Document Formatting Feedback Checklist

The following checklist is based upon the most frequent comments given to students when reviewing APA formatted course paper submissions. Only comments denoted with an "X" in the To Consider column apply to your paper submission.
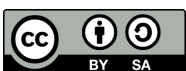
Student:

General APA Version 7 Formatting – Common Comments

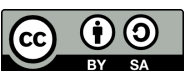| To Consider	Comment
	Please follow the specified file naming convention when submitting your assignment. It can be very difficult to keep track of multiple student submissions that are simply named "Assignment 1.docx" or "Assignment 1.pdf"
	For general APA formatting standards for APA version 7, refer to https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/general_format.html
	The updated rule for Page Headings in APA v7 is as follows: • **Student Papers – No Page Header on the Title Page, or subsequent pages.** • Professional Papers – Page Header on ALL pages, including Title Page. • Page Header formatting for ALL papers – SHORT FORM TITLE FOR YOUR PAPER IN ALL CAPS • Note – Do NOT include Running Head: PAGE HEADER on the Title Page anymore. • Note – Your Page Header should be less than 50 characters long.
	Keywords should be listed in alphabetical order.
	For an APA paper, you should open the main body with a Level 1 header. Either repeat the title of the paper, or use "Introduction."
	Avoid using a first-person perspective in a formal academic paper. No matter how valid your points are, the reader tends to dismiss them as either anecdotal or biased when the first-person is used.
	When stating the purpose of your paper, only use "will" in a proposal. Once the paper is written, say that it "does." Use something like "this paper explores…"
	For formatting specifics for section heading levels in APA, refer to https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/apa_headings_and_seriation.html
	For proper table formatting in APA, refer to https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/apa_tables_and_figures.html
	For proper figure formatting in APA, refer to https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/apa_tables_and_figures.html

To Consider	Comment
	Spell out numbers from zero to nine, and use numbers for numbers 10 and above (unless you are presenting a statistical figure).
	Do not use contractions in formal writing.
	You must spell out all acronyms or abbreviations the first time you reference them in a paper (i.e. American Psychological Association (APA)...)
	You do not need to start a new page for each section of your paper. Only force a page break after the cover page and Abstract, and before your References and each Appendix.
	Delete extra line breaks. Use just a single hard return at the end of a paragraph, or after a section heading.

APA Version 7 Citations and References Formatting – Common Comments

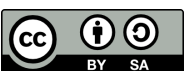| To Consider	Comment
	References List
	Your References list should begin on a new page, with a Level 1 APA v 7 section heading.
	Your References are not formatted according to APA v 7 conventions. (Do not use footnotes or endnotes for an APA paper, list all resources in alphabetical order by author lastname, not in order that they appear in the paper, and refer to the APA v 7 formatting guidelines for the type of resource cited.
	References should be formatted using a hanging indent paragraph format (use the paragraph formatting options in Word, not the tab key). Refer to the following re inserting hanging indents in Word documents: https://support.microsoft.com/en-au/office/create-a-hanging-indent-7bdfb86a-c714-41a8-ac7a-3782a91ccad5
	Improper use of or missing italics for publication name in Reference or in-text citations.
	Do not include the retrieval date, or the words "retrieved from" or "available from" for an APA v 7 reference. Just the URL.
	Do not include the city of publication for an APA v 7 citation. Just the name of the publisher.
	The proper format for citing a book chapter is: Lastname, Initial. (year). Chapter title. In Initial. Lastname (Ed.), *Book title*, pp. x-xx. Publisher. DOI or URL (if online)
	The proper format for citing a journal article is: Lastname, Initial. (year). Article title. *Journal title, Volume#*(Issue#), pp. x-xx. DOI or URL (if online)
	The proper format for citing a web page is: Lastname, Initial. (or Copyright holder). (year). *Web page title*. Web site title. URL or, if no information on author or copyright holder: *Web site title* (date). URL
	The proper format for citing a blog post is: Lastname, Initial. (year, month day). Blog post title. [Web log post]. *Blog site title*. URL
	The proper format for citing a YouTube video is: Lastname, Initial. (or publisher). (year, month day). *Video title*. [Video recording]. URL Note – use the short form URL from the sharing link, not the longer URL from your browser's address bar.
	Here are a couple of good resources that show how to properly cite a course pack: • https://guides.douglascollege.ca/APA-7/CourseRelatedMaterial • https://blog.apastyle.org/apastyle/2012/09/how-to-cite-course-packs.html
	You need to cite software, applications, or web-based resources the first time that you refer to them in a paper. The easiest way to cite software is to find the vendor's web page for the product, and cite it like you would any other web page. The Auckland University of Technology has an excellent summary of how to properly cite software applications at https://aut.ac.nz.libguides.com/APA7th/software

To Consider	Comment
	In-Text Citations and Quotes
	Use "&" when citing a group of authors inside of parentheses for an in-text citation. Use "and" when listing the group of authors in a sentence.
	List all authors the first time you cite them in-text in your paper (unless there are more than 4). Use "et al." for subsequent citations of the same source.
	For inline quotes (not block) at the end of a sentence, the period should come after the citation, not before it. Otherwise, it belongs to the next sentence.
	Only include page or paragraph numbers for direct quotes, not for paraphrased concepts.
	Only use ellipses when removing text from the middle of a quoted passage, not at the beginning or end.
	Any quotes longer than 40 words MUST use a block quote format. Refer to https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/in_text_citations_the_basics.html
	Avoid including active hyperlinks in an APA format paper. • Do not include linked text in the main body of the paper. • Most publishers prefer that any URLs in your References list are formatted as plain text (unlinked). Note – active hyperlinks decrease readability (because they are underlined and in a different color, and active links cannot be accessed by anyone viewing printed copy of the document.)

Digital Accessibility Issues – Common Comments

To Consider	Comment
	General Text Formatting
	Use the appropriate paragraph or heading tag from the Formatting Styles toolbar to actually tag your text as a heading or paragraph. This will ensure compliance with all local Digital Accessibility requirements. Update the styles in the toolbar, as necessary, to reflect APA v 7 formatting. Refer to the following for more details: https://youtu.be/AKzuXghQFnc
	Watch your use of fonts. • For a paper, stick to the font recommended by your publisher, or stick to a common font such as Times New Roman, Verdana, Calibri, Helvetica, or Arial, to maximize readability. • For a web-based project, presentation slide deck, or video presentation, please stick to a sans serif font to maximize readability. • For a web-based project, such as content in an LMS, please stick to the default system font. This will maximize Digital Accessibility by allowing readers to use extensions, plug-ins, or other applications to "overwrite" your page font with one that meets their specific Accessibility needs. Manually selecting a font other than the system default may "break" this functionality for some users.
	Do not use your <ENTER> key to vertically align content on a page. This creates a Digital Accessibility issue. Refer to: https://youtu.be/DS9TJH9eAqI (from 00:42 to 04:54)
	Do NOT use your <ENTER> key to create a new page. This does not comply with Digital Accessibility guidelines (a screen reader will read out each and every blank line!). It also causes formatting issues for readers on different screens. Use <CTRL>+<ENTER> to force a page break. Refer to: https://youtu.be/DS9TJH9eAqI (from 00:42 to 04:54)
	Text Boxes
	Avoid using textboxes to position content on a page. Textboxes are "objects" that "float" above the main page content and are invisible to digital screen reader applications. • To ensure that text within a textbox can be read by a screen reader application, you MUST manually set the textbox alignment to "Inline with Text." Refer to: https://www.section508.gov/training/documents/aed-cop-docx10/
	Tables
	Ensure that any tables you embed include properly tagged row or column headers (not just manually formatted using bold font or color). Otherwise, your table will be confusing to visually-impaired readers using a digital screen reader application.

To Consider	Comment
	Images and Color
	Include ALT tags when embedding an image in a document (to increase compliance with local Digital Accessibility standards)
	Avoid embedding a lot of text within an image. Text within an image is not machine-readable, so it is not accessible to anyone using a digital screen reader application. • Stick to short text headings or bullet-points within your image (if they are needed), and primarily graphical information. • Provide a text-based explanation or elaboration on the key points in paragraph form either before the image (to introduce it), or after the image.
	Watch for Color Contrast Ratio issues. • Avoid using colored text, especially to convey meaning. Some users may not be able to distinguish color differences, and some devices may render colors differently. • Colored text may not be as visible for users who are using "dark mode" on their devices. Manually-selected text colors will "break" the ability of a user's device to automatically render text in white when using dark mode. • Always ensure the highest possible ratio between foreground text and the background. When in doubt, stick to black and white. Use a tool such as the free Color Contrast Analyzer to test your foreground and background color ratios. • https://www.tpgi.com/color-contrast-checker/
	Embedded Media
	Ensure that embedded videos have available Closed Captions (or a text-based, machine-readable transcript). If possible, it is helpful to also ensure the available of Descriptive Video options.
	Ensure that embedded media is not set to auto-play.
	Ensure that embedded media has controls (start, stop, pause, rewind, forward, captions, etc) that can be controlled with either a mouse, a keyboard, or a digital switch. Ensure that users can escape from the media controls without requiring a mouse.

Note: Please refer to the official assignment grading rubric to determine if comments related to Digital Accessibility issues are included as part of your assessment criteria. While Digital Accessibility issues may or may not be counted towards your assignment grade, it is best practice to address them at all times (and may be required by organizational or regional standards in your jurisdiction).

For more resources on how to make your documents or digital teaching and learning resources more accessible for your audience, refer to the Power Learning Solutions Digital Accessibility Resources page at https://www.powerlearningsolutions.com/digital-accessibility.html