Pro Tips for APA Style in the SNHU Nursing Programs

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Nursing Governance Committee
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Pro Tips for APA Style in the SNHU Nursing Programs

A nursing task force, including Loke Ahyo, Dr. Carol Allen, and Sandy Strouse, was formed to address the needs pertaining to use of APA in our programs. The purpose was to have a brief resource that outlines expectations for APA Style usage in SNHU’s Nursing Programs. This document highlights elements of page setup, citations, and references, as well as common errors and correct usage of punctuation, grammar, and avoiding plagiarism. Contents were reviewed and approved by Nursing Governance in August 2019.

Most of the information is presented in outline format. The single-space format and the hyperlinks are intentional. The intent of the active hyperlinks is to allow quick access to the associated resources. Learners should remember that these links within the outline and single-spacing do not follow APA Style for spacing and citations as expected for academic papers. The reference list has been formatted to demonstrate format expectations for references in academic papers. Please let us know if you have any questions.

Further information and approved resources can be located within the

- Latest edition of *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*
- Southern New Hampshire University’s Shapiro Library
  - FAQ’s, Library Guides [http://libguides.snhu.edu/c.php?g=157152&p=2052832](http://libguides.snhu.edu/c.php?g=157152&p=2052832)
  - Training unit titled APA, citations, and plagiarism knowledge for students, [https://rise.articulate.com/share/XZPdTH1BZqWUm7HKbeAjRjQevZT41hhv#](https://rise.articulate.com/share/XZPdTH1BZqWUm7HKbeAjRjQevZT41hhv#)
  - Hoonuit topics [http://libguides.snhu.edu/az.php?a=h](http://libguides.snhu.edu/az.php?a=h)
- APA style blog [https://blog.apastyle.org](https://blog.apastyle.org)

**APA Setup**

APA setup for scholarly papers include: (APA, 2010)

**Settings**

1. **Spacing**: Maintain double spacing throughout. (This document is set for single space intentionally.)
2. **Margins**: 1-inch margins (right, left, top, and bottom)
3. **Font**: Times New Roman, 12-point. This includes the running head, which students often miss because of word processor program’s default settings. Remember to check.

**Title Page**: (APA, 2010, pp. 23-24)

   a. Example: Running head: PRO TIPS APA STYLE
   b. Subsequent pages correct example: PRO TIPS APA STYLE #
5. **Title Elements**: Title of the paper, your name, and institution (affiliation)
6. **Options**: Any other information (Course number and course title, date, etc.) is optional and should be included as the author’s note in the lower half of the page (at least two double-spaces below the title page information).

(Ahyo, Allen, & Strouse, 2019) SNHU
7. See title page of this document and example in the manual (APA, 2010, p. 41).

1. Not all assignments require an abstract. Check the assignment prompts.
2. Placed after title page before start of paper
3. Format: Center “Abstract” at top of page do not bold or underline (no quotations)
4. Brief, comprehensive summary of the paper
5. Maximum 250 words
6. Italicize “Key Words” - centered, after abstract, not bold (no quotation marks)
   a. Identified key words should not be in italics
   b. Example: Key Words: aging, attention, school, survey

1. Repeat title of the paper, centered on the first line of the page (not bold, use upper- and lower-case letters). This is a section label (Lee, 2009). Every writing needs a title as a section label.
2. Use headings to organize and separate topic sections (See Table 1). The title (section label as explained above) is not a heading and do not use “Introduction” as a heading at the beginning of the text. The first paragraph of every writing is the introduction and should not be labeled as such.

Table 1
Formatting Headings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Formatting Headings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level 1</td>
<td>Center, bold with uppercase and lowercase heading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td>Left align, bold with uppercase and lowercase heading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 3</td>
<td>Indented, bold with lowercase heading and end with a period.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 4</td>
<td>Indented, bold, italicized, lowercase heading that ends with a period. Paragraph begins in line with heading.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 5</td>
<td>Indented, italicized, lowercase heading that ends with a period. Paragraph begins in line with heading.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from APA (2010).

Reference Page: (APA, 2010, p. 37)
1. Center the word “References” at top of page. This is a section label. Do not bold or use italics.
2. Use the Hanging indent (in the paragraph settings) to set first line of each reference to overhang. The first line of each reference should be flush to the left margin.

Appendices: (APA, 2010, pp. 38-40)
1. Appendices (when used) need to be cited within the paper
2. Example: (see Appendix A for detailed demographics)
3. Insert after the reference list of your paper.
4. Center the title of the appendix, upper- and lower-case letters as a section label.
5. Label by letter according to the number of appendices
   a. One appendix: Center the italicized word “Appendix” at top of page
   b. Multiple Appendices
      1. Appendix A, Appendix B, Appendix C, etc.
   c. Begin text left flush

**Most Common Punctuation Errors**

**Use of Commas:** (APA, 2010, pp. 88-89; Becker, 2011, 2013)

1. Between elements of a series of three or more elements, insert a comma before the words “and” or “or” (Note that the incorrect example is commonly seen in advertising and other writings. This is because advertisements typically use Chicago style, which does not add the comma as APA style does. Because we see this “error” so often, this is an easy mistake to make).
   a. Correct example: …dog, cat, and mouse
   b. Incorrect example: … dog, cat and mouse

2. To separate clauses:
   a. Correct example: From the beginning, it was clear…
   b. Incorrect example: From the beginning it was clear….

**Use of Periods with End-Citations:** (APA, 2010, Chapter 6)

1. For citations that are at the end of a sentence, do not put the period before the citation. Rather, place the period after the citation.
   a. Correct example: The Icebreaker helped to know one another in the class (Allen, 2014).
   b. Incorrect example: The Icebreaker helped to know one another in the class. (Allen, 2014)
   c. Exception: Blocked quotations

**Quotation Marks and End-Citations:** (Allen, 2014; APA, 2010, pp. 170 – 171; SNHU, 2019)

1. APA rule: If you provide a quotation, you MUST also list the page or paragraph number in parentheses after the quote.
2. You may include page or paragraph numbers from the source, even if it is not quoted, when you want the reader to know where to find specific information in the source.
3. Do not include end-citations within the quotation marks
   a. Correct example: “Do not include end-citations within the quotation marks” (Allen, 2014, p. 1).
   b. Incorrect example: “Do not include end-citations within the quotation marks (Allen, 2014, p.1).”
4. Quotes of 40+ words: avoid and use sparingly. If you must include a long quote, present it in blocked-quote format. Blocked quotes do not use quotation marks. Instead of using long quotes, consider paraphrasing the main idea in your own words.
5. Try not to have too many quotes (for example, less than 20% of quoted content). Instead, focus on synthesizing information with original thoughts (include citations with syntheses).

**Tips to Avoid Plagiarism**

**Avoiding Plagiarism:** (Allen, 2014; APA, 2010, pp. 170-171; SNHU, 2019)

(Ahyo, Allen, & Strouse, 2019)
1. As a general rule (not absolute rule), consider that any 4 consecutive words used from a source must be in quotation marks. However, know that even if you substitute a word here and there, this is still a form of plagiarism. Rather, try to capture the main idea from the source and explain it in your own words. If you must use exact phrasing, use quotation marks.

2. Another rule: Even if you are not directly quoting (e.g., you are paraphrasing or summarizing) you must have a citation to give credit for the idea. Tell the reader where the idea came from.

**Past Tense Use**

*When referring to published works, use the past tense:* (APA, 2010, p. 78).


2. Incorrect example: APA (2010) describes the use of past tense for published works on page 78.

**Abbreviations and Acronym Use**

*When an abbreviation or acronym is appropriate* (APA, 2010, pp. 106-107), the document needs to list the term/name first, followed by the abbreviation or acronym (APA, 2010, p. 107). [https://blog.apastyle.org/apastyle/2015/10/abbreviations-faq.html](https://blog.apastyle.org/apastyle/2015/10/abbreviations-faq.html)

1. Correct example 1: American Psychological Association (APA)

2. Correct example 2: …attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)…

3. **When used with an in text-citation** – Correct example: According to the American Psychological Association (APA, 2010), abbreviations should be used sparingly and, if used, they should appear at least three times in the document.

4. **When used with an end-citation** – Correct example: Abbreviations should be used sparingly and, if used, they should appear at least three times in the document (American Psychological Association [APA], 2010).

5. After identifying the abbreviation or acronym, it can be used alone throughout the rest of the document.

**Citations Format**

The format for a citation is Author(s) by last name and Date (with page/para if quoted) (See basic styles in APA, 2010, p. 177; or refer to the Shapiro Library Guides for APA beginning at [http://libguides.snhu.edu/c.php?g=157152&p=2052916](http://libguides.snhu.edu/c.php?g=157152&p=2052916))

**In-Text Citations:** (Allen, 2014; APA, 2010; SNHU, 2019) Shapiro Library Guide [https://libguides.snhu.edu/c.php?g=157152&p=4630644](https://libguides.snhu.edu/c.php?g=157152&p=4630644)

1. **Basic Format:** Author (date)
   a. Correct example: According to Allen (2014), the elements of citations include the author(s), the date, and, as needed, the page or paragraph number.
   b. Incorrect example: According to Allen, the elements of citations include the author(s), the date, and, as needed, the page or paragraph number (2014).

2. **With two or more authors:** (Allen, 2014; APA, 2010; SNHU, 2019) Shapiro Library Guide [https://libguides.snhu.edu/c.php?g=157152&p=4630813](https://libguides.snhu.edu/c.php?g=157152&p=4630813)
   a. **Format:** use the word “and” before the last author’s name (first time in document).
b. Correct example: Pender, Murdaugh, and Parsons (2011) wrote about nursing from a health promotion perspective.

c. Incorrect example: Pender, Murdaugh, & Parsons (2011) wrote about nursing from a health promotion perspective.


   a. In-text citations of two authors always use “and” between the authors. Reoccurring in-text citations of **three** or more authors include the elements of the first author’s last name, and the phrase *et al.* Note that the period follows “al.” and not “et.”

   b. Correct example: Pender et al. (2011) wrote about nursing from a health promotion perspective.

   c. Incorrect example: Pender et. al (2011) wrote about nursing from a health promotion perspective.

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1. **Format:** (Author(s) last name, date) Note the spacing between the comma and date. When a page number is given, use “p.” and space before the number. When a paragraph number is given, use “para.” and space before the number. (Allen, 2014; APA, 2010; SNHU, 2019)


   b. Incorrect example: Use citations when paraphrasing from a source (Allen, 2014, p1).

2. **With two or more authors:** Use the “&” instead of “and” before the name of the last author.

   a. Correct example: There are many views of what is health (Pender, Murdaugh, & Parsons, 2011, p. 15).

   b. Incorrect example: There are many view of what is health (Pender, N., Murdaugh, C., and Parsons, M.A., 2011, p15).

3. **Subsequent multiple author citations:** After citing three or more authors, repeat citations will use *et al.* Compare the punctuation and spacing in the examples.

   a. Correct example: There are many views of what is health (Pender et al., 2011, p. 15).

   b. Incorrect example: There are many views of what is health (Pender, et. Al, 2011).

---

**References Format**

Because of the many different types of sources to reference, there are varied details of how to organize the elements of a reference. APA (2010) discussed these in detail. Please refer to the text or to the APA Style blog ([http://www.apastyle.org](http://www.apastyle.org)) to answer specific formatting
questions about APA reference styles. The Shapiro Library Guides also details the major reference formats you need for your academic papers. These are listed below for convenience.


**Links from Shapiro Library Guides** (SNHU, 2019):
- APA Style: Basics > General rules for formatting the reference list page [https://libguides.snhu.edu/c.php?g=157152&p=2052694](https://libguides.snhu.edu/c.php?g=157152&p=2052694)
- APA Style: Basics > General rules for formatting the reference list page with video. [https://libguides.snhu.edu/c.php?g=157152&p=4604481](https://libguides.snhu.edu/c.php?g=157152&p=4604481)
- APA Style: Basics > More Help Citing Sources in APA with Self-Paced Training [https://libguides.snhu.edu/c.php?g=157152&p=2052832](https://libguides.snhu.edu/c.php?g=157152&p=2052832)

There is a basic format on how to organize the elements in a reference. The basic format and examples of references from a book, a journal, a website, and a course lecture are identified below.

a. **Basic Format**: Author(s) Last name, Initials. (Date). Title of work. Source of work.
b. Remember the page setup: Use the hanging tool, under the “special” menu within the paragraph settings.
c. Each element of a reference is separated by a period. Note the use of italics, spacing, punctuation, and upper- and lower-case letters in each reference type.

   Shapiro Library Guide [https://libguides.snhu.edu/c.php?g=157152&p=4603596](https://libguides.snhu.edu/c.php?g=157152&p=4603596)
   - **Format**: Author. (Date). Title of the book. (ed. If edition is indicated). City of publication: Publisher

   - **Format**: Author. (Date). Title of article. *Name of Journal, volume*(issue), pages. Retrieval information.
   - **Author**: (APA, 2010, p. 184)
     1. Last name, initial(s). If more than one initial, place a period and space after each. If more than one author, use “&” instead of “and” and insert a comma before &
     2. Correct example: Pender, N., Murdaugh, C., & Parsons, M. A.
     3. Incorrect example: Pender, N., Murdaugh, C. and Parsons, M.A.
   - **Date**: (APA, 2010, p. 185)
     1. The date should be only the year of publication. Exceptions are when there are no issue numbers. Then, the month is added.
     2. For newspapers (and other periodicals or blogs without issue numbers, etc.), the entire date would be listed: (year, month, day)
   - **Title of the Article**: (APA, 2010, p. 185; Lee, 2012)
1. Use upper case for the first letter of the first word, and lower-case (unless there is a proper noun) for the other words of the title. No italics, no bold font.
2. Correct example: Key findings from research studies on safe RN staffing.
3. Incorrect example: Key Findings From Research Studies on Safe RN Staffing
4. Incorrect example: Key Findings From Research Studies on Safe RN Staffing

e. **Journal Information:** (APA, 2010, p. 185; SNHU, 2019), Shapiro Library Guide
   https://libguides.snhu.edu/c.php?g=157152&p=4603840
   1. The name of the journal (in italics), comma, the volume number (in italics) no space the issue number (in parenthesis, and not in italics), comma, page numbers, without adding the “p.”

f. **Retrieval Information:** (APA, 2010; McAdoo, 2017; see “DOI and URL Flowchart” at https://blog.apastyle.org/files/doi-and-url-flowchart-8.pdf)
   - **DOI format:** If the doi number is available, that becomes your retrieval information. The doi is a string of numbers and/or letters with backslashes. Do not insert spaces in the string.
     1. Correct example: https://doi.org/10.1037/arc0000014
     2. Old style format is still acceptable (McAdoo, 2017) example: doi: 10.1037/arc0000014
     3. **Usage** (old style vs new style): Both are correct but should be consistent throughout the list (McAdoo, 2017). Select one or the other style.
   - **Without a doi format:** (SNHU, 2019) Shapiro Library Guide
     https://libguides.snhu.edu/c.php?g=157152&p=4603840 Any sources obtained from the Shapiro Library should indicate the search engine used and the Ascension Number, or publication number. It should not include the URL (the web link) because only those who have access to the Shapiro Library can use that link.
     1. Correct example 1: CINAHL AN#####
     2. Correct example 2: ProQuest #######
   - **Internet journal sources that do not have a doi:** (Lee, 2016) Insert the URL (web link) preceded by “Retrieved from http://…..”
     1. The http:// is an important component.
   - **Re: retrieval date:** (Becker, 2014) Do not include the date the journal article was accessed
   - **Re: Hyperlinks:** (APA, 2010; SNHU, 2019). With web links, Word defaults to making URLs a hyperlink (underlines and changes the color). Right click
on the link and select “remove hyperlink” to remove the color change and the underline. (Select hyperlinks intentionally kept with key resources in this document for easy access to the resource.) Shapiro Library Guide
https://libguides.snhu.edu/c.php?g=157152&p=4604239


https://apastyle.apa.org/learn/quick-guide-on-references#Websites;
https://blog.apastyle.org/apastyle/2012/05/missing-pieces.html
b. Determining Author: (APA, 2010, pp. 176-177; Lee, 2016)
   1. Author specifically identified: may be at the top or at the end of the article
   2. Group: Organization or Agency: Sometimes, the organization is the author. Write out the name of the organization and include a period after the name (before the date).
   3. No name, no group: Substitute title of the page for the author
   4. Correct example: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
   5. Incorrect example from the CDC site: “National Diabetes Statistics Report”
c. Date: When there is no date, use (n.d.)
d. Format Description: (Lee, 2016): The type of document could be clarified by identifying the type of document in brackets. Not all references require a format description. After the period-space of the title, insert the bracket, document type, followed by a period.
   1. You may want to identify the type, such as a position statement, or clarify that the item is a report.
   3. You may want to clarify the document format
   4. Correct examples: [Video]. [PDF]. [PowerPoint].
   5. Incorrect example: [Journal Article]. [Book].
   6. (Contextual note: the references of journals and books are described by the elements of the reference list. To insert an added description in brackets is redundant. Use this format description element only when the reader would benefit from knowing the type of document being referenced.)
e. Multiple Pages on a Website: When more than one page from a web-page source, such as the CDC, is used, create a separate reference for each page used. Cite in the paper accordingly.
   1. Correct Examples: (Format these as double-space, aligned left, and with hanging setting).

(Ahyo, Allen, & Strouse, 2019)

   (Contextual clarification: Incorrect because this page is an index that provides the links to the other pages used in the paper. If the paper discussed the index page, for example, as a resource for others to access, then this would be a correct reference.)

   e. Retrieval date: (Becker, 2014).
      1. Do not include the date the web-based article was accessed

      1. With web links, Word defaults to making URLs a hyperlink (underlines and changes the color). Right click on the link and select “remove hyperlink” to remove the color change and the underline. (Hyperlinks kept in this outline for easy access to the links).
      2. Option: Change the color only of the hyperlinks and keep the links active in the list.
      5. Option example (also correct): Retrieved from http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola

      4. Note that the city and publisher are not included in the reference. The student could use VitalSource Bookshelf or MBS Direct as the bracketed information. The bracketed information from these sources are not required. An example of a required bracket for e-book information is: [Kindle]. (If that is what was used.)
5. The citations would still follow author, date format.
6. Citations requiring a page/paragraph number could cite the overarching heading of the section in the source quote (if there are no page numbers).

   a. You might choose to cite a lecture with a journal or discussion board entry, when appropriate (such as in a discussion about the lecture). Lectures would not be appropriate evidence to use with academic papers.
   b. **Format:** Author (usually the speaker. There may be a combination). (Date). Title of Lecture, [special notation]. *Course number and Name.* Department. City: University.
   e. Other: Lectures can also be managed the same way personal communications are managed, especially if they are not accessible to all (not public), and/or no one’s name is associated with it (such as the text-lectures in BrightSpace).
      1. In-text citation example: The point made in the Module Two lecture (accessed August 14, 2019), about …
      2. End-citation example: (Module Two lecture, accessed August 14, 2019)
      3. Do not reference personal communications in the reference list.
References


(Ahoy, Allen, & Strouse, 2019)


Retrieved from https://libguides.snhu.edu/apa

# Appendix

APA Usage by Assignments at SNHU

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Title Page</th>
<th>In-Text Citation</th>
<th>Reference List</th>
<th>First Person</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DB/Small Group</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No (Graduate)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes (UG)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short Paper</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Varies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection Journal</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Varies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Study</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Varies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>Title Slide</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholarly Paper</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No (Graduate)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Varies (UG)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(SNHU, 2017; SNHU, 2018)

(Ahyo, Allen, & Strouse, 2019)