Fifth Edition

Publication
Manual

of the American Psychological Association

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Preface

In 1928 editors and business managers of anthropological and psychological journals met to discuss the form of journal manuscripts and to write instructions for their preparation. The report of this meeting, which was chaired by Madison Bentley and sponsored by the National Research Council, is the forerunner of this book. The report was published as a seven-page article in the February 1929 issue of the *Psychological Bulletin*, a journal of the American Psychological Association (APA). The group agreed that it would not dictate to authors; instead, it recommended a "standard of procedures, to which exceptions would doubtless be necessary, but to which reference might be made in cases of doubt" ("Instructions," 1929, p. 57; see section 9.01 for references to the predecessors of this edition of the *Publication Manual*).

In the 70 years that followed, those "instructions" were revised and expanded a number of times. The first edition of the instructions under the title of *Publication Manual* was actually a 60-page supplement to the *Psychological Bulletin* published in 1952.

It was another 22 years before a new edition was published in 1974 with 136 pages. Publication of the 208-page third edition occurred in 1983, and the fourth edition of 368 pages rolled off the presses in 1994.

Seven years have elapsed since the last edition, during which time great changes have occurred in the publishing world and in the technology used by authors, editors, and publishers. The fourth edition stood the test of time well, but eventually there were more matters to be dealt with than could be easily accommodated on the APA Web site for updates. In

1999 the APA Publications and Communications Board authorized work to begin on this fifth edition of the *Publication Manual*.

Leslie Dodson ably served as the project leader for the revision, and many APA members and staff contributed their time, energy, and expertise to the preparation and editing of this volume. Mark Appelbaum and his colleagues on the Statistics Task Force (Leona S. Aiken, Joel R. Levin, Robert Rosenthal, and Howard Wainer) had a particularly difficult assignment. Although not always in agreement on the specifics, the task force did agree on the need to provide some additional assistance to authors in dealing with statistical representations in manuscripts. Lenore W. Harmon, the APA Chief Editorial Advisor, drew on her experience to work on the ethics and authorship sections and to chair the Task Force on the Publication of Case Material (with Janice Birk, Clara Hill, Ross Parke, and William Stiles). Kathleen Sheedy took aim at the moving target of electronic referencing and manuscript preparation. She will continue working with the APA Internet Services staff to keep the new APA Style Web site up to date with changes in this area as they occur. Susan Knapp and Demarie Jackson provided examples, text, and guidance along the way.

There is a section in the foreword to the fourth edition that aptly characterizes the *Publication Manual*.

> 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.
>
> Every edition of the *Publication Manual* has been intended to aid authors in the preparation of manuscripts. The 1929 guide could gently advise authors on style, because there were then only about 200 authors who published in the 4 existing APA journals. Today,

the editors of APA's 24 primary journals consider close to 6,000 manuscript submissions per year (of which approximately 1,400 reach print). Without APA style conventions, the time and effort required to review and edit manuscripts would prohibit timely and cost-effective publication and would make clear communication harder to achieve.

The numbers are higher today, of course. There are now 27 APA primary journals. And at least a thousand other journals in psychology, the behavioral sciences, nursing, and personnel administration use the *Publication Manual* as their style guide. This standardization has greatly facilitated the communication of new ideas and research and simplified the tasks of publishers, editors, authors, and readers as well as enabled linkages of electronic files across articles and across publishers.

As noted in the foreword to the fourth edition, however, this "standard" is not static. Our APA Web site devoted to the *Publication Manual* will provide updates and the latest information on changes in APA style and in APA policies and procedures that will affect authors as they prepare their manuscripts.

What's new in APA Style?
Visit the APA *Publication Manual*
Web site:
www.apastyle.org

Introduction

Rules for the preparation of manuscripts should contribute to clear communication. Take, for example, the rule that some editors consider to be the most important: Double-space everything. A double-spaced manuscript allows each person in the publication process to function comfortably and efficiently. Authors and editors have space for handwritten notes; typists and typesetters can easily read all marks. Such mechanical rules, and most style rules, are usually the results of a confluence of established authorities and common usage. These rules introduce the uniformity necessary to convert manuscripts written in many styles to printed pages edited in one consistent style. They spare readers a distracting variety of forms throughout a work and permit readers to give full attention to content.

The rules provided in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* are drawn from an extensive body of psychological literature, from editors and authors experienced in psychological writing, and from recognized authorities on publication practices. Writers who conscientiously use the *Publication Manual* will express their ideas in a form and a style both accepted by and familiar to a broad, established readership in psychology.

Early versions of the *Publication Manual* were intended exclusively for American Psychological Association (APA) authors. Recognizing a need for commonly accepted guidelines in psychology as a whole, APA published the 1974 second edition for a much wider audience. The third edition, published in 1983, also was an extensive revision and achieved the goal of becoming a major guide for authors, editors, students, typists,

and publishers; it has been used widely by members of graduate and undergraduate departments of psychology. The 1994 fourth edition was guided by two principles: specificity and sensitivity. With that in mind there were a number of revisions made to the *Publication Manual* on reporting results and statistics as well as on ethical principles in scientific publishing and on writing without bias.

This fifth edition builds on the fourth edition, updating and clarifying the formats for electronic and legal references, adding sections on the content of methodological and case study reports, outlining revisions to procedures (e.g., reporting of potential conflict of interest), and expanding on some of the issues involved in data sharing and verification. The statistics section has been largely rewritten to reflect emerging standards in the field (although there are still a number of disagreements on presentation). Instructions for manuscript preparation now take advantage of the nearly universal use of sophisticated word processors: the hanging indent is back, and authors can represent italicized and bold-faced entries as they will appear in print. The paragraphs that follow briefly describe each chapter and highlight the changes and additions in this new edition.

Organization of the Fifth Edition

Chapter 1, Content and Organization of a Manuscript, describes review, theoretical, methodological, and case study articles as well as empirical studies. There are guidelines on describing participants of a study and on reporting statistics, with the goal of enabling researchers to replicate published studies. Instructions on the preparation of abstracts have been updated.

Chapter 2, Expressing Ideas and Reducing Bias in Language, emphasizes the importance of organizing one's thinking and writing and of making every word contribute to clear and concise communication. Guidelines are included for reducing bias in language.

Chapter 3, APA Editorial Style, describes many of the mechanical aspects of editorial style in APA journals, including punctuation, spelling, capitalization, italics, abbreviations, quotations, mathematical copy, headings, tables, illustrations, footnotes, and citations in text.

Chapter 4, Reference List, is now a chapter in its own right and contains, in addition to a description of the components of common references, more examples, including updates on some forms for referencing electronic media.

Chapter 5, Manuscript Preparation and Sample Papers to be Submitted for Publication, provides instructions on preparing manuscripts with a word processor. The sample paper and outlines illustrate the format and application of APA style. Labels on the sample paper give more specific cross-references to relevant parts of the *Publication Manual.*

Chapter 6, Material Other Than Journal Articles, describes such manuscripts as theses, dissertations, student papers, material for oral presentations, and brief reports. Guidance is provided on how dissertations may be readied for publication as journal articles.

Chapter 7, Manuscript Acceptance and Production, provides instructions to authors on preparing the accepted manuscript for production. Ways to review copyedited manuscripts and typeset proofs of articles are also explained. A sample manuscript is provided to demonstrate how a manuscript should be coded for electronic processing.

Chapter 8, Journals Program of the American Psychological Association, discusses the general policies that govern all APA journals and includes discussion of the ethical principles of the APA that apply to authorship and publication. The chapter also explains the editorial review process and the management of submitted manuscripts.

Chapter 9, the **Bibliography,** lists works on the history of the *Publication Manual* and annotated references for further reading.

Appendixes A and **B** are checklists authors should review to ensure that they have met the criteria for submitting manuscripts for publication and for transmitting accepted manuscripts for electronic production, respectively. **Appendix C** is an extract from the APA Ethical Principles containing all of the sections that may have relevance to authorship and to publication. **Appendix D** contains reference examples for legal materials using the *Blue Book.* Finally, **Appendix E** is a sample cover letter illustrating the kinds of information an author might include when submitting a manuscript for consideration to a journal editor.

The **Index** has been expanded and includes section numbers as well as page numbers. Finding your way around this new edition should be a great deal easier.

Specific Style Changes in the Fifth Edition

Readers who are familiar with the fourth edition of the *Publication Manual* will find, besides the revisions and additions outlined in the previous section, a detailed listing of specific changes in style requirements introduced with the fifth edition at the APA Web site for the *Publication Manual*.

Changes in requirements for manuscript preparation may initially be inconvenient and frustrating to authors submitting papers. Such changes arise because of changes in APA policy, in production technology, in the economy, or in the state of science. Should future changes in requirements occur before the preparation of another edition of the *Publication Manual*, they will be published on the APA Web site and keyed to this edition.

Although the *Publication Manual* provides some specific rules of usage and grammar, it does not address general problems of writing and language, which are adequately dealt with elsewhere. The *Publication Manual* does not cover exceptional writing situations in psychology in which style precedents may need to be set. When you are without a rule or a reference and the answer to a question can be narrowed to several reasonable choices, aim for simplicity, plain language, and direct statements.

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, each chapter also develops from the preceding chapter. For example, chapter 1 explains how to organize the parts of a manuscript, and chapter 2 describes how to express specific ideas

within the manuscript. Chapters 3 and 4 describe APA style and bibliographic reference format. Chapters 5, 6, and 7, which concern preparing a manuscript, provide information you will use only after you have reviewed the first four chapters; that is, you will not prepare your manuscript until you have organized and written it. To use the *Publication Manual* most effectively, you should be familiar with the contents of all its chapters before you begin writing.

The design of the fifth edition provides specific aids that allow you to locate information quickly. Format aids, such as changes in typeface, will help you easily locate and identify the answers to questions on style and format. Organizational aids, such as checklists and cross-references to other sections, will help you organize and write the manuscript and check major points of style and format when you have finished. Do not use these aids independently of the explanatory text; they highlight important information, but they do not include everything you need to know to prepare your manuscript. Lists of some of these format and organizational aids follow.

Format Aids

- The examples of points of style or format that appear in chapters 3 and 4 are in a typeface that looks like that produced on a word processor. This typeface not only helps you locate the examples quickly but shows how material appears when typed:

  This is an example of the word processor typeface.

  (Note that manuscript examples are not fully double-spaced. Authors should, however, follow the instructions in chapter 5 for manuscript preparation.)
- A detailed table of contents, which lists the sections for each chapter, helps you locate categories of information quickly.
- A list of tables and a list of figures, which appear in the table of contents, help you locate specific tables and figures.

- Sample tables and figures give you guidance on preparing your own tables and figures in what the APA considers ideal forms.
- An improved and comprehensive index helps you locate section and page numbers for specific topics quickly.
- The tabs and key (see inside back cover) help you easily locate frequently used sections.

Organizational Aids

- A section on evaluating content (section 1.02) lists questions you can use—before you begin writing—to decide whether the research is likely to merit publication.
- A section at the end of chapter 1 on the quality of presentation lists questions you can use to evaluate the organization and presentation of information in the manuscript.
- Table Examples 1–12 show how tables should be prepared. A table checklist (section 3.74) provides a final review of major points of table style and format.
- Figure Examples 1–10 show how figures should be prepared. A figure checklist (section 3.86) provides a final review of major points of figure style and format.
- Sample papers and outlines (Figures 5.1–5.3) are provided: The sample one-experiment paper shows how a typical manuscript looks as prepared with a word-processing program (Figure 5.1). The outlines for a sample two-experiment and a sample review paper (Figures 5.2 and 5.3) show the typical organization of these kinds of papers.
- Section 9.03 of the Bibliography lists publications that provide more information on topics discussed in the *Publication Manual.*

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