

In-Text Citations: Author/Authors

APA style has a series of important rules on using author names as part of the author-date system. There are additional rules for citing indirect sources, electronic sources, and sources without page numbers.

Citing an Author or Authors

A Work by Two Authors: Name both authors in the signal phrase or in the parentheses each time you cite the work. Use the word "and" between the authors' names within the text and use the ampersand in the parentheses.

Research by Wegener and Petty (1994) showed...

(Wegener & Petty, 1994)

A Work by Three to Five Authors: List all the authors in the signal phrase or in parentheses the first time you cite the source.

(Kernis, Cornell, Sun, Berry, & Harlow, 1993)

In subsequent citations, only use the first author's last name followed by "et al." in the signal phrase or in parentheses.

(Kernis et al., 1993)

In *et al.*, *et* should not be followed by a period.

Six or More Authors: Use the first author's name followed by et al. in the signal phrase or in parentheses.

Harris et al. (2001) argued...

(Harris et al., 2001)

Unknown Author: If the work does not have an author, cite the source by its title in the signal phrase or use the first word or two in the parentheses. Titles of books and reports are italicized or underlined; titles of articles and chapters are in quotation marks.

A similar study was done of students learning to format research papers ("Using APA," 2001).

Note: In the rare case the "Anonymous" is used for the author, treat it as the author's name (Anonymous, 2001). In the reference list, use the name Anonymous as the author.

Organization as an Author: If the author is an organization or a government agency, mention the organization in the signal phrase or in the parenthetical citation the first time you cite the source.

According to the American Psychological Association (2000),...

If the organization has a well-known abbreviation, include the abbreviation in brackets the first time the source is cited and then use only the abbreviation in later citations.

First citation: (Mothers Against Drunk Driving [MADD], 2000)

Second citation: (MADD, 2000)

Two or More Works in the Same Parentheses: When your parenthetical citation includes two or more works, order them the same way they appear in the reference list, separated by a semi-colon.

(Berndt, 2002; Harlow, 1983)

Authors With the Same Last Name: To prevent confusion, use first initials with the last names.

(E. Johnson, 2001; L. Johnson, 1998)

Two or More Works by the Same Author in the Same Year: If you have two sources by the same author in the same year, use lower-case letters (a, b, c) with the year to order the entries in the reference list. Use the lower-case letters with the year in the in-text citation.

Research by Berndt (1981a) illustrated that...

Personal Communication: For interviews, letters, e-mails, and other person-to-person communication, cite the communicators name, the fact that it was personal communication, and the date of the communication. Do not include personal communication in the reference list.

(E. Robbins, personal communication, January 4, 2001).

A. P. Smith also claimed that many of her students had difficulties with APA style (personal communication, November 3, 2002).

Citing Indirect Sources

If you use a source that was cited in another source, name the original source in your signal phrase. List the secondary source in your reference list and include the secondary source in the parentheses.

Johnson argued that...(as cited in Smith, 2003, p. 102).

Note:When citing material in parentheses, set off the citation with a comma, as above.

Electronic Sources

If possible, cite an electronic document the same as any other document by using the author-date style.

Kenneth (2000) explained...

Unknown Author and Unknown Date: If no author or date is given, use the title in your signal phrase or the first word or two of the title in the parentheses and use the abbreviation "n.d." (for "no date").

Another study of students and research decisions discovered that students succeeded with tutoring ("Tutoring and APA," n.d.).

Sources Without Page Numbers

When an electronic source lacks page numbers, you should try to include information that will help readers find the passage being cited. When an electronic document has numbered paragraphs, use the ¶ symbol, or the abbreviation "para." followed by the paragraph number (Hall, 2001, ¶ 5) or (Hall, 2001, para. 5). If the paragraphs are not numbered and the document includes headings, provide the appropriate heading and specify the paragraph under that heading. Note that in some electronic sources, like Web pages, people can use the Find function in their browser to locate any passages you cite.

According to Smith (1997), ... (Mind over Matter section, para. 6).

Note: Never use the page numbers of Web pages you print out; different computers print Web pages with different pagination.