

# **How to Prepare your Dissertation in APA Style**

This guide has been taken from the American Psychological Associations Website.

## **Style Manual**

It is recommended that APA Style Seventh Edition is used. It should be in 12-point type using Times New Roman font.

## **Spacing**

The text in the manuscript should be double-spaced. The right margin of the text should not be justified, but kept left-aligned, also known as ragged right, like the text in this guide.

## **Margins**

All margins in the document should be set to 1 inch on each side. The margins must be maintained on all pages, including the appendices. Tables, maps, charts, and illustrations should fall within such margins.

## **Bias-Free Language**

Eliminate biased language from your writing. Avoid perpetuating prejudicial beliefs or demeaning attitudes. Instead, use bias-free language to describe all people and their personal characteristics with inclusivity and respect, including:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender
- Participation in research
- Racial and ethnic identity
- Sexual orientation
- Socioeconomic status
- Intersectionality

For guidelines on how to write about people without bias and examples of bias-free language, see the [Bias-Free Language](#) link on the last page.

## **Dissertation Order**

Your dissertation should include a title page, text, and references. They may include additional elements, such as tables and figures.

Arrange the pages of an APA Style paper in the following order:

- Title page - *required*
- Dissertation Approval/Signature Page\* - *required*  
*\*Formatting must be approved by The Graduate School before printing, then signed by all members of the committee and The Dean of The Graduate School.*
- Copyright Page - *required*
- Abstract - *required*
- Table of Contents
- Text
- References
- Footnotes
- Tables
- Figures
- Appendices

In general, start each section on a new page. However, the order of pages is flexible in the following cases:

- **tables and figures:** Embed tables and figures within the text after they are first mentioned (or “called out”), or place each table and then each figure on separate pages after the references. If an embedded table or figure appears on the same page as text, place it at either the top or the bottom of the page, and insert a blank double-spaced line to separate the table or figure from the adjacent text.
- **footnotes:** Use the footnotes function of your word-processing program to insert a footnote at the bottom of the page of text on which the footnote appears, or list footnotes together on a separate page after the references.

## Professional Title Page

The professional title page includes the paper title, author names (the byline), author affiliation(s), author note, running head, and page number, as shown in the following example.

Follow the guidelines described next to format each element of the professional title page.

**The Role of Compulsive Texting in Adolescents' Academic Functioning**

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Faculty of  
Montclair State University in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

by

John P. Smith

Montclair State University

Upper Montclair, NJ

August 2020

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Michael S. Silverman

	<b>Format</b>	<b>Example</b>
<b>Paper title</b>	Place the title three to four lines down from the top of the title page. Center it and type it in bold font. Capitalize major words of the title. Place the main title and any subtitle on separate double-spaced lines if desired.	<p><b>The Role of Compulsive Texting in Adolescents' Academic Functioning</b></p> <p>A DISSERTATION</p>
	As shown in the sample to the right, include the following submission note underneath the title and subtitle.	<p>Submitted to the Faculty of Montclair State University in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy</p>
<b>Author name</b>	Place one double-spaced blank line between the submission note and the author names. Center author name(s) on their own line.	<p>by John P. Smith</p>
<b>University</b>	As shown.	<p>Montclair State University Upper Montclair, NJ</p>
<b>Date</b>	Use the month and year that you are completing your dissertation.	<p>August 2020</p>
<b>Running head</b>	The running head appears in all-capital letters in the page header of all pages, including the title page. Align the running head to the left margin. Do not use the label "Running head:" before the running head.	<p>COMPULSIVE TEXTING AND ACADEMIC FUNCTIONING</p>
<b>Page number</b>	Use the page number 1 on the title page. Use the automatic page-numbering function of your word processing program to insert page numbers in the top right corner of the page header.	<p>1</p>

## **Dissertation Approval/Signature & Copyright Pages**

The next two pages illustrate the proper formatting that should be used for the required Dissertation Approval/Signature and Copyright pages. All content should be in Times New Roman and 12 pt font, with the exception of the Copyright label itself being 11 pt font.

MONTCLAIR STATE UNIVERSITY  
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL  
DISSERTATION APPROVAL

We hereby approve the Dissertation

**The Role of Compulsive Testing in Adolescents'**

**Academic Functioning**

of

John P. Smith

Candidate for the Degree:

Doctor of Philosophy

Graduate Program:  
Counseling

Dissertation Committee:

Certified by:

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Dr. Michael S. Silverman  
Dissertation Chair

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Dr. M. Scott Herness  
Vice Provost for Research and  
Dean of the Graduate School

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Dr. Patricia X. Smith

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Date

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Dr. Frieda F. Friedman

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# Creating an APA Style table of contents

## APA format guidelines for the table of contents

In a dissertation, the table of contents comes between your abstract and your introduction. It should be written in the same font and size as the rest of your text (usually 12 pt Times New Roman). At the top of the page, write **Contents**, centered and in bold.

In APA Style, you can use up to five levels of headings, each with its own formatting style. In the table of contents, you should include all level 1 and 2 headings, left-aligned and formatted as plain text. Level 2 headings are indented.

Including lower-level headings in the table of contents is optional. Add an additional indent for each level. If you have a lot of headings in your text, you may not be able to include them all – your table of contents should not be more than two pages long in total.

Example: APA table of contents (see below)

## Contents

Introduction.....	2
Literature Review.....	5
Methodology.....	10
Sampling Method.....	11
Procedure.....	11
Data Analysis.....	12
Results.....	13
Survey Data.....	13
Interview Data.....	16
Conclusion.....	23
Discussion.....	24
Recommendations.....	28
Reference List.....	29
Appendix 1. Interview Transcripts.....	34
Appendix 2. Survey Responses.....	38

## How to generate a table of contents in Word

To automatically generate a table of contents in Word, you'll first have to apply heading styles throughout your text. After that, you can generate the table of contents.

### Applying heading styles

First, go through your text making sure that each level of heading is in keeping with APA Style rules:

Heading 1	<b>Centered, Bold, Title Case Capitalization*</b>
Heading 2	<b>Left-Aligned, Bold, Title Case Capitalization*</b>
Heading 3	<b>Indented, bold, sentence case capitalization,** a final period.</b> The body text begins immediately after the period.
Heading 4	<b><i>Indented, bold, italics, sentence case capitalization,** a final period.</i></b> The body text begins immediately after the period.

## Heading 5

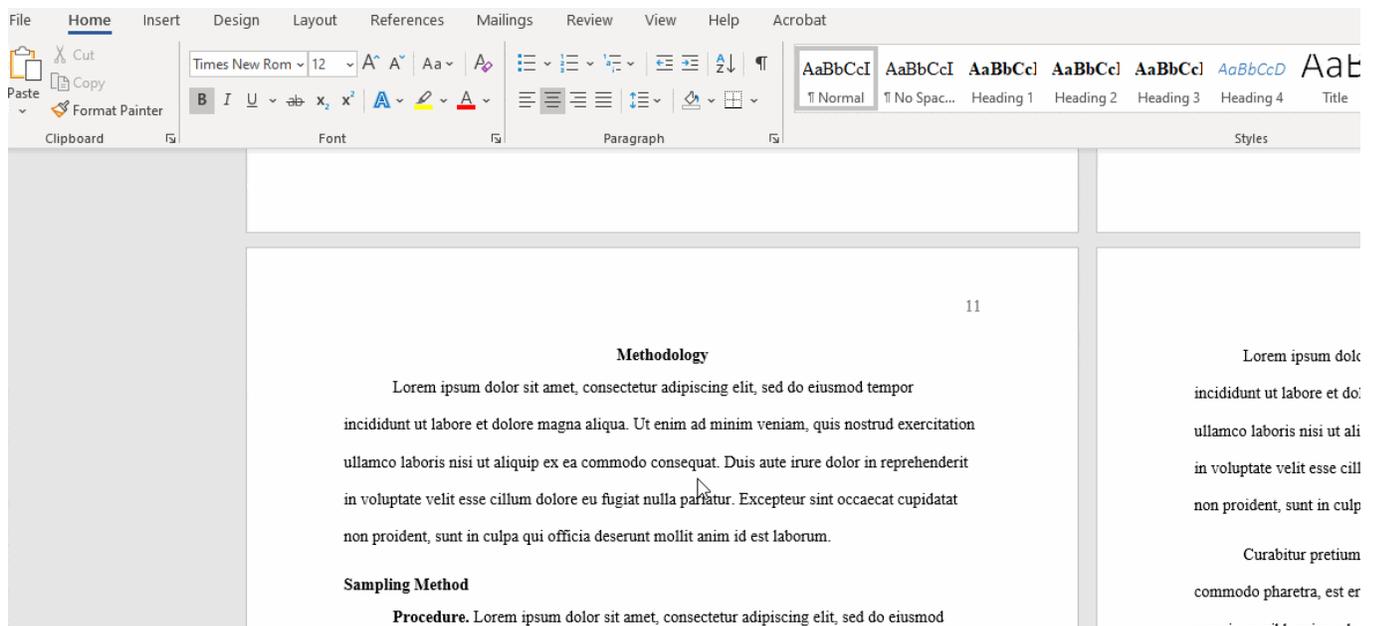
*Indented, italics, sentence case capitalization, \*\* a final period.* The body text begins immediately after the point.

\* Capitalize the first word of the title and all major words (including words that have four or more letters). Example: The Effects of Autism on Listening Skills.

\*\* Capitalize the first word of the title and proper nouns (just as you would capitalize a sentence). An example: Teenagers with autism in the United States.

Next, update the heading styles listed in the **Home** tab at the top:

1. Highlight a level 1 heading.
2. Right-click the **Heading 1** style and select **Update Heading 1 to match selection**
3. Do the same for each level of heading.

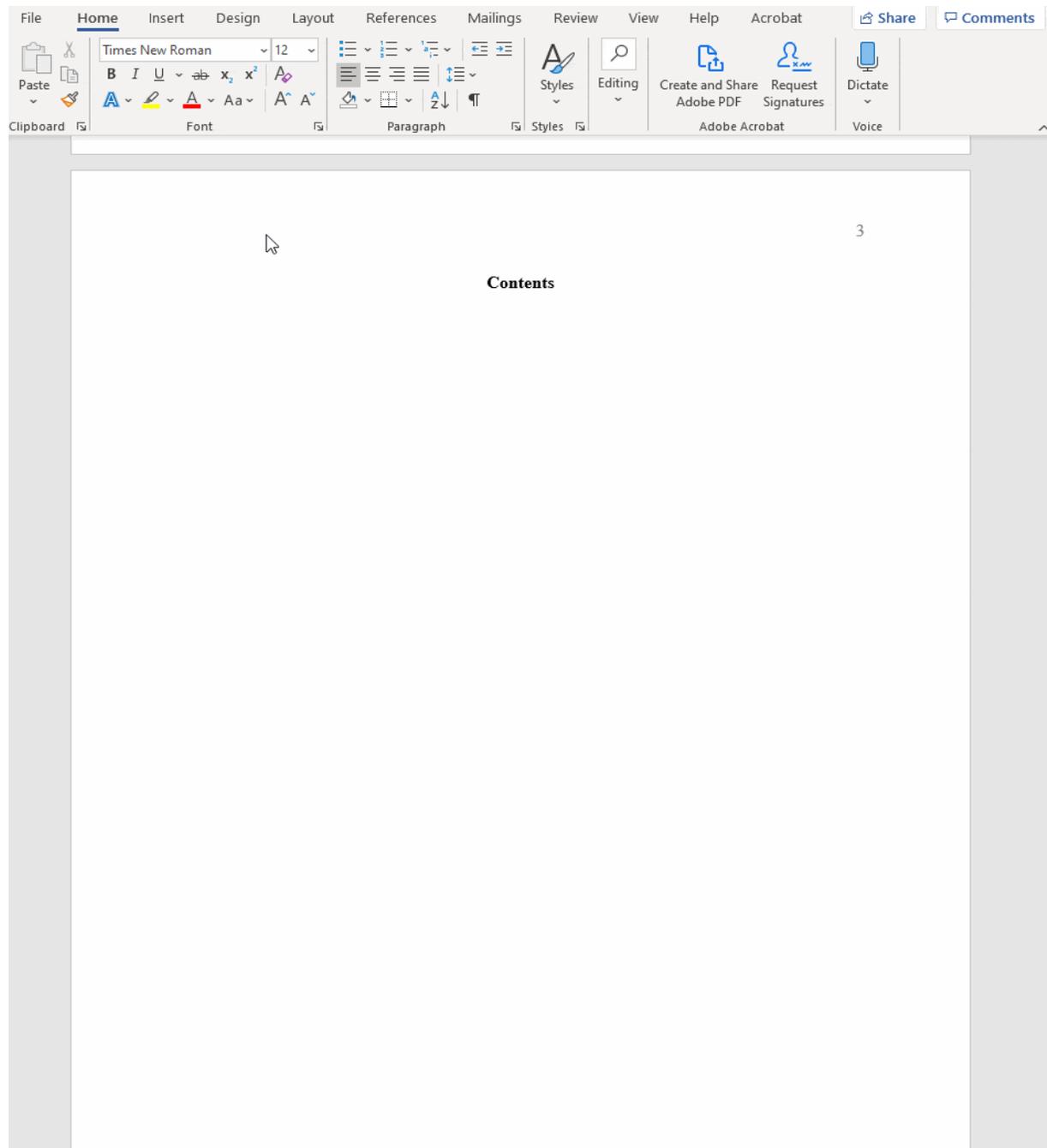


Once you've done this you can update any other headings quickly using the heading styles. Make sure all headings are in the appropriate style before proceeding.

## Generating the table of contents

Now you can generate your table of contents. First write the title (in the style of a level 1 heading). Then place your cursor two lines below this and go to the **References** tab.

Click on **Table of Contents** and select **Custom Table of Contents...** In the popup window, select how many levels of heading you wish to include (either two or three) under **Show levels**, then click **OK**:



## Updating your table of contents

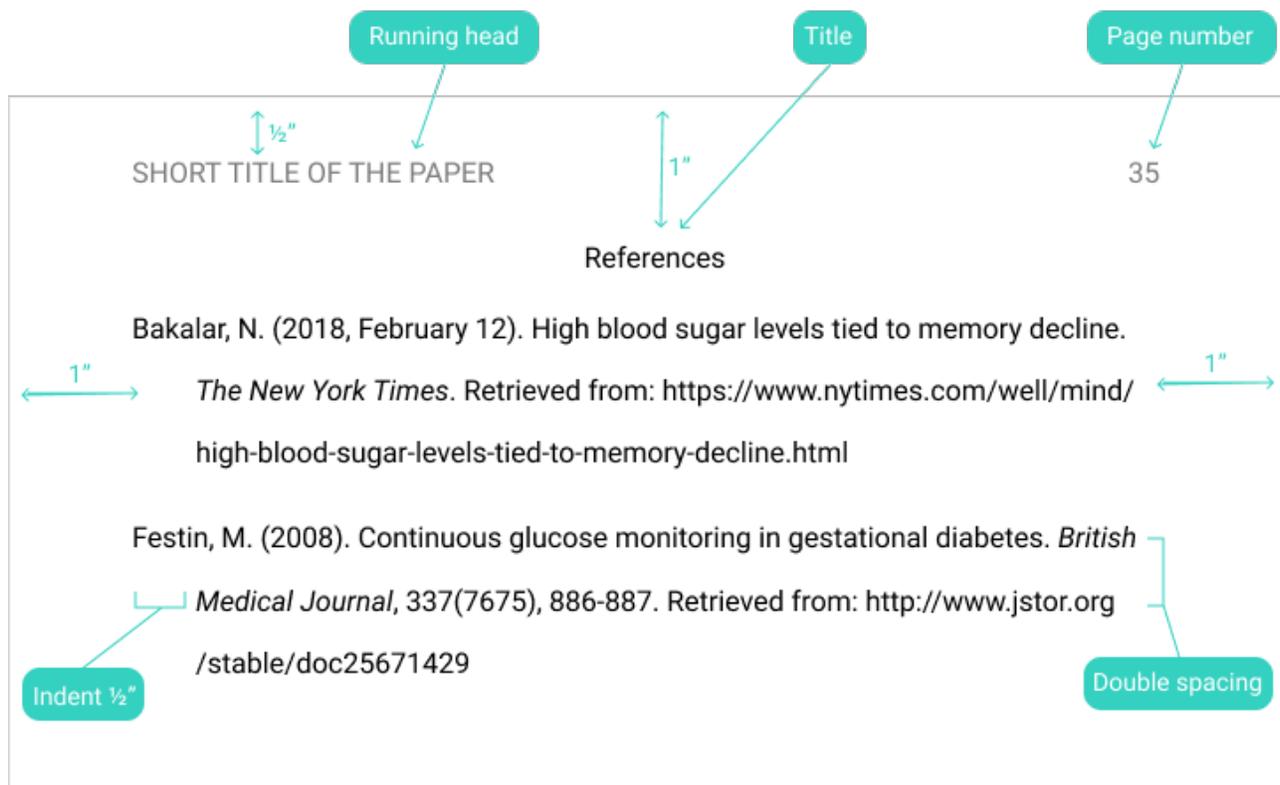
Now you have a table of contents based on your current headings and page numbers; if you continue working on your text after this, be sure to go back and update your table of contents at the end, as headings and page numbers might change.

You can do this by right-clicking on the table of contents and selecting **Update Field**. Then you can choose whether to update all information or just the page numbers; it's best to update everything, just to be sure.

## APA reference page

The APA reference page is a separate page at the end of your paper where all sources you cited in the main text are listed. The references are **sorted alphabetically**, **double spaced**, and formatted using a **hanging indent** of ½ inch. Use **“References”** as **page heading** and include a running head with your paper title and page number.

## APA reference page example



## Creating references in APA format

Each reference must be structured according to the rules for that source type. These rules vary between books, journal articles, internet articles and more.

You should include a reference for all sources you have [cited in the text](#). One inch (2.54 cm) page margins on all sides

- Times New Roman font in 12 pt
- ‘References’ as title (centered)
- Running head (top left corner)
- Page number (top right corner)
- Double spacing within and between references
- ½ inch hanging indent for references longer than one line.

## Links for further resources

Additional reference guides are available at: <https://apastyle.apa.org/>

Purdue University has a comprehensive Writing Lab:

[https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research\\_and\\_citation/apa\\_style/apa\\_style\\_introduction.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_style_introduction.html)

In-Test Citation Checklist: <https://apastyle.apa.org/instructional-aids/in-text-citation-checklist.pdf>

Bias-Free Language: <https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/bias-free-language/>

Creating an APA Style Reference List: <https://apastyle.apa.org/instructional-aids/creating-reference-list.pdf>

Center for Writing Excellence - APA Resources: <https://www.montclair.edu/center-for-writing-excellence/cwe-digital-dashboard/resources-for-writers/citing-sources/#APA>