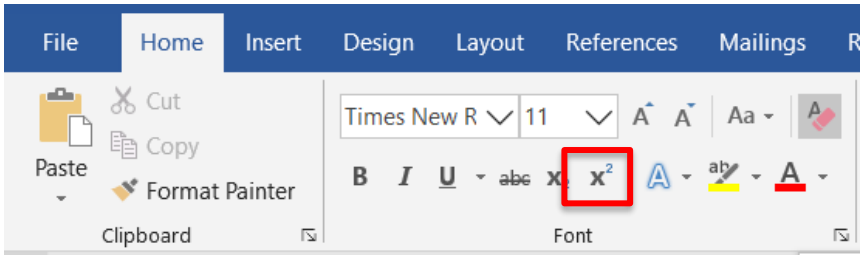
Educational department, School

"Teacher Education Department, Eastern Michigan University"

Place each affiliation or department on its own line.

Multiple authors that share different affiliations requires superscript.

In the Font section of the Home tab:



Example:

"George F. Huges[1], Mary L. Johnson[2, 3], and Sam R. Haven[1]

[1]Teacher Education Department, Eastern Michigan University

[2] English Language & Literature Department, Eastern Michigan University

[3]Psychology Department, Eastern Michigan University"

Course

Format the course number how your school formats it.

"ECE 303"

Professor

Use their preferred title (Dr., Mr., Ms., Mrs., Professor, their first name, etc.) followed by their preferred name (full name, middle initial and last name, or last name only).

"Dr. Henry Allen Smith," "Mr. Henry A. Smith," "Henry Smith," "Professor Smith," etc.

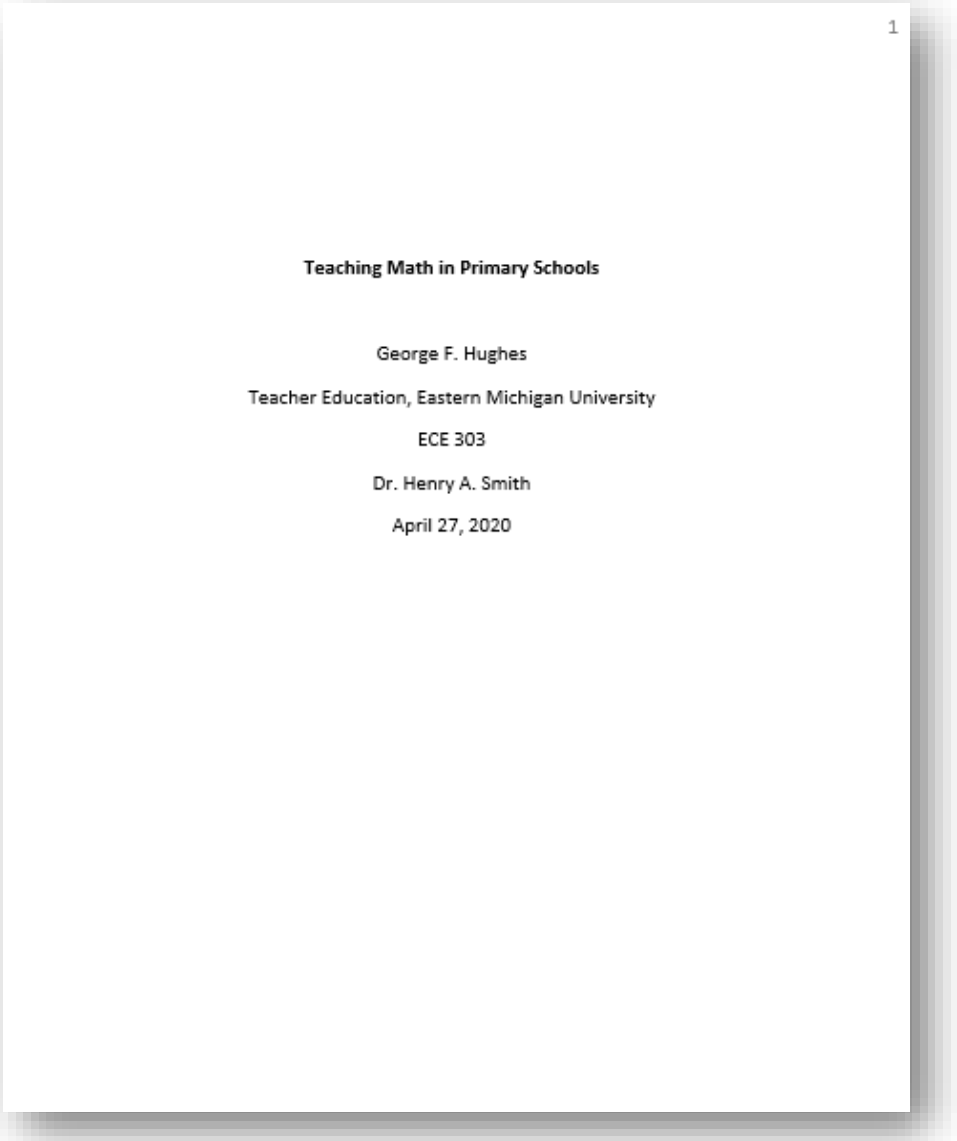
Date

Use the date the paper is **due.**

Month day, year

"April 27, 2020"

Example title page:



Author Note

Conditional Element

The *author note* contains extra information from or about the author(s).

Title

"Author Note"

Title case

Bold

Centered

Layout

On bottom half of title page

Separated from date by at least one blank line

Left aligned

Paragraphs indented in the first line

Example author note on a title page:

Teaching Math in Primary Schools

George F. Hughes

Teacher Education, Eastern Michigan University

ECE 303

Dr. Henry A. Smith

April 27, 2020

Author Note

The author note may include ORCID iDs of contributors as hyperlinks.

If any author's affiliations have changed at some point in the process of writing this piece, that would go in the author note.

If there are any conflicts of interest to disclose or any acknowledgements to anyone who helped with funding or process, that would be included in the author note.

If you wish to give your contact information to anyone reading your paper, do so in the author note.

Abstract

Conditional Element

The *abstract* is a brief summary of the paper.

Title

"Abstract"

Bold

Centered

Top of page

Layout

Starts on a new page

One paragraph

Flush left

250 words or fewer

You can check the page and word count for the entire paper or for selected text in the bottom left corner of Word.

It is optional to separate the abstract into sections with labels. Make any labels bold, italic, and on the same line as the text.

Main Text

Required Element

Title

Repeat title of paper on first line

Title case

Bold

Centered

Layout

Starts on a new page

Text is left aligned

Paragraphs are indented in the first line

Do not insert blank lines or page breaks between paragraphs or sections.

Different levels of headings divide the paper into sections and subsections. Here is the formatting of each level:

Level	Alignment	Font	Case	End with Period	On Same Line as Following Text
1	Centered	Bold	Title		
2	Flush left	Bold	Title		
3	Flush left	Bold and italics	Title		
4	Left indented	Bold	Title	✓	✓
5	Left indented	Bold and italics	Title	✓	✓

*Note: in the APA manual, this element is called the text. I have called it the main text to distinguish it from text within other elements.

Reference List

Required Element

Title

"References"

Bold

Centered

Top of page

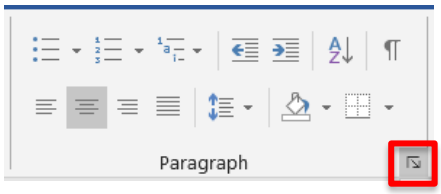
Layout

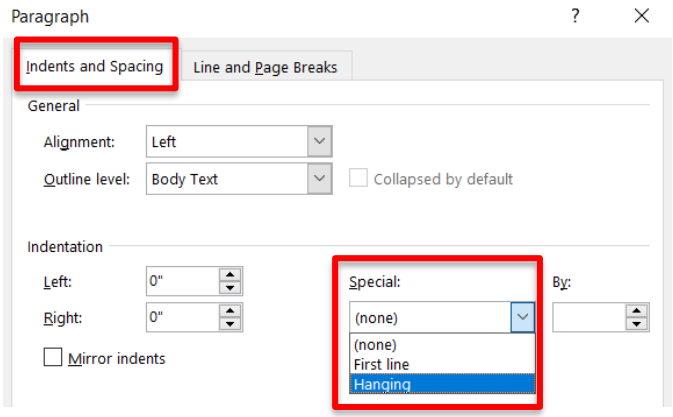
Starts on a new page

Left aligned

Hanging indent

In the Paragraph window in the Home tab:





Do **not** insert an extra blank line between each reference.

References are in alphabetical order.

Reference Components

Author's last name, First initial. Middle initial. (Year or date published). Title of work in sentence case. *Title of Source in Title Case, volume*(issue), page–page. https://DOIorURLhyperlink

*Note: case, italics, spaces, punctuation, and lack thereof are intentional.

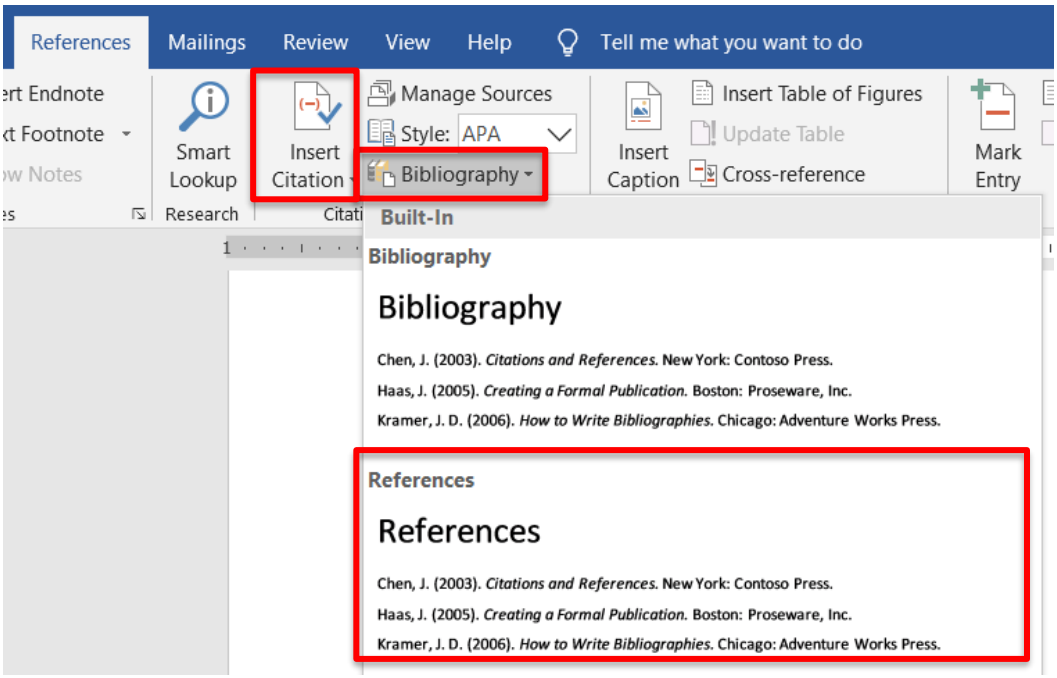
This is the most general, simple description of a reference list entry.

See the APA Guide to correctly reference various types of works.

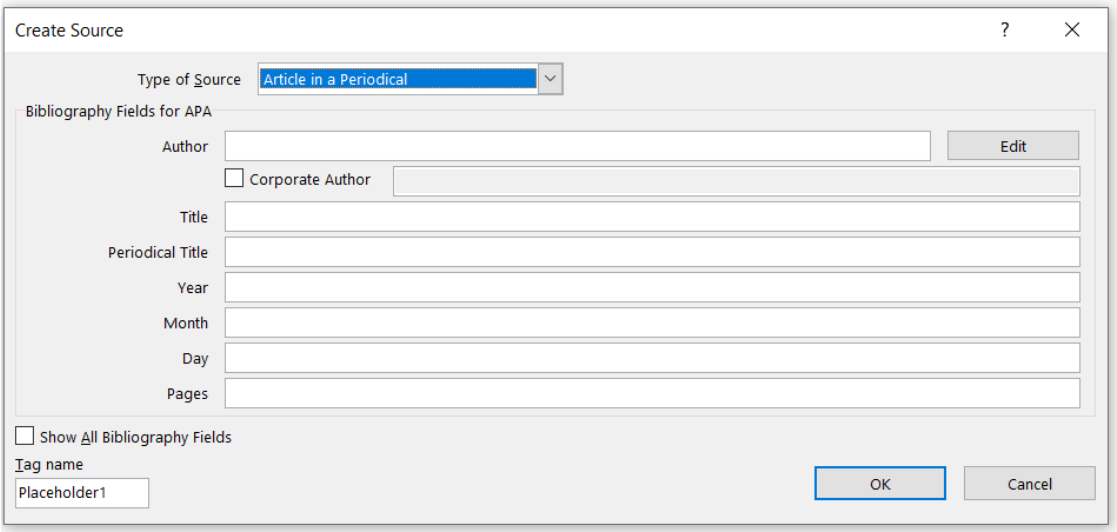
Example:

Dent, A. P. (1984). The art of flying: How to throw yourself at the ground and miss. *The Traveler's Guide to the Universe, 4*(2), 87–114. https://doi.org/SLaTfAtF

You can use Word's Citations & Bibliography tool in the References tab, but you will need to edit the reference list it makes. Word currently has 6th Edition APA references, which are for the most part the same as 7th Edition, but you will need to check against your style manual for each type of source.



Select References in the drop down, then Insert Citation.

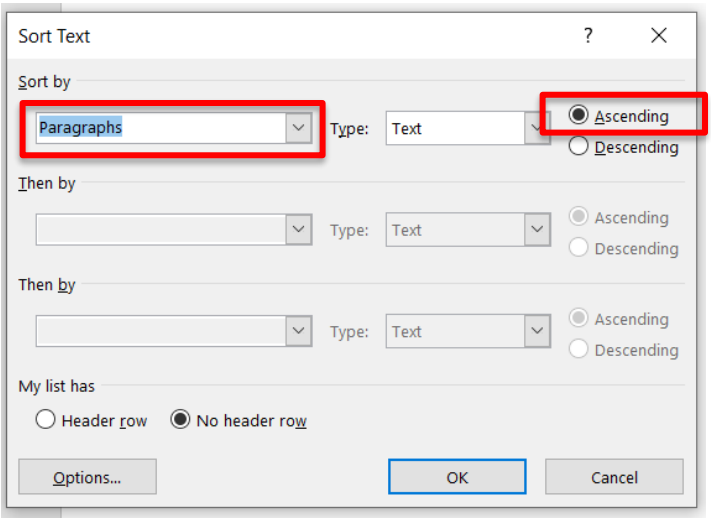


This tool does not:

- have volume or issue number
- capitalize anything
- double space the reference
- format the title of the reference list in APA format

You will need to look for things like this to edit if you choose to use this tool.

You can also alphabetize your references using Sort in the Paragraph section of the Home tab.



Appendices

Optional Element

Each *appendix* starts on a new page.

Label

One appendix: “Appendix”

Multiple appendices: “Appendix A,” “Appendix B,” and so forth

Top of page

Bold

Centered

Order appendices in the order they are mentioned in the main text.

Each appendix must be mentioned in the main text at least once.

Title

New line under label

Title case

Bold

Centered

Italics

Labels Within an Appendix

Tables, figures, footnotes, and equations within an appendix are labeled with a number starting with the letter of the appendix label (Table A1, Equation C6, etc.).

If there is only one appendix, use the letter A (Figure A2, not Figure 2) to distinguish from tables, figures, footnotes, and equations in the main text.

Order them in the order they are first mentioned in the main text.

In an appendix consisting of one sole table or one sole figure, the appendix label and title take the place of the table/figure label and title (Appendix A rather than Figure A).

Tables and Figures

Optional Element

Placement

Flush left

After the end of a paragraph

Insert a blank line before and after the table or figure.

Label

Labels of tables and figures in the main text are a number with no letter.

(Table 3, Figure 7, etc.)

Bold

Flush left

Related tables and figures are **not** labeled Table 1a and Table 1b or in any other way that connects them. Simply label them Table 1 and Table 2 (for example) or combine the tables if preferable.

Title

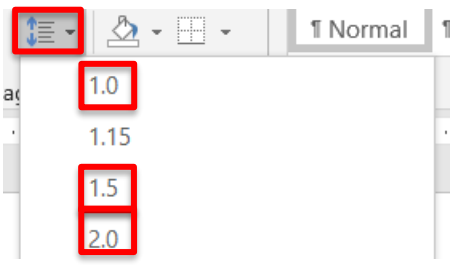
Italic

Flush left

Inner Text

Single, one and a half, or double spaced

In the Paragraph section of the Home tab:



Notes

Flush left after the table or figure

Each type of note goes on its own line; more than one of the same type of note goes on the same line, with a period and space between each note.

Place the types of notes in this order:

General Note: A note giving any necessary explanation for an entire table or figure. "Note" in italics followed by a period. The note itself is normal font, ending with a period. Always explain use of italics, bold, symbols, and abbreviations in the general note.

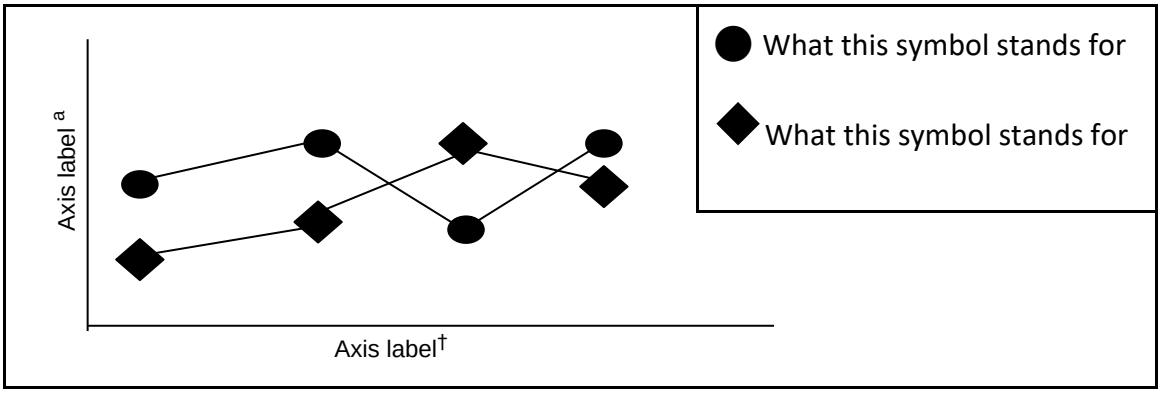
Specific Notes: Notes for specific columns or cells in a table or specific parts of a figure. Use a superscript lowercase letter with a space before the note. The note itself is in normal font, ending with a period.

Probability Notes: Notes on specific probability factors (*p* values). Use an asterisk or dagger without a space before the note. The note itself is in normal font, ending with a period.

Example:

Figure 1

An Image that Adds Necessary Information to the Paper



Note. Say something about the image.

[a] Say something about a specific part of the image.

†Say something about a *p* value.

More on Tables

Text in **all** cells is *sentence case*.

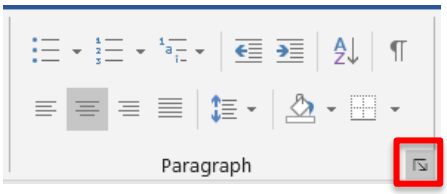
Indentation

All indentations within a table are 0.15 inches or one em space.

Indent subcategories of entries.

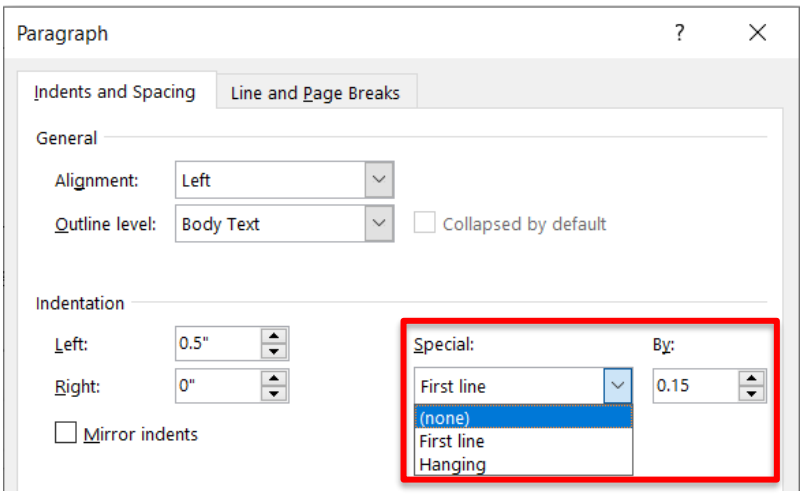
If text in a cell is more than one line, use a hanging indent.

Open the Paragraph window in the Home tab.

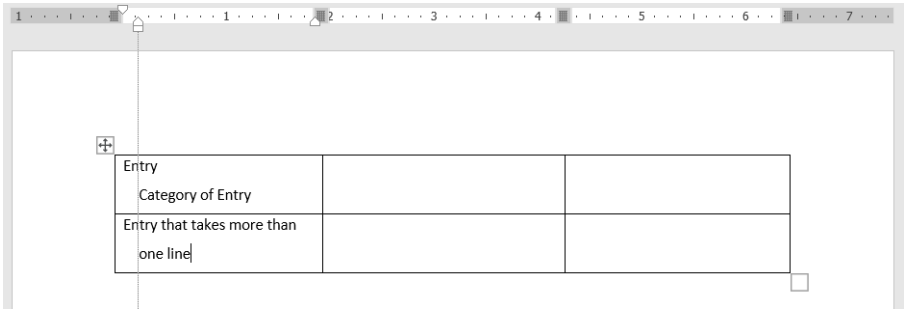


To indent one line, select Special: First line by 0.15.

To use a hanging indent, select Special: Hanging by 0.15.

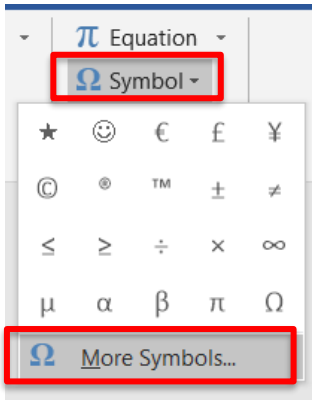


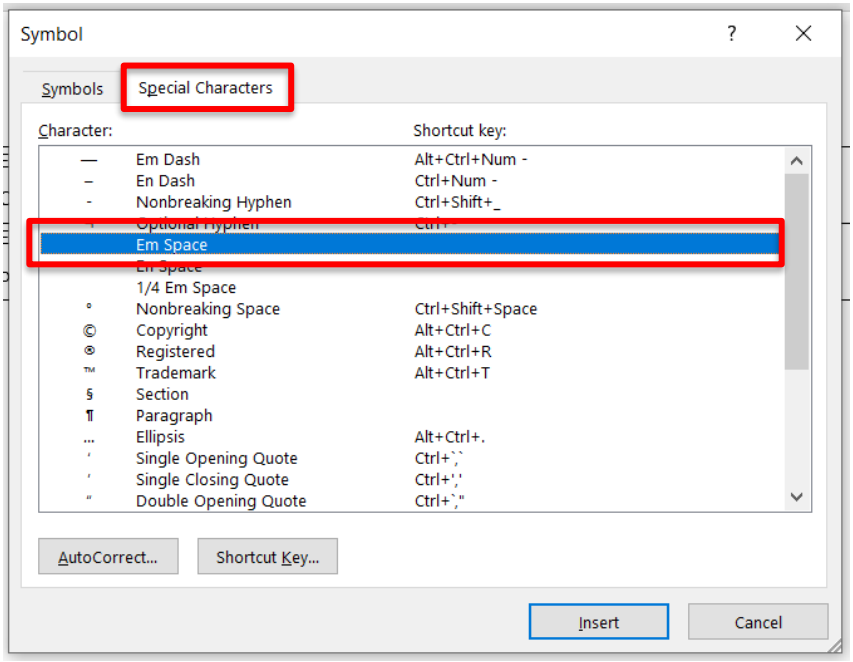
Example:



Inserting an em space:

At the end of Insert tab, select Symbol, More Symbols, then Special Characters.





Column Headings

Label **all** columns with centered headings.

Always label the leftmost column (called the *stub column*) with a heading, even if this column contains labels for rows in the table.

Entries in the Stub Column

Left aligned (If much shorter than the stub heading, they may be centered.)

Parallel to one another

Indent subcategories of entries in the stub column. Do **not** put these in a separate column. Example:

Participant	Amount
Professors	
Fulltime	14
Adjunct	22
Students	
Graduate	36
Undergraduate	57

Alignment of all Other Cells

Centered

Can be left aligned if long and difficult to read in the center

Special Types of Headings

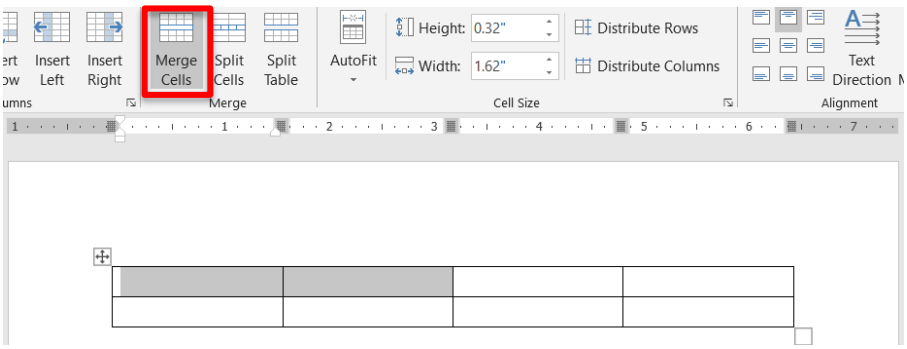
Column spanner: a heading for multiple columns. Each column still has individual headings. Example: “Test 1” and “Test 2”

Student No.	Test 1		Test 2	
	Score	Percentage	Score	Percentage
1	42	84	49	98
2	47	94	48	96
3	50	100	50	100

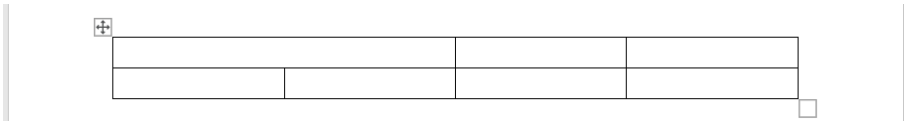
Table spanner: a heading across the entire width of the table to divide it. Do not repeat column headings after the table spanner. Example: “Test 1” and “Test 2”

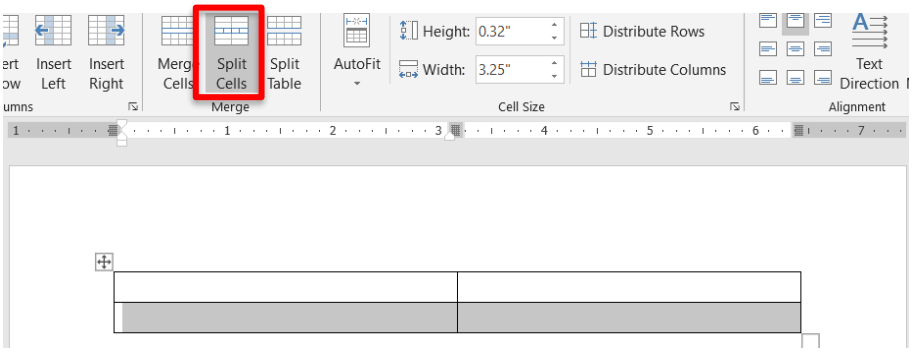
Student No.	Score	Percentage
	Test 1	
1	42	84
2	47	94
3	50	100
Average	46.33	92.66
	Test 2	
1	49	98
2	48	96
3	50	100
Average	49	98

Separate Design and Layout tabs appear when you create a table. You can use the Merge section of the Layout tab to merge and split table cells to create spanners.

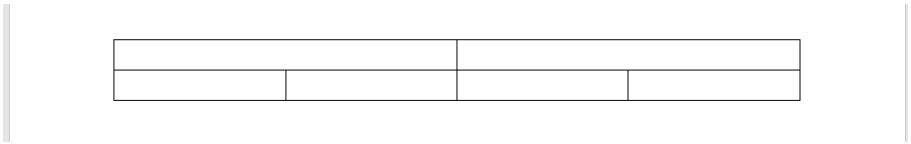


After merging:





After splitting:



Decked heads: Headings stacked on top of one another, such as a column head directly below a column spanner. Use no more than two levels of decked heads.

Comparisons

Positioned side by side

Citations within Tables

Use “&” instead of “and”

Borders and Lines

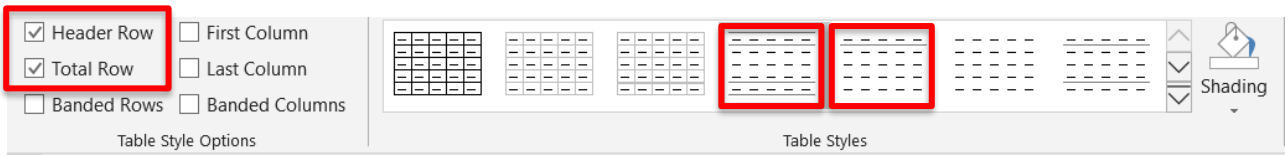
Only use where necessary.

There is typically a border at the top and bottom, under the heading, and above any spanners.

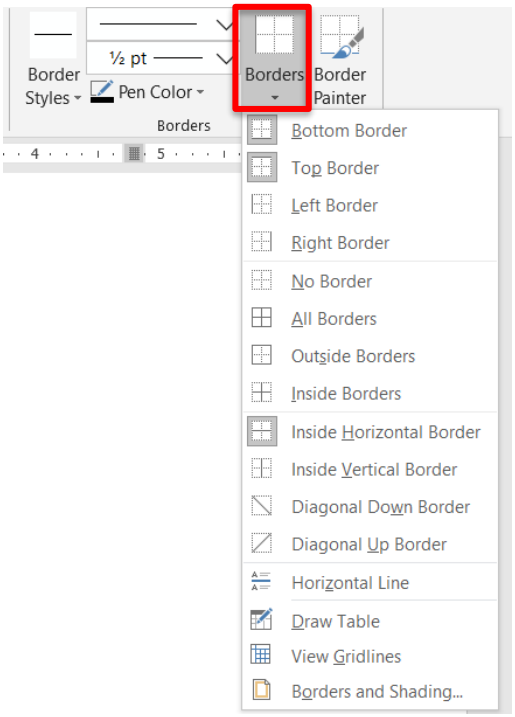
A border may separate a row from the rest of the table that contains summarizing information, such as totals or averages of numbers in other rows.

Do not use vertical borders nor use a border around every cell. Instead, use white space and alignment to show separation of cells.

In the Table Design tab, you can use Table Style Options to put lines around a Header Row and a Total Row if you have one:



You can also manually choose borders.



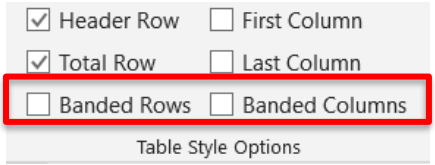
Avoid Shading

Distinguish between rows by using white space and borders.

Emphasize cells by using italics and bold (then explain the emphasis in the general note).

If shading is unavoidable, explain it in the general note.

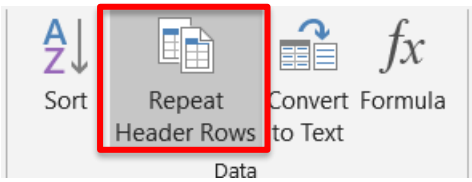
Make sure “banded rows” and “banded columns” are **not** checked so that Word does not automatically shade.



Tables Larger Than One Page

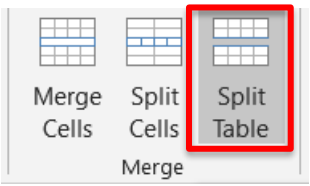
Vertically longer: Repeat the headings on the next page.

In the Data section of the Table Layout tab:



Horizontally wider: Repeat the stub column on the next page. Word does not have a tool for this. (Wide tables may use landscape orientation if desired.)

Both: Create separate tables. You can split a table in the Merge section of the Table Layout tab.



More on Figures

A *figure* is a chart, graph, photo, drawing, or some other image.

Legend

Also called a key

Explains the meaning of symbols, colors, and patterns used

Is part of the image

Other Rules

Label all components, such as axes of graphs.

Use a sans serif 8 – 14 pt. font within figures.

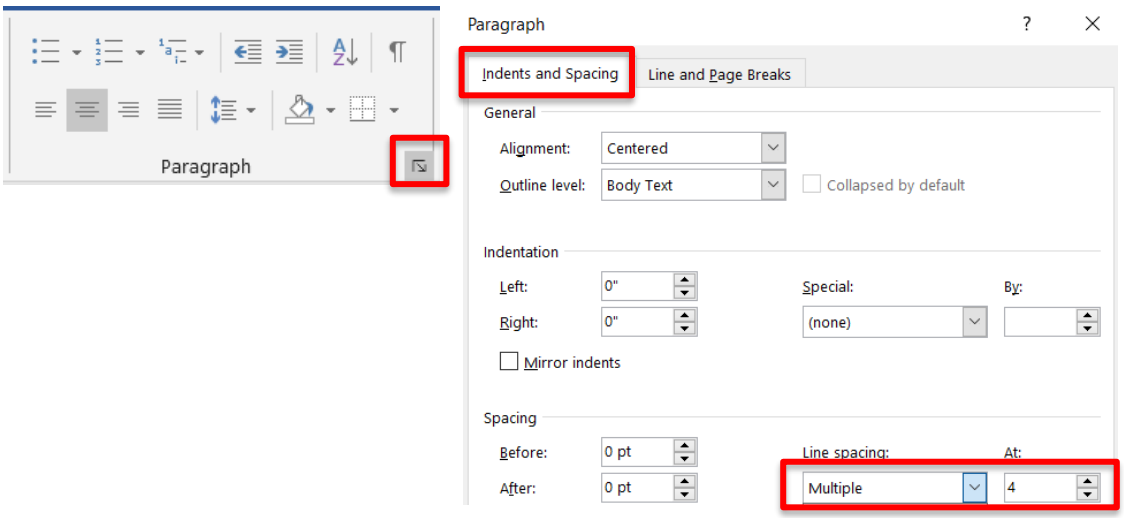
Figures that are similar or equally important should use the same size images.

Other Formatting

Equations

Up to 3.0 or 4.0 spacing around equations

To use over 3.0 spacing, open the Paragraph window in the Home tab and select Line Spacing: Multiple at 4.



Code

Monospace font

Fonts suggested by APA for code

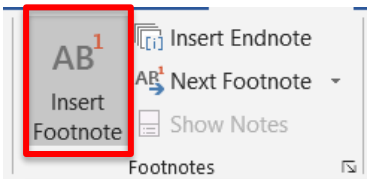
- `10 pt. Lucida Console`
- `10 pt. Courier New`

Footnotes

10 pt. font

Single spaced

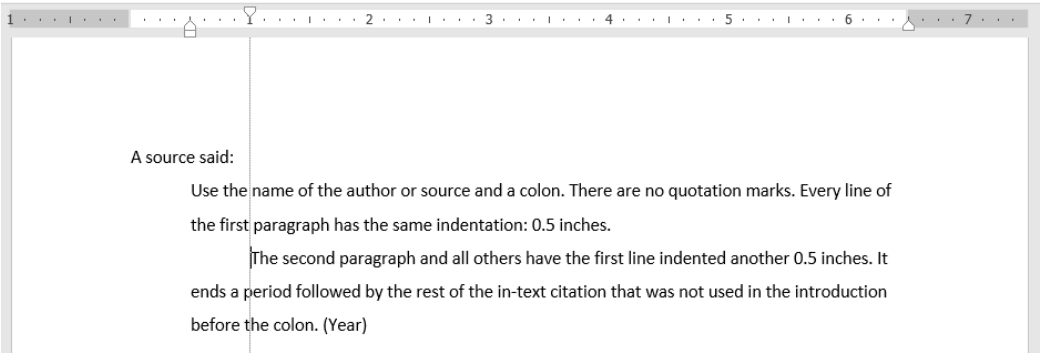
This is Word's default when you select Insert Footnote from the References tab.



Block Quotes

All lines indented

All paragraphs after the first have the first line indented **again.**



Numbered and Bulleted Lists

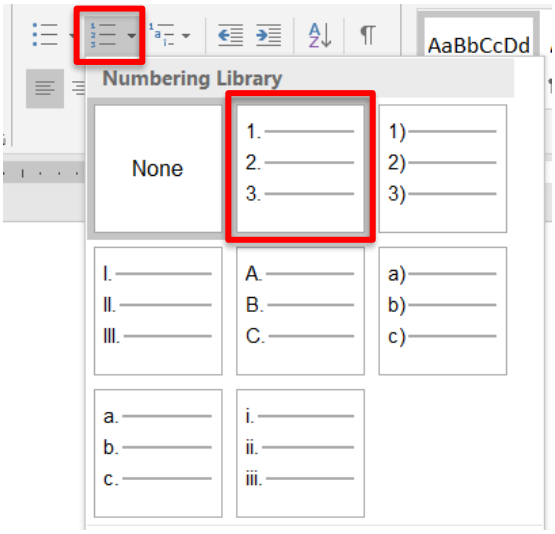
Left aligned

Each item on new line

All items sentence case

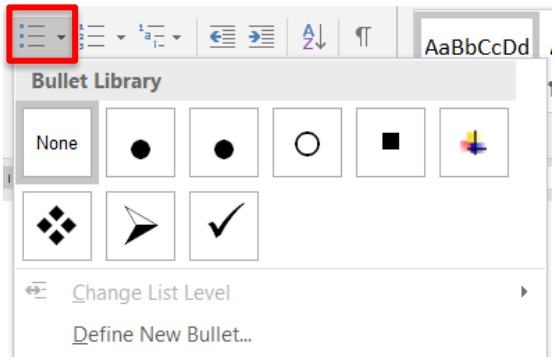
Numbered lists: use periods and no parentheses or other punctuation.

Select Numbering in the Home tab and select the first numbered option.



Bulleted lists: use ●, ○, ■, –, or any other simple bullet style

Select Bullets in the Home tab and choose a style.



Tips and Tricks

Difference Between Minus, Hyphen, and Dashes

Minus: – Used in mathematical equations (5−2=3)

Hyphen: - Used within words (up-to-date, eight-year-old children)

En dash: – Used between numbers (pages 67–82, March 22–April 9)

Word automatically turns a [space hyphen space] between words into an en dash.

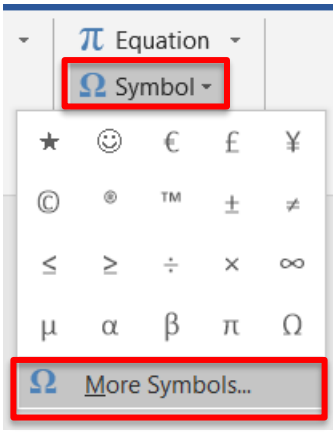
Em dash: — Em dashes can replace other symbols—like parentheses and commas—to offset information within a sentence. The sentence makes sense with or without the information following the em dash—such as this part right here.

Word automatically turns a [hyphen hyphen] between words into an em dash.

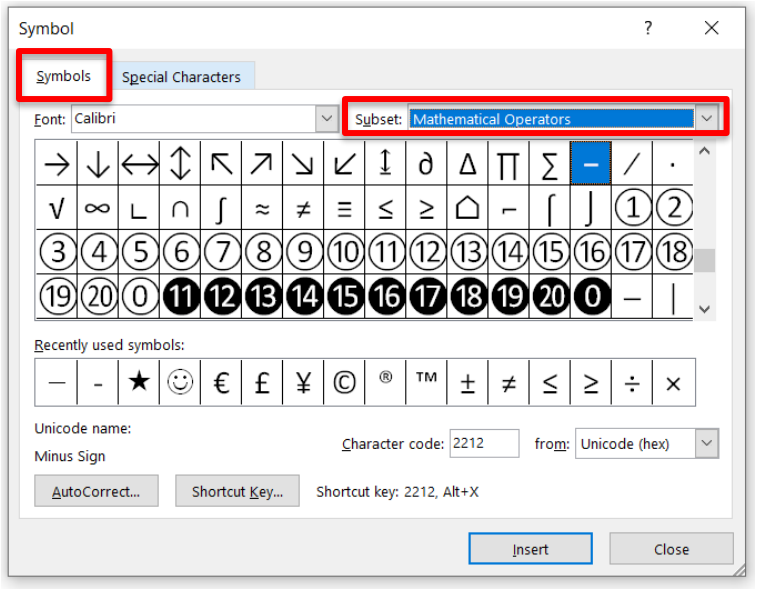
Feel free to copy and paste the symbols from here; just be sure to fix your font.

You can also use them by inserting a special symbol.

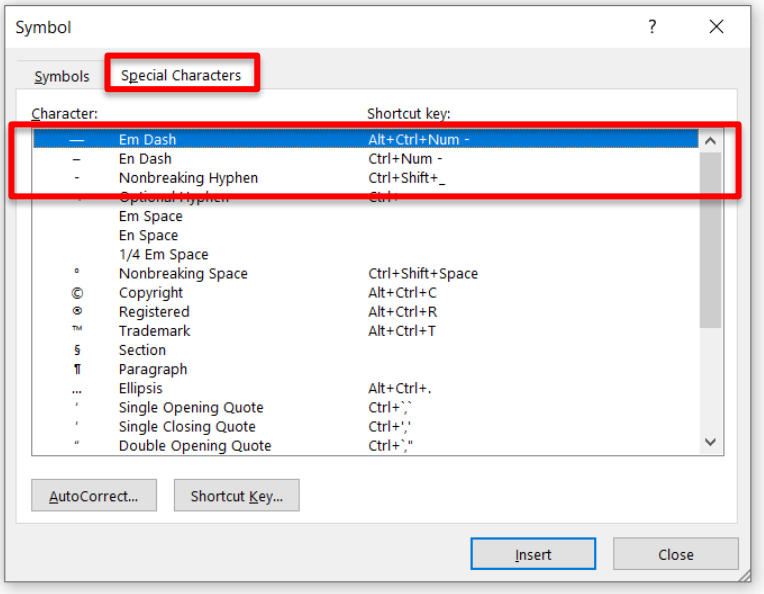
In the Symbols section of the Insert tab:



For a minus, use this window to insert a Minus Sign (**not** a Hyphen-Minus).



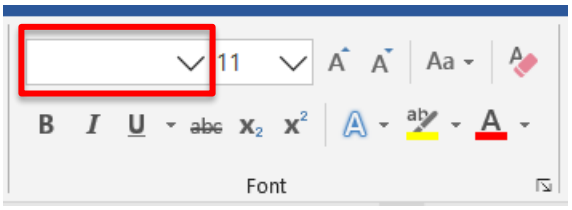
For an em dash, en dash, or hyphen, use this window to select Special Characters and choose from the first three options. (They have corresponding keyboard shortcuts listed with them.)



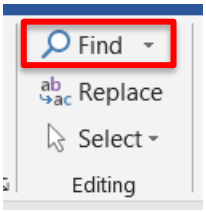
Post Writing Checks

After the paper is written, select all text to check font, font size, text color, and highlighting. These can change throughout the text due to pasting and accidental selections. If any one of these is blank in the tool bar, all the selected text is not the same for that tool. Fix this by selecting the font, size, color, or highlight you intend the paper to be in while all text is still selected.

For example, the font box here is blank, so there are at least two different fonts in this document.



After the paper is written, search in the document (Ctrl + f) for any terms or punctuation you are not allowed to use. For example, if your assignment requires third person only, search for "I," "we," "you," etc. rather than reading to find all first and second person. If your assignment does not allow contractions, search in the document for an apostrophe and find all contractions. Select Find in the Editing section of the Home tab.

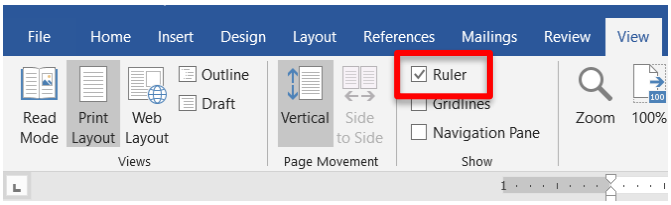


Convert from Google Docs

Google Docs is useful. You can write your paper in it, but then **download it as a Word document to format, or your formatting will be wrong.** You'll see that your document is a little shorter once in Word, among other subtle differences. Everything in Google Docs is ever so slightly larger and the formatting is a little different.

Enabling the Ruler

Check the box next to Ruler in the Show section of the View tab.

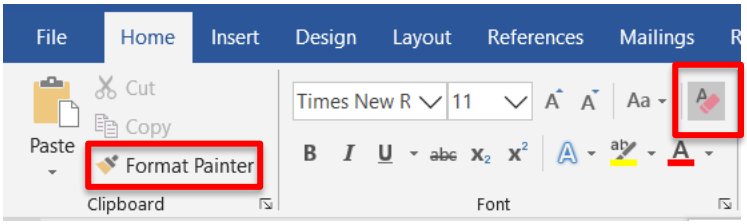


Format Painter and Format Eraser

Use the Painter to apply the formatting from other text to the selected text.

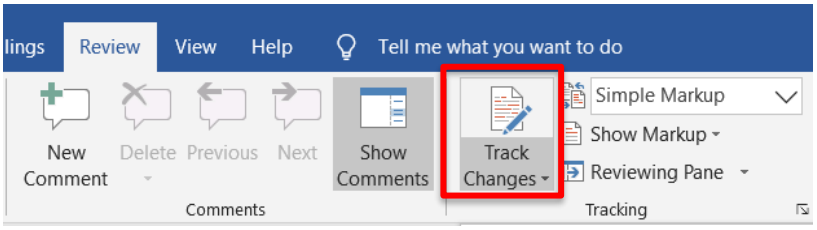
Use the Eraser to clear formatting from the selected text.

In the Home tab:



Track Changes

If you're editing and unsure of the changes you're making, use the Track Changes tool in the Tracking section of the Review tab so you can view and reconsider the changes later.



Free Microsoft Word Through Your School

You may be able to download Microsoft Word for free through your school. Visit https://www.office.com/ and log in with your university or college email. If your school is licensed to provide Microsoft Office to students, your login will automatically have a corresponding Office 365 account. From there, click Install Office and follow the instructions.

All information on APA Style in this guide comes from the *7th Edition Publication Manual of the American Psychology Association.*

Information on Microsoft Word in this guide comes from personal experience.

Additional recommended source: APA Style Blog at https://apastyle.apa.org/blog/

Ryleigh Byrne

January 2020