Basics of APA Citation and Referencing Style
The American Psychological Association (APA) writing style prescriptions have been widely adopted within areas such as education and psychology.

This handout aims to provide you the basics of APA citation and referencing style, for further details see Library referencing pages and the official APA Web site at: https://apastyle.apa.org

It is essential to use these formats accurately and consistently throughout your academic work (and in any work submitted for publication in psychology journals).
Citations within a bracket are in alphabetical order (not date order)

Citations are separated by semicolons; authors and date are separated by a comma

Cite multiple authors in full the first time; use et al. (note the punctuation) thereafter (but if there are six or more authors, use et al. throughout)

Use an ampersand (&) within the bracket (and in the reference list), “and” otherwise.

Several publications on qualitative research methods (Elliott, Fischer & Rennie, 1999; Smith & Osborn, 2008; Willig, 2008) discuss the nature of...
Journal article

Chapter in a book

Complete book
Reference list

- Note usage of punctuation, italics and ampersands (&)
- Book titles are in lower case; journal titles in title case
- No part numbers needed for journal articles
- APA style says include DOI (document object identifier) details for journal articles – this is not needed for the thesis, you can obtain a DOI using Crossref: https://search.crossref.org/
How do I cite a secondary source?

If you cite a paper in the text, you are assumed to have read it yourself (and therefore may be asked about it in the viva). If it is a hard-to-obtain reference, e.g., a conference presentation, which you have seen cited elsewhere but not read yourself, cite both the primary and the secondary source. For example, if you want to cite Bloggs (1978), which you saw referred to in Jones (2006), then your citation would be (Bloggs, 1978, cited in Jones, 2006). For your thesis, list both works in your reference list (contrary to the APA style guide, which recommends giving the secondary source only).
How do I cite an unpublished document?

For an unpublished document, the citation in the text should give the date, and the reference should give the reader information on how to locate the document. For example, for the following thesis, the citation is Saunders (2008) and the reference is:

How do I cite a website?

If you are citing a web page, your reference list needs to give the full URL (i.e. the web address). For example, if you are citing the NICE guidelines on depression, in the text give the citation as (NICE, 2010), and in the reference list, give it as:

Using APA for a doctoral theis

Each of the three parts of the research thesis (literature review, empirical paper and critical appraisal) is regarded as a separate paper, and so you should cite each reference in full the first time you use it in each part (and each part will also have its own reference list).
APA Guides and Resources


- APA guides, video and tutorials on Library for Online Programmes [https://libguides.liverpool.ac.uk/online/referencing](https://libguides.liverpool.ac.uk/online/referencing)

- Cite them Right (online referencing textbook) [http://www.citethemrightonline.com.liverpool.idm.oclc.org/](http://www.citethemrightonline.com.liverpool.idm.oclc.org/)

- APA on Library Referencing Guide [http://libguides.liverpool.ac.uk/referencing/apa](http://libguides.liverpool.ac.uk/referencing/apa)
Support and Advice

• For training video, guides and tutorials on using the Library please see the Training page shown in the left menu of the Library for Online Programmes http://libguides.liverpool.ac.uk/online/training

• For general enquires using Library resources or login help please see our 24/7 support services at http://libguides.liverpool.ac.uk/online/support

• If you have any further questions, to schedule a consultation or to report ongoing problems please contact the Librarian at the first opportunity http://libguides.liverpool.ac.uk/online/support