

Summary of APA Style for Writing Research Reports

All reports must be typed in APA 6th edition format. Complete specifications can be found in the APA style manual available in the bookstore or at the reference desk in the library. The Psychology department highly recommends that you buy this manual since you will need it in several of your courses. This handout provides an abbreviated list of the sections of an APA report that you will use in your problem sets. Page numbers refer to the pages in the APA style manual where you can find more information about the section.

Note: The headings and subheadings in this handout are typed as they should be in your report. For example, the heading Method is centered. The subheading Participants is left justified and underlined. Note all headings and subheadings in the 6th edition APA style are bolded. These reports are written in the past tense, because you are describing an experiment that you already conducted. The entire report is **double-spaced**.

Title page (p 23)

The front page of the report has a centered title, which describes the research, your name, the date, and the academic behavior code. Sign your name after the code. The running head is found on the title page and at the top of each page in your paper. The page # is on the title page in the upper right-hand corner and on each page in your paper.

The report itself is broken down into several sections.

Abstract (p 25)

The abstract is a brief summary of your report. It is usually 150 – 250 words and typed on a separate page of the report. *You will not have to write an abstract for your problem sets.*

Introduction (p 27)

(your title is typed and not the heading “introduction”)

This section includes a literature review, a brief description of your experiment, and a statement of your hypotheses.

You will only complete a full introduction section for the last problem set in this course.

Method (p 29)

The method section describes in detail the methodology of your study – who were the participants, how were they selected, what was the design of your study, what stimuli, materials, and/or equipment did you use, and what was the experimental procedure. A reader should be able to have a clear understanding of how you conducted the study. This section is divided into sub-sections to better organize the information. The sub-sections that you use depend on the design of your study.

Participants

Describe the subjects - how many and any special characteristics (e.g., age, gender, how selected, how compensated for participation).

Design

Describe the experimental design used (e.g., a survey design or a 2 x 2 experimental design), the independent and dependent variables, and how the variables were manipulated and operationalized.

Materials/Apparatus/Stimuli/Measures

The name of this section depends on your design. If you used a questionnaire, you must describe it in a materials section. If a piece of equipment was used to present stimuli to the participant, describe it in an apparatus section. If you developed stimuli, which were shown to the subject, you explain these in a stimuli section. If you had multiple measures (e.g., a questionnaire, a behavioral measure), you might label the sub-heading Measures. You could have one or more of these sections in the same report.

Procedure

Describe the experimental procedure - what was done - from the participant's perspective. Make sure you have enough detail so the reader could replicate your study.

Note, sometimes authors combine sections such as **Design and Procedure** or **Materials and Procedure**.

Results (p 32)

Describe the statistical results of the experiment. You need to tell the reader what statistical tests were conducted, what the results were, and what these numbers mean. If you have many results (means and SD for several variables), put these numbers in a table. If you have just a few results, the statistics can be reported in the text. Below is the correct way to report some common statistics in APA form (p 116):

Correlation	$r(45) = .56, p = .04$ (Note: 45 is the N)
Means and standard deviations	$(M = 21.41, SD = 10.35)$
T-test	$t(60) = 5.41, p = .03$ (Note: 60 = df)
Anova results	$F(2, 45) = 8.90, p = .02$ (Note: 2,45 are the df for the F)
Chi-Square	$\chi^2(4, N = 90) = 10.51, p = .21$ (Note: 4 is the df)

Discussion (p 35)

In the discussion, you must explain your results. This is the section where you connect the results to your introduction section. In a complete report, you would explain if the results supported the hypotheses. You also should relate the findings to past research. For your problem sets where a discussion is required, you have to provide an integrated understanding of why the results occurred. Also, discuss any problems and/or biases in the study. Finally, you should suggest future directions for this research.

References (p 193)

All sources cited in the report need to be listed in the reference section. The reference page follows the discussion and is on a separate page. *You will only have a reference section for the final problem set.*

Tables, Figures, and Appendices (p 128 - 167)

Tables, figures, and appendices go at the end of the report. Tables are labeled with numbers (e.g., Table 1), graphs are labeled with numbers (Figure 1) and appendices are labeled with letters (Appendix A). You probably will only have tables for your problem sets. Make sure they are typed and labeled appropriately. Tables should be easy to read and understand.

Each table is always put on a page by itself and is put at the end of a paper after the references. Since you will not have a reference section for some of your problem sets, put your tables on separate pages after the discussion section and before the attached SPSS printouts. Below you will find examples of three tables that are similar to tables you might create for your problem sets. Note that the table is numbered in the upper left hand corner and has title in *italics*. Tables are double spaced. They often contain notes at the bottom of the table to explain the numerical contents; many times the scale values are explained. You should work hard to create tables that a reader can understand without having to read your whole paper.

Table 1 below would be appropriate for displaying the results of the crosstabulation between satisfaction with college and class year.

Table 1

Frequency of Satisfaction with College by Class Year

Satisfaction	First Year	Sophomore	Junior	Senior
Extremely Dissatisfied	0	3	2	0
Dissatisfied	1	2	3	1
Neutral	2	3	2	2
Satisfied	4	3	3	5
Extremely Satisfied	6	2	4	6

Table 2 below would be appropriate for showing the mean grades and math liking and stress ratings for men and women.

Table 2

Mean Grade, Math Liking, and Stress Ratings by Gender

	Men	Women
Grade	83.67 (12.24)	81.50 (10.56)
Math Liking	4.50 (.32)	4.30 (.98)
Stress Level	6.17 (.45)	5.78 (1.10)

Note: SD are in (). Math liking and stress level were reported on a 7-point scale where higher numbers indicated more of the attribute.

Table 3 would be appropriate to display the means from a two-way analysis of variance. In addition to the four cell means, you could also include the four marginal means (row and column means) if there are any significant main effects.

Note: You should round all numbers to two decimal places (e.g., 32.41 not 32.4132)

Table 3

Mean Final Exam Grade by Gender and Treatment Condition

	Stress Reduction	Control
Men	92.00 (16.42)	75.33 (20.23)
Women	90.67 (18.22)	88.67 (22.42)

Note: SD are in ().