APA format for academic papers and essays

In addition to guidelines for APA citations, there are format guidelines for academic papers and essays. They're widely used by professionals, researchers, and students.

The most important APA format guidelines in the 6th edition are:

- Use 12 pt Times New Roman
- Set 1-inch page margins
- Apply double line spacing
- Insert a running head on every page
- Indent every new paragraph ½ inch

Headings

Throughout your paper, you use different heading levels. The levels ranging from one to five help structure the document. Major headings, or heading 1, are used for the titles. Heading levels two to five are used for subheadings. Each heading level is formatted differently. These are the APA heading guidelines:

Heading level	APA format
Heading 1	Centered, Bold, Title Case Capitalization
Heading 2	Left-Aligned, Bold, Title Case Capitalization
Heading 3	Indented, bold, Sentence case capitalization, a final period. The body text begins immediately after the period.
Heading 4	*Indented, bold, italics, sentence case capitalization, a final period.* The body text begins immediately after the period.
Heading 5	*Indented, italics, sentence case capitalization, a final period.* The body text begins immediately after the point.

Title case capitalization: Capitalize the first, last, and principal words.

Sentence case capitalization: Capitalize only the first word and any proper nouns.

Title page

The APA title page also called a cover page, is the first page of your paper. The regular formatting guidelines regarding font and margins apply. In addition, an APA formatted title page contains:

- Running head including page number
- Full paper title (in title case)
- Author name(s), without titles and degrees
- Institutional affiliation

Running head: SMARTPHONES ON ATTENTION SPAN   1

The Effects of Smartphones on the Attention Span of Young Adults

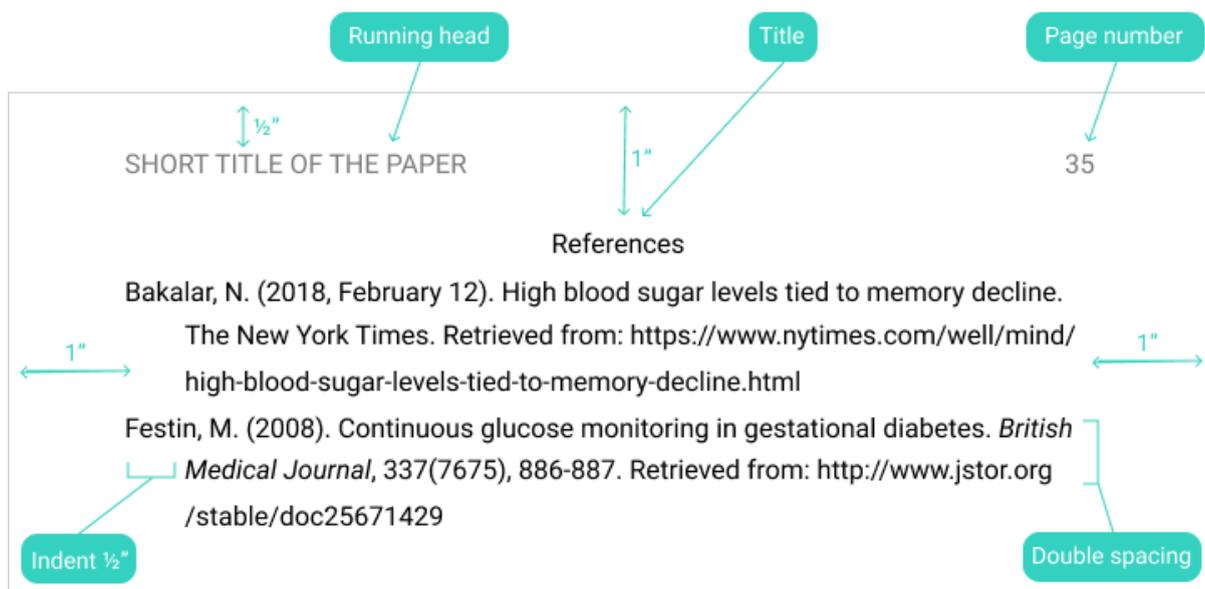John T. Taylor, George Kotler and Dennis G. Parker

University of California, Berkeley

Reference page

The APA reference page also called the reference list, is where all sources that are cited in the text are listed. The citations differ for each source type. Aside from the references itself the reference page as a whole also has specific APA formatting guidelines.

The APA reference page example below highlights those guidelines regarding page margins, hanging indent, and the reference page title "References". Furthermore, the reference list is sorted alphabetically.

APA reference page example

In-text citations and references

APA format citations consist of parenthetical citation in the text (in-text citations) and the full reference in the reference list. For each webpage, journal article, book, or any other source-specific citation guidelines apply.