



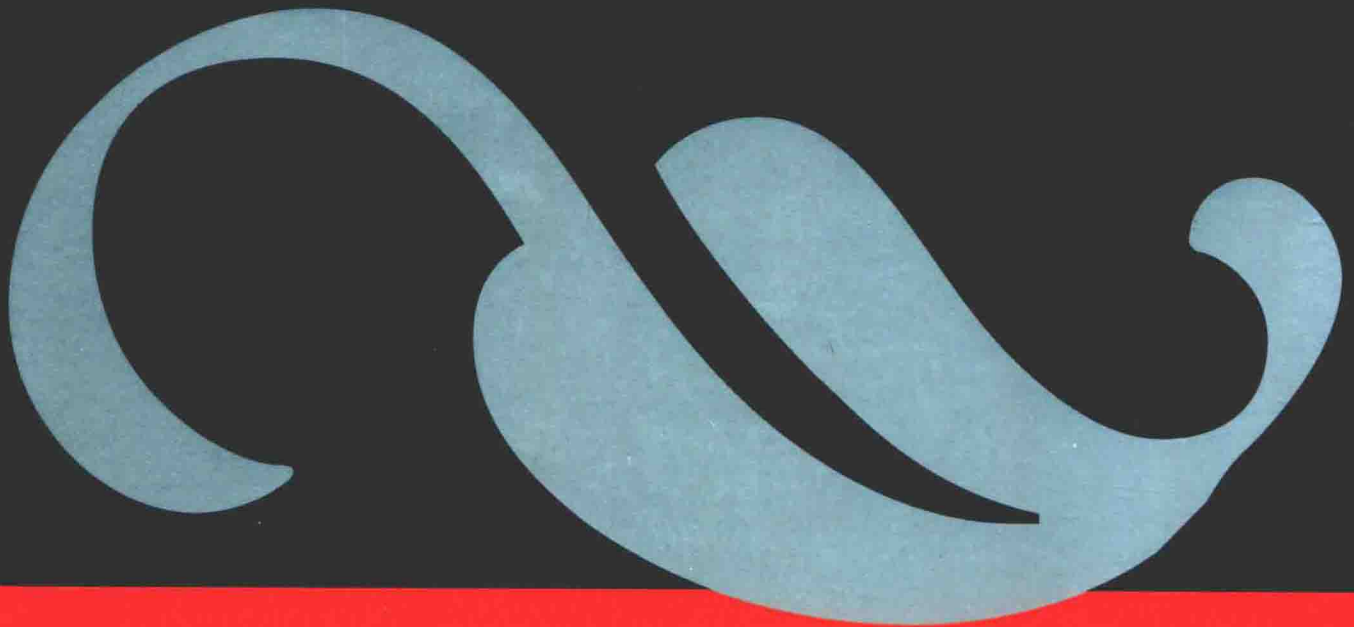
Mastering

APA Style

Student's Workbook and Training Guide

*A hands-on guide for learning the style rules of the
Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association,
Fifth Edition*

Harold Gelfand, Charles J. Walker, &
the American Psychological Association



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Mastering
APA Style

The Purpose of *Mastering APA Style*

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*Imagine what writing would look like without style rules: Wee the peepul
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constitooshun . . .*

What Is Style?

According to *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* (10th edition), *style* is “a convention with respect to spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and typographic arrangement and display followed in writing or printing” (p. 1169). When people first began to put words on paper, there were no customs or plans. Spelling was whimsical; punctuation had not been invented. There had been no need for such conventions. Listeners knew whether a speaker meant *where* or *wear* by the context of the speech. They knew when ideas were changing course because the speaker paused and drew breath. However, when people tried to read what others had written, confusion reigned. Imagine trying to read a page of text that has no commas, periods, or paragraph breaks; in which you cannot discern who is speaking because there are no quotation marks; and in which the same word may be spelled five different ways. The need for rules was immediately obvious, and style was born.

Who's on first?

*Lessee hereby leases from lessor, and lessor leases to lessee, the property
listed in the attached Schedule 1 and in any schedule made a part hereof
by the parties hereto (herein called “equipment”).*

As soon as some uniformity had been achieved, it also became obvious that exceptions to the rules, or special rules, were needed as well. Chemists needed a universally understandable, shorthand way to refer to compounds and formulas. Lawyers needed a special way of communicating that eliminated ambiguity in phrasing the law. Scientists needed a way of reporting the results of their experiments. Researchers needed a way of citing the sources on which their ideas were founded. Each discipline had its own needs. The style used to write a will would not be useful for writing a research article. The style used for writing a research article would not be appropriate in an office memo.

Always credit your source:

“My extensive research proves that women are smarter because they do not have to wear neckties to work” (based on a chat with a chap at the train station).

It is important to realize that there is more than one “correct” style. The style conventions that you follow for your particular writing project will be those that best meet the needs of the discipline that you are writing for or about. Thus, journalists, lawyers, government officials, literary critics, and mathematicians follow style guides that were developed specifically to meet their needs and those of their intended audiences.

What Is APA Style, and Who Uses It?

Soon after psychology was established as an academic discipline, it was clear that a customized set of rules and conventions was needed. Theories of psychology are founded on research conducted with animals and humans. The ways in which research is conducted are standardized by the discipline. For example, there are well-defined procedures for using experimental controls, applying statistics, interpreting the validity of test scores, and so forth. When preparing written reports of such research, it is important that writers use the same conventions so that results and conclusions and the means of deriving them are universally understood.

Thus, APA style was originally devised specifically to meet the needs of people who write term papers, essays, master’s theses, doctoral dissertations, journal articles, reports, or books in the behavioral and social sciences. APA style has also been widely acknowledged as a practical means to organize and communicate technical information in fields other than psychology (e.g., anthropology, sociology, management science), and many of these disciplines have adopted its use in their academic departments and professional organizations.

The handbook that lists the rules and conventions of APA style is the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. The fifth and most current edition was published in 2002. The *Publication Manual* is probably the most widely used style guide in the world. Hundreds of professional journals require their authors to use the *Publication Manual* as their style guide. Use of APA style is required by all psychology departments and by many other academic departments in U.S. colleges and universities. More than 200,000 copies of the *Publication Manual* are sold throughout the world each year.

Why Should You Use APA Style?

The reason for using any style guide is apparent: You want to be able to communicate your ideas clearly to others. Writing has two components: content and style. *Content* is what you say; *style* is how you say it. You may have great ideas, but if your manuscripts are poorly prepared (e.g., if you make numerous grammatical errors, are repetitious, fail to cite sources, present tables that are difficult to interpret), you lose credibility with the reader. If that reader is your instructor, he or she may think that you do not comprehend your subject matter.

If you are a student of psychology or a related discipline, you should use APA style because it will enable you to communicate in a way that is familiar to and accepted by the people for whom you are or will be writing (who number in the hundreds of thousands!). If lawyers ignored the style conventions used by their colleagues, their written work would probably be viewed with great skepticism (e.g., “When I kick the bucket, give all the junk in my basement to my friend Bill, but only if he promises not to sell anything at one of his yard sales”). If statisticians invented their own way of presenting probabilities and did not use the guidelines accepted by their field, readers would have great

difficulty interpreting their numbers (e.g., “The phi delta chi probability is less than gamma magna probability”). Your discipline requires you to follow APA style—and for good reason.

Therefore, there are two fundamental reasons why you should use APA style: Following any style guide will enable you to communicate better, and following APA style is required in your discipline. What you may not realize is that many personal benefits will accrue to you as you use APA style. Set aside for a moment the idea that APA style is required, and consider what is in it for you:

- The *Publication Manual* is more than a list of rules and guidelines; it also contains sound advice on the craft of writing (chapters 1 and 2). Thus, APA style will help you to improve your writing skills not only for the courses in which it is required but also for any writing that you do.

- Having rules and guidelines readily available for troublesome or complicated issues such as formatting references or displaying statistics saves you time and trouble: You do not have to create ways of doing these things. Your time is freed up to concentrate on content.

- Often writer’s block occurs because you cannot see how to arrange your information. Should you discuss each implication as you present each result, or should you present all of the results and then all of the implications? Should you introduce your paper by summarizing your conclusions or begin by describing your procedures and present your conclusions only at the end? There are myriad decisions to be made. The *Publication Manual* offers a ready-made outline that can help you organize your thoughts before you write and as you write.

- If you follow APA style guidelines correctly, your writing will be free of most of the mechanical errors that can distract your readers from the ideas—the content—that you are presenting. By showing respect for your readers, you gain their respect and their interest in your subject.

- The more you use APA style, the more mastery you will achieve. When you achieve mastery, you will have internalized good writing skills as well as knowledge of the basic style rules. Thus, in any subsequent writing you do, you will need to consult the *Publication Manual* less and less often and will approach any writing task with greater confidence and competence. In other words, the benefits continue to accrue beyond your first term paper.

- If you do plan to pursue graduate study or a professional career in psychology or a related discipline, you will probably be required to write for publication. Most publishers in your discipline require that you conform to APA style. Thus, by mastering APA style now, you help ensure your chances of success in graduate study or a professional career.

- From a purely academic standpoint, there is no question that by improving your writing skills—even only the mechanics—you will get better grades. By preparing your papers well you increase the likelihood that you convey what you know.

So you see, mastering APA style has many practical advantages beyond getting you through your first course that requires it. You will save time, improve your writing skills, write with greater ease and confidence, improve your chances of getting better grades, and—most important—equip yourself with a valuable skill that will continue to serve you in the future, regardless of what career course you choose.

How Will This Workbook Help You Learn APA Style?

Chances are that you are reading this book because you are required to learn APA style. It is quite natural for you to question this requirement. You may view it as an unwelcome demand on your time. You may wonder how you can be expected to learn APA style in addition to learning the subject matter of your course. If you are fairly certain that you will not go to graduate school, you may wonder why you have to learn all of these rules just to write a few papers. The preceding section should convince you that learning APA style will be beneficial for you regardless of whether you write only one paper for a required course or whether you go on to graduate school or a profession. Even if you are convinced that you need to learn APA style, how will you do it? How will you find the time? Will you have to memorize the entire *Publication Manual*?

If reading a copy of the *Publication Manual* is your only means of learning APA style, the task can seem daunting. There is a great deal of material to learn, and there are many small details to remember. Many of the guidelines seem arbitrary to you. Thus, it is difficult for you to understand why you should have to use them. For example, why does a paper have to be double-spaced? Why do references have to be put in alphabetical order? Why do you have to say *humankind* instead of *mankind*? As you gain experience, you will understand the practical reasons for style rules that are not so apparent at first. It is easier to learn anything if you understand its application.

You will discover that many style guidelines are intended to aid the reader. For example, double-spaced manuscripts are easier to read than single-spaced manuscripts, alphabetizing references makes it easier for readers to look them up, and using nonsexist language shows respect and sensitivity for your audience. Some style rules, such as some of the rules for numbers, are indeed arbitrary. Such style rules exist simply because consistency is preferable.

The trouble with learning APA style from the *Publication Manual* alone is that although examples of usage are given, the book does not offer you practice in applying rules to real-life situations. Remember that the *Publication Manual* is a reference book, not a how-to book. *Mastering APA Style* was designed to make learning APA style easy for you and to save you time. No, you will not have to memorize the entire *Publication Manual*. In fact, memorizing the guidelines will not enable you to master APA style. Mastery comes through practice. Think of using APA style as a skill or a tool rather than as a subject matter to be memorized. APA style is a means, not an end, a means of becoming your own writing critic or editor.

This user-friendly workbook is written in such a way that you may study on your own, at your own pace, without supervision. Individual instructors may offer you guidance, class time, or deadlines, all of which will only help you further. The workbook also teaches through practice (i.e., hands-on learning). The exercises and tests require you to apply APA style, not necessarily to prove that you have memorized it. Furthermore, you may not need to complete the entire workbook. The workbook is full of road markers (i.e., the sections of the *Publication Manual* to which a style point pertains is always cited) so that you can work on only those areas that you need to work on. Although this workbook is designed to teach you about APA style, it will also inform you about psychology. The exercises draw on what has been done in a variety of areas within psychology. You will learn about theories, methods, research, and applications by many different psychologists representing diverse groups.

CHAPTER 2

How to Use the *Student's Workbook and Training Guide*

Organization of the Workbook

Take a moment to look at the table of contents for the *Student's Workbook and Training Guide*. Chapter 1, which you should have just read, describes the purpose of *Mastering APA Style* and describes what style is in general and what APA style is in particular. Perhaps most important, the chapter outlines the benefits that you will gain by mastering APA style. If you have any doubts about why you need to be able to use APA style or how this book will help you learn, chapter 1 should help you resolve them. In this chapter, the organization and content of the workbook are described in greater detail, and instructions are given for using the materials. It is essential to read chapter 2 to understand how to use the materials most efficiently.

As the table of contents shows, the learning materials are divided into two units: term paper writing (chapter 3) and research report writing (chapter 4). If you do not need to write reports of empirical research presently or in the near future, you need complete only the term paper unit. However, everyone, including those who will be writing research reports, should do the term paper unit because the basic principles it teaches are the foundation for the more technical principles taught in the research report unit. Within each unit, you will see that the learning materials are divided into four components:

- Familiarization Test
- Learning Exercises and Integrative Exercises
- Practice Test
- Review Exercises.

The learning, integrative, and review exercises are further subdivided by topic.

An important thing to know is that all of the answers to test and exercise items are in the workbook. The tests have answer keys, and the exercises consist of a draft version (the question) and a feedback version (the answer). You will not be left wondering whether you have correctly applied a style rule; there is no mystery. This feature of the workbook is explained more fully under “Instructions for Using the Workbook Materials” later in this chapter.

Using the *Publication Manual* With the Workbook

Now take a moment to leaf through the *Publication Manual*. You will notice that each chapter is subdivided into numbered sections. For example, in chapter 2, “Expressing Ideas and Reducing Bias in Language,” you will find a subsection coded 2.01 (“Orderly Presentation of Ideas”). In the code 2.02, the number to the left of the decimal identifies the chapter number; the number to the right of the decimal identifies the section, which is also a specific point of style, or rule. These numbers simplify the process of finding style rules in the *Publication Manual*. The same numbering system is used in the *Student's Workbook and Training Guide* to assist you in locating the section of the *Publication Manual* pertinent to the style point you are studying. These numbers are referred to as “APA codes,” and they are listed with each test and exercise item.

*Buy a copy of the Publication Manual.
Always do the term paper unit first.
Always take the familiarization test before doing the learning exercises.*

Where Should You Begin?

Be sure you have a copy of the *Publication Manual* (fifth edition) before you begin to use the workbook. You should definitely complete the term paper unit before doing the research report unit, even if you need to know APA style only for writing research reports. The reason is that the research report unit builds on the principles taught in the term paper unit. It is also strongly recommended that you take a familiarization test before doing the learning exercises. Doing so may save you significant time and effort because it will help you to identify particular style points that you have already mastered; thus, you may choose to skip the learning exercises pertaining to those points.

Although the order of the exercises corresponds roughly to the order of the sections of the *Publication Manual* indicated by APA codes, the workbook is designed for independent study and can be used flexibly. Unless your instructor makes specific assignments, you may complete the exercises in any order you find useful. To facilitate skipping around, each topic area is preceded by a brief synopsis of what style points the exercises for that section teach and how to complete them.

You may also wonder whether you should do all of the exercises in a section (e.g., exercises on punctuation) and then go back and look at the feedback version (the correct version of each exercise item) or whether you should do them one by one. Either way is fine. The same advice applies to consulting the *Publication Manual*. That is, you may want to consult the *Publication Manual* each time a question arises in your mind. Or you may read whole sections before or after doing the exercises. Whatever works for you!

Two approaches to doing learning exercises:

- *Do one exercise, jotting down changes or notes right on the workbook page. Then look at the feedback version and compare your work with the correct version. Consult the Publication Manual as questions arise. Go on to the next exercise.*
 - *Do all of the exercises in a section, jotting down changes or notes right on the workbook page. Then review all of the feedback versions. Consult the Publication Manual at any time.*
-

Instructions for Using the Workbook Materials

There are several things you should know about the materials contained in *Mastering APA Style*. Understanding how the materials are written, arranged, and formatted before you begin working will make your task easier. These matters are explained in further detail later in this chapter.

- *Mastering APA Style* consists of two books: the *Instructor's Resource Guide* and the *Student's Workbook and Training Guide*. You need only the *Student's Workbook and Training Guide*. The *Instructor's Resource Guide* contains the mastery tests, the mastery test answer keys and answer sheets, and the complete test item pool. Your instructor will provide you with any mastery test, along with an answer sheet, that you may be asked to take.
- All test and exercise items cite APA codes, which indicate the sections of the *Publication Manual* that contain the style guidelines that pertain to the questions and exercises.
- The tests and exercises do not cover the *Publication Manual* comprehensively. They focus on chapters 1 through 5, which contain most of the editorial style guidelines.

- Test and exercise items are grouped by topic, and they are arranged to correspond approximately to the order of the *Publication Manual*.
- All test items have a multiple-choice answer mode. There are no yes–no, true–false, or essay questions per se.
- The tests consist of three styles of questions: complete statements or questions, incomplete statements, and unedited segments of manuscript.
- Some of the tests and exercises are designed to aid you in memorizing important aspects of APA style, whereas others are intended to help you learn how to use the *Publication Manual* itself or to look up infrequently used technical information.

There are three styles of questions in the tests:

- *Complete statements or questions, for which you choose the correct response.*
20. Which of the following examples should not be hyphenated?
- role-playing technique
 - super-ordinate variable
 - six-trial problem
 - high-anxiety group
 - all of the above
- *Incomplete statements, for which you choose the response that accurately completes the statement (i.e., fill in the blank).*
21. In titles of books and articles, initial letters are capitalized in
- major words when titles appear in regular text.
 - words of four letters or more when titles appear in regular text.
 - the second word in a hyphenated compound when titles appear in regular text.
 - major words and words of four letters or more when titles appear in reference lists.
 - all of the above except d.
- *Unedited segments of manuscripts, which you edit and then choose the response that reflects how you edited the text.*
11. Edit the following for the use of nonsexist language:
- It has been suggested that the major factor giving man a performance advantage over other primates on many cognitive tasks is that the tasks have been selected and administered by other men.

- a. leave as is
 - b. It has been suggested that the major factor giving the species of man a performance advantage over other primates on many cognitive tasks is that the tasks have been selected and administered by men of the same species.
 - c. It has been suggested that the major factor giving human beings a performance advantage over other primates on many cognitive tasks is that the tasks have been selected and administered by other human beings.
 - d. It has been suggested that the major factor giving human beings (men or women) a performance advantage over other primates on many cognitive tasks is that the tasks have been selected and administered by other human beings.
-

Familiarization Tests

Taking the familiarization tests and reviewing your responses to them will help you to identify what you do know and do not know about APA style. The time you spend on the familiarization tests is time well spent. In the long run these tests will save you time because you will be able to focus your study efforts on only those topics that you need most to learn or master.

The tests consist of 40 numbered items, each followed by a series of possible responses identified by lowercase letters (e.g., a, b, c). Only one response is correct for each item. Two answer sheets for each test are located at the end of the tests. One is blank, so that you can write in your responses. The other contains the answers and the APA codes for each item. Read each test item, read the possible responses, and write in the letter of the response that you think is correct on the blank answer sheet. You may consult the *Publication Manual* at any time. You may find it useful to make a notation next to any test item that you found to be difficult.

When you have responded to all of the test items, check your work against the answer key and score your own test. To get an accurate assessment of how much you know, when you score your familiarization test, count only those questions you answered correctly without the aid of the *Publication Manual*. If the total number of incorrect answers plus looked-up answers is greater than 20% (i.e., 8 or more of a possible 40 answers), consider doing all of the learning exercises. While you are doing the exercises, pay special attention to those aspects of APA style that you are the least familiar with (i.e., read and practice those parts of the *Publication Manual* you missed on the test).

However, if you did well on the familiarization test (e.g., a score of 36 or better), you may save time by skipping the learning exercises. If you are doing this work as a requirement for a course, your instructor may choose to give you a mastery test; to prepare yourself for these tests, simply do the review exercises and take the practice test.