



# Introduction

The *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* was first published in 1929 as a seven-page “standard of procedure, to which exceptions would doubtless be necessary, but to which reference might be made in cases of doubt” (Bentley et al., 1929, p. 57). Eighty years later, we launch the sixth edition of the *Publication Manual* in the same spirit. Over the years, the *Publication Manual* has grown by necessity from a simple set of style rules to an authoritative source on all aspects of scholarly writing, from the ethics of duplicate publication to the word choice that best reduces bias in language.

The rules of APA Style are drawn from an extensive body of psychological literature, from editors and authors experienced in scholarly writing, and from recognized authorities on publication practices. This edition of the *Publication Manual* has been extensively revised to reflect new standards in publishing and new practices in information dissemination. Since the last edition of the manual was published, we have gone from a population that reads articles to one that “consumes content.” New technologies have made increasingly sophisticated analyses possible, just as they have accelerated the dissemination of those analyses in multiple forms, from blogs to personal Web postings to articles published in online databases.

To provide readers with guidance on how these and other developments have affected scholarly publishing, we have reordered and condensed the manual significantly. Our first goal was to simplify the reader’s job by compiling all information on a topic in a single place. We have ordered information in accordance with the publication process, beginning with the idea stage and ending with the publication stage. We have retained and strengthened the basic rules of APA writing style and the guidelines on avoiding bias in language that were first published by APA more than 30 years ago. Most important, we have significantly expanded guidance on ethics, statistics, journal article reporting standards, electronic reference formats, and the construction of tables and figures.

Key to this revision is an updated and expanded web presence, which exponentially increases the information we are able to provide. At [www.apastyle.org](http://www.apastyle.org), readers will find a full range of resources for learning APA Style as well as additional guidance on writing and publishing, which will evolve with changing standards and practices.

## Organization of the Sixth Edition

In Chapter 1, we acquaint readers with the types of articles common in scholarly publications. We also describe the role of ethics in publishing and offer guidance in following best practices for compliance.

In Chapter 2, we define all parts of a scholarly manuscript, from title to appendix, emphasizing both function and form. We also summarize current reporting standards for journal articles. The chapter ends with sample papers that illustrate the rules of APA Style.

In Chapter 3, we offer basic guidance on planning and writing the article. We advise readers on how to organize their thoughts, choose effective words, and describe individuals with accuracy and sensitivity.

In Chapter 4, we instruct readers on the nuts and bolts of style: punctuation, spelling, capitalization, abbreviations, numbers, and statistics in text. Consistency in the use of these basic aspects of style is key to clear scientific communication.

In Chapter 5, we describe the effective use of graphic elements in text and provide readers with illustrations of graphic elements that are useful for the presentation of data in tables and figures.

In Chapter 6, we provide guidance on citing sources. We discuss ground rules for acknowledging contributions of others and for formatting quotations. We instruct readers on when and how to cite references in text and on how to construct a reference list that contains everything readers need to locate each source.

In Chapter 7, we provide a comprehensive selection of reference examples in APA Style. The examples cover a range of categories, from periodicals to podcasts, with an emphasis on references to electronic formats.

In Chapter 8, we provide an overview of the journal publishing process. We emphasize the author's responsibilities in manuscript preparation and at each subsequent stage of publication.

## Specific Changes in the Sixth Edition

### General Approach

We considered two broad issues in planning this revision. First, given the wide use of the *Publication Manual* by readers outside the field of psychology, to what extent should this edition focus specifically on the APA journals program? Detailed information on APA journals is available on the web (see <http://www.apa.org/journals/>); each journal has its own web page, which includes specific instructions to authors. We decided to remove from the *Publication Manual* much of the APA-specific information that is readily accessible on the web, where guidelines are kept current. In this edition of the *Publication Manual*, we emphasize general principles that researchers need to know as well as principles of clear textual and visual communication.

Second, to what extent should the *Publication Manual* be prescriptive rather than descriptive of current practices in the field? A section in the foreword to the fourth edition is relevant:

The *Publication Manual* presents explicit style requirements but acknowledges that alternatives are sometimes necessary; authors should balance the rules of the *Publication Manual* with good judgment. Because the written language of psychology changes more slowly than psychology itself, the *Publication Manual* does not offer solutions for all stylistic problems. In that sense, it is a transitional document: Its style requirements are based on the existing scientific literature rather than imposed on the literature. (American Psychological Association, 1994, p. xxiii)

Because of the diversity of practices in the social and behavioral sciences, we anticipated that the *Publication Manual* would likely prescribe new direction for some subdisciplines and merely describe the current state of scientific reporting for other subdisciplines.

## New and Expanded Content

**Chapter 1.** Because of the importance of ethical issues that affect the conduct of scientific inquiry, we have placed ethics discussions in this opening chapter and have significantly expanded coverage of several topics. New guidance is included on determining authorship and terms of collaboration, duplicate publication, plagiarism and self-plagiarism, disguising of participants, validity of instrumentation, and making data available to others for verification.

**Chapter 2.** In Chapter 2, we provide comprehensive information on specific manuscript parts, which were located in several chapters in the last edition. For each manuscript part, we describe purpose and core content as well as how it should appear in text. This chapter has been significantly expanded with the addition of journal article reporting standards to help readers report empirical research with clarity and precision. We also provide an expanded discussion of statistical methods, including guidance on reporting effect sizes. In addition, we provide a new section on the use and preparation of supplemental materials for the web. We close the chapter with a new selection of sample papers that instantiate elements of APA Style.

**Chapter 3.** In this chapter, we offer two areas with significantly changed content. First, we have simplified APA heading style to make it more conducive to electronic publication. Second, we have updated guidelines for reducing bias in language to reflect current practices and preferences. A new section on presenting historical language that is inappropriate by present standards has been added, and examples of good and bad language choices have been expanded and moved to the web, where they are more accessible to all and can be easily updated.

**Chapter 4.** New content in Chapter 4 includes guidelines for reporting inferential statistics and a significantly revised table of statistical abbreviations. A new discussion of using supplemental files containing lengthy data sets and other media is also included.

**Chapter 5.** Procedures for developing graphic material have changed dramatically since the last edition of the *Publication Manual* was published. This chapter contains significantly expanded content on the electronic presentation of data. It will help readers understand the purpose of each kind of display and choose the best match for communicating the results of the investigation. We provide new examples for a variety of displays, including electrophysiological, imaging, and other biological data.

**Chapter 6.** In this chapter, we have consolidated information on all aspects of citations, beginning with guidance on how much to cite, how to format quotations, and how to navigate the permission process. The discussion of electronic sources has been greatly expanded, emphasizing the role of the digital object identifier as a reliable way to locate information. The discussion of each reference type is now followed directly by a variety of examples, with electronic sources featured.

**Chapter 7.** Chapter 7 contains a significantly expanded set of reference examples, with an emphasis on electronic formats, for readers to use in mastering the changes described in Chapter 6. New examples have been added for a number of online sources, from data sets and measurement instruments to software and online discussion forums.

**Chapter 8.** Chapter 8 has been revised to focus more on the publication process and less on specific APA policies and procedures. It includes an expanded discussion of the function and process of peer review; a discussion of ethical, legal, and policy requirements in publication; and guidelines on working with the publisher while the article is in press.

## How to Use the *Publication Manual*

The *Publication Manual* describes requirements for the preparation and submission of manuscripts for publication. Chapters in the *Publication Manual* provide substantively different kinds of information and are arranged in the sequence in which one considers the elements of manuscript preparation, from initial concept through publication. Although each chapter is autonomous, individuals new to the publication process may benefit from reading the book from beginning to end to get a comprehensive overview.

### Organizational Aids

We have included checklists throughout the book to help you organize tasks and review your progress. These are listed below.

Checklist name	Page
Ethical Compliance Checklist	20
Table Checklist	150
Figure Checklist	167

We have also provided sample papers to illustrate applications of APA Style. These include a one-experiment paper (Figure 2.1, pp. 41–53), a two-experiment paper (Figure 2.2, pp. 54–56), and a sample paper reporting a meta-analysis (Figure 2.3, pp. 57–59).

## Format Aids

Examples of points of style or format that appear throughout the book are in a contrasting typeface. This typeface is intended to help you locate examples quickly.

This is an example of the typeface used to illustrate style points.

The following are other formatting aids that are designed to help the reader locate specific information quickly:

- A detailed table of contents lists the sections for each chapter and will help you locate categories of information quickly.
- An abbreviated table of contents appears inside the front cover for ease in locating broad categories of information.
- A list of tables and figures follows the table of contents and will help you locate specific tables and figures.
- Tabs and keys printed in the margins will help you locate frequently used sections.

We hope that these format aids will assist you in finding the instruction you need in the pages that follow.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>You may find that the appearance of these pages occasionally deviates from APA Style rules. For example, sections may not be double-spaced and may not be in 12-point Times Roman typeface. APA Style rules are designed for ease of reading in manuscript form. Published work often takes a different form in accordance with professional design standards.

