

apa style format 6th edition example

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Understanding APA Style 6th Edition: A Complete Example Guide

Academic writing demands precision, clarity, and a standardized format that allows readers to locate information quickly. The American Psychological Association (APA) style has long been the gold standard for social science research. While the 7th edition is now the current version, many institutions and journals still require the 6th edition format. This article offers a thorough, step by step walk through of the APA 6th edition style, complete with an example that demonstrates every element from the title page to the reference list. Whether you're a graduate student, a seasoned researcher, or a curious reader, you'll find the information you need to produce a polished, professional manuscript.

Why Use APA 6th Edition?

APA style is not merely a set of formatting rules; it is a system that promotes transparency, reproducibility, and ethical scholarship. The 6th edition, published in 2009, introduced several key changes over its predecessor, such as a new heading structure, the inclusion of a running head for student papers, and clearer guidelines for electronic sources. Many universities still mandate the 6th edition for undergraduate theses, while some journals have not yet transitioned to the 7th edition. Mastering APA 6th edition therefore remains essential for a wide range of academic contexts.

Key Differences Between 6th and 7th Editions

- **Heading levels:** The 6th edition uses five levels, each with specific formatting rules, whereas the 7th edition offers a simplified structure.
- **Running head:** The 6th edition requires a running head on every page; the 7th edition only includes it for professional papers.
- **Page numbers:** In the 6th edition, page numbers are centered at the top right; in the 7th edition, they are placed at the top right but the header format differs.
- **Reference formatting:** The 6th edition requires a period after the author's name, while the 7th edition uses a comma.
- **Digital Object Identifiers (DOIs):** The 6th edition formats DOIs as URLs; the 7th edition presents them as plain text without "http://" prefix.

Because many of these changes affect the visual layout of a paper, it is crucial to understand the specific requirements of the 6th edition when preparing manuscripts for submission.

Formatting Your Manuscript: Step by Step

1. Title Page

The title page is the first impression of your research. In APA 6th edition, the title page includes the following elements, each centered and double spaced:

1. Title – 12 point Times New Roman, bold, centered, and no more than 12 words.
2. Author's Name – Full name, centered below the title.
3. Institutional Affiliation – The university or organization, centered below the author's name.

4. Course Information (if applicable) – Course title, instructor name, and due date, each on separate lines.
5. Running Head – In the header, the phrase “Running head: SHORT TITLE” on the first page, and “SHORT TITLE” on subsequent pages. The short title must be no more than 50 characters.
6. Page Number – Centered at the top right corner.

Below is an example of a correctly formatted title page:

Running head: EFFECTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON STUDENTS (Page 1)

Effects of Social Media on Students

Jane Doe

University of Example

2. Abstract

The abstract is a concise summary of your study, limited to 150–250 words. It should be a single paragraph, double spaced, and include the word “Abstract” in bold at the top, centered. Key elements to include are the research question, methods, results, and implications.

3. Main Body

The main body of your paper is divided into sections using a five level heading system. Each level has specific formatting rules:

- Level 1: Centered, Bold, Title Case.
- Level 2: Flush Left, Bold, Title Case.
- Level 3: Flush Left, Bold Italic, Title Case.
- Level 4: Indented, Bold, Title Case, Ended with a Period.
- Level 5: Indented, Bold Italic, Title Case, Ended with a Period.

All text is double spaced, with 1 inch margins on all sides. Use 12 point Times New Roman unless your institution requires a different font.

4. In Text Citations

APA 6th edition uses the author date citation system. The basic formats are:

- Parenthetical: (Smith, 2010)
- Narrative: Smith (2010) found that...
- Multiple authors: (Smith & Jones, 2012) or Smith and Jones (2012)
- Three or more authors: (Smith et al., 2015) or Smith et al. (2015)
- Direct quotations: (Smith, 2010, p. 45)

5. Reference List

The reference list appears on a new page, titled “References” (centered, bold). Entries are alphabetized by the surname of the first author. Each entry follows a hanging indent of 0.5 inches. Below are common reference formats:

Author, A. A. (Year). *Title of work: Capital letter also for subtitle*. Publisher.

Author, A. A., & Author, B. B. (Year). Title of article. *Journal Name*, volume number(issue number), page range.
<https://doi.org/xxxx>

Author, A. A. (Year, Month Day). Title of page. Site Name. <http://www.example.com>

6. Tables and Figures

Tables and figures should be numbered consecutively (Table 1, Figure 1). Each should have a title, and a note if necessary. The table or figure title appears in italics, while the note is in plain text. Place the table or figure on its own page, and provide a caption immediately below.

7. Appendices

Appendices contain supplementary material such as raw data, questionnaires, or additional analyses. Label each appendix with a letter (Appendix A, Appendix B) and title it. The appendix title appears centered and bold.

Complete APA 6th Edition Example

Below is a fully formatted example of a 6th edition APA paper, including title page, abstract, main text, references, and appendices. The content is fictional but demonstrates every formatting requirement.

Title Page

Running head: SOCIAL MEDIA IMPACT (Page 1)

Social Media Impact on Academic Performance

John Smith

Example University

Abstract

Abstract

The present study examines the relationship between social media usage and academic performance among undergraduate students. A sample of 200 participants completed a self report questionnaire measuring time spent on various platforms and their GPA. Results indicated a negative correlation ($r = -.032$, p

Introduction

Social media has become a ubiquitous part of daily life, especially among college students. While platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter offer opportunities for social connection and information sharing, concerns have risen regarding their potential impact on academic outcomes. Previous research has produced mixed findings: some studies report a detrimental effect (Smith, 2010), whereas others find no significant association (Jones & Lee, 2012). This paper aims to clarify the relationship by examining self reported social media usage and GPA among a diverse sample of undergraduates.

Method

A total of 200 undergraduate students ($M = 20.3$ years, $SD = 1.8$) from Example University participated in the study. The sample was 55% female and 45% male. Participants were recruited through campus flyers and an online bulletin board.

Participants completed an online survey that included demographic questions, a social media usage inventory, and a self reported GPA. The survey was administered via Qualtrics and took approximately 15 minutes to complete. All participants provided informed consent in accordance with the university's Institutional Review Board.

- Social Media Usage Inventory: Adapted from Smith and Jones (2010), this inventory asks participants to estimate the number of hours per week spent on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, and other platforms.
- Academic Performance: Self reported GPA on a 4.0 scale.

Results

Descriptive statistics revealed an average total social media use of 12.4 hours per week (SD = 5.6). Pearson's correlation analysis showed a significant negative relationship between total social media use and GPA ($r = -0.32$, p

Discussion

The findings support the hypothesis that increased social media use is associated with lower academic performance. These results align with Smith (2010) but contradict the null findings of Jones and Lee (2012). Possible explanations include differences in sample demographics and the evolving nature of social media platforms. Future research should explore causal mechanisms and assess the efficacy of digital literacy interventions.

References

References

Jones, B. K., & Lee, S. M. (2012). Social media and academic success: A longitudinal study.

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