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SEVENTH EDITION

PUBLICATION Manual

of the American Psychological Association

THE OFFICIAL GUIDE TO APA STYLE

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Manual

of the American Psychological Association



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THE OFFICIAL GUIDE TO APA STYLE



 AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION
Washington, DC

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To address changes in scholarly writing and publishing since the release of the sixth edition, we consulted many professional groups and experts (each recognized individually in the Editorial Staff and Contributors list). We thank members of the *Publication Manual* Revision Task Force for their vision for the manual and for ensuring that our guidance reflects current best practices. We also thank the APA Working Group on Quantitative Research Reporting Standards for updating the original journal article reporting standards (JARS) for quantitative research and the APA Working Group on Reporting Standards for Qualitative Research for their groundbreaking work in establishing the first set of qualitative and mixed methods JARS in APA Style. We are indebted to members of the APA Public Interest Directorate committees and other advocacy groups who revised the bias-free language guidelines on age, disability, race and ethnicity, sexual orientation and gender diversity, and socioeconomic status. We are also grateful to the reviewers who provided valuable perspectives while representing psychology, nursing, education, business, social work, ethics, and writing instruction.

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Last, we thank our many users who contributed their feedback via emails, surveys, interviews, focus groups, and social media. Your insights into what worked for you and what more you needed from APA Style have been invaluable in revising and creating content for this edition of the manual.

INTRODUCTION

Excellence in writing is critical for success in many academic and professional pursuits. APA Style is a set of guidelines for clear and precise scholarly communication that helps authors, both new and experienced, achieve excellence in writing. It is used by millions of people around the world in psychology and also in fields ranging from nursing to social work, communications to education, business to engineering, and other disciplines for the preparation of manuscripts for publication as well as for writing student papers, dissertations, and theses. The *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* is the authoritative resource for APA Style, and we are proud to deliver its seventh edition.

Why Use APA Style?

APA Style provides a foundation for effective scholarly communication because it helps authors present their ideas in a clear, concise, and organized manner. Uniformity and consistency enable readers to (a) focus on the ideas being presented rather than formatting and (b) scan works quickly for key points, findings, and sources. Style guidelines encourage authors to fully disclose essential information and allow readers to dispense with minor distractions, such as inconsistencies or omissions in punctuation, capitalization, reference citations, and presentation of statistics.

When style works best, ideas flow logically, sources are credited appropriately, and papers are organized predictably and consistently. People are described using language that affirms their worth and dignity. Authors

plan for ethical compliance and report critical details of their research protocol to allow readers to evaluate findings and other researchers to potentially replicate the studies. Tables and figures present data in an engaging, consistent manner.

Whether you use APA Style for a single class or throughout your career, we encourage you to recognize the benefits of a conscientious approach to writing. Although the guidelines span many areas and take time and practice to learn, we hope that they provide a balance of directiveness and flexibility and will eventually become second nature.

APA Style for Students

The *Publication Manual* has long been an authoritative source for scholarly writing, and this edition provides more targeted guidance and support for students. All students, no matter what career they pursue, can benefit from mastering scholarly writing as a way to develop their critical thinking skills and hone the precision and clarity of their communication.

Most guidelines in the *Publication Manual* can be applied to both student papers and professional manuscripts. The manual also has elements specifically designed for students, including a student title page; guidance on citing classroom or intranet sources; and descriptions of common types of student papers such as annotated bibliographies, response papers, and dissertations and theses. Journal article reporting standards (JARS) are intended primarily for authors seeking publication but may be helpful for students completing advanced research projects.

Utility and Accessibility

We have created the seventh edition of the *Publication Manual* with the practical needs of users in mind. Within chapters, content is organized using numbered sections to help users quickly locate answers to their questions. This ease of navigability and depth of content mean that the manual can be used as both a reference work and a textbook on scholarly writing.

This edition promotes accessibility for everyone, including users with disabilities. In consultation with accessibility experts, we ensured that the

guidelines support users who read and write works in APA Style through a variety of modalities, including screen readers and other assistive technologies. For example, we present a streamlined format for in-text citations intended to reduce the burden of both writing and reading them. We provide guidance on how to use adequate contrast in figures to meet Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (Web Accessibility Initiative, 2018). We also support the use of a variety of fonts and default settings in common word-processing programs, meaning that users need to make fewer adjustments to their systems to be ready to write in APA Style. Above all, our aim is to support the many ways in which people communicate. We encourage authors to be conscientious and respectful toward both the people about whom they are writing and the readers who will benefit from their work.

What's New in the Seventh Edition?

Brief descriptions of new and updated content are provided next on a chapter-by-chapter basis. For a more comprehensive overview of content changes, see the APA Style website (<https://apastyle.apa.org>).

Chapter 1: Scholarly Writing and Publishing Principles

Chapter 1 addresses types of papers and ethical compliance.

- New guidance addresses quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods articles as well as student papers, dissertations, and theses.
- Information on planning for and ensuring ethical compliance reflects best practices.
- Guidance on data sharing, including in qualitative research, reflects open practice standards.

Chapter 2: Paper Elements and Format

Chapter 2 is designed to help novice users of APA Style select, format, and organize paper elements.

- The title page is updated for professionals, and a new student title page is

provided.

- For all papers, the byline and affiliation format on the title page aligns with publishing standards.
- The author note includes more information, such as ORCID iDs, disclosure of conflicts of interest or lack thereof, and study registration information.
- The running head format has been simplified for professional authors and is not required for students.
- Font specifications are more flexible to address the need for accessibility.
- An updated heading format for Levels 3, 4, and 5 improves readability and assists authors who use the heading-styles feature of their word-processing program.
- Two new sample papers are provided: a professional paper and a student paper, with labels to show how specific elements appear when implemented.

Chapter 3: Journal Article Reporting Standards

Chapter 3 orients users to journal article reporting standards (JARS) and includes tables outlining standards for reporting quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods research.

- JARS for quantitative research has been significantly expanded and updated (see Appelbaum et al., 2018; Cooper, 2018).
- The updated JARS now cover qualitative and mixed methods research (see Levitt, 2019; Levitt et al., 2018).

Chapter 4: Writing Style and Grammar

Chapter 4 provides guidance on writing style and grammar.

- The singular “they” is endorsed, consistent with inclusive usage.
- More detailed guidance helps writers avoid anthropomorphism.

Chapter 5: Bias-Free Language Guidelines

Chapter 5 presents bias-free language guidelines to encourage authors to write about people with inclusivity and respect.

- Existing guidance on age, disability, gender, racial and ethnic identity, and sexual orientation has been updated to reflect best practices.
- New guidance is provided on participation in research, socioeconomic status, and intersectionality.

Chapter 6: Mechanics of Style

Chapter 6 covers the mechanics of style, including punctuation, capitalization, abbreviations, numbers, and statistics in text.

- Updated guidance answers a common question: Use one space after a period at the end of a sentence, unless an instructor or publisher requests otherwise.
- Formatting of linguistic examples has changed; quotation marks are now used around examples, rather than italics, to promote accessibility.
- Expanded guidance is provided on the capitalization of proper nouns, job titles, diseases and disorders, and more.
- Guidelines for the presentation of abbreviations address common questions, such as how to include a citation with an abbreviation.
- Guidelines for the presentation of numbers have been updated to be consistent throughout a work (e.g., there is no longer an exception for presenting numbers in an abstract).
- New guidance is given on how to write gene and protein names.
- Updated guidelines allow greater flexibility for lettered, numbered, and bulleted lists.

Chapter 7: Tables and Figures

Chapter 7 presents guidance on creating tables and figures.

- More than 40 new sample tables and figures are presented, in dedicated sections, covering a variety of research types and topics.
- The presentation of tables and figures in text is more flexible (either after

the reference list on separate pages or embedded in the text).

- Formatting of tables and figures is parallel, including consistent styles for numbers, titles, and notes.
- The accessible use of color in figures is addressed.

Chapter 8: Works Credited in the Text

Chapter 8 addresses appropriate levels of citation as well as plagiarism, self-plagiarism, and other unethical writing practices.

- In-text citations have been simplified; all in-text citations for works with three or more authors are shortened to the name of the first author plus “et al.” (except where this would create ambiguity).
- New guidance is provided on how to cite recorded or unrecorded Traditional Knowledge and Oral Traditions of Indigenous Peoples.
- Examples of paraphrasing demonstrate how to achieve clear attribution without overcitation.
- New guidance is provided on how to format quotations from research participants.

Chapter 9: Reference List

Chapter 9 examines the four elements of a reference list entry (author, date, title, and source).

- The number of authors included in a reference entry has changed; up to 20 authors are now included before names are omitted with an ellipsis.
- The presentation of digital object identifiers (DOIs) and URLs has been standardized. Both are presented as hyperlinks; the label “DOI:” is no longer used, and the words “Retrieved from” are used only when a retrieval date is also needed.
- Updated guidance explains when to include DOIs and URLs for works retrieved from most academic research databases as well as from proprietary databases such as ERIC or UpToDate.
- New formatting guidance is provided for annotated bibliographies.

Chapter 10: Reference Examples

Chapter 10 provides more than 100 examples of APA Style references, each with accompanying parenthetical and narrative in-text citations.

- Templates are provided for every reference category.
- References are streamlined; for example, journal article references always include the issue number, and book references now omit the publisher location.
- Audiovisual materials receive expanded coverage, with new examples for YouTube videos, PowerPoint slides and lecture notes, TED Talks, and more.
- Social media, webpages, and websites are addressed in new categories. For consistency and ease of formatting, blogs and other online platforms that publish articles are part of the periodicals category.

Chapter 11: Legal References

Chapter 11 presents expanded and updated legal reference examples.

- Guidelines from *The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation* continue to be the foundation for APA Style legal references, with some modifications.
- New, relevant legal reference examples are provided (e.g., the Every Student Succeeds Act).

Chapter 12: Publication Process

Chapter 12 provides guidance on the publication process.

- New content helps early career researchers adapt a dissertation or thesis into a journal article or articles, select a journal for publication, avoid predatory or deceptive publishers, and navigate journal submission.
- Improved guidance on the journal publication process reflects current processes and policies authors need to be aware of when preparing a manuscript for submission.
- New guidance addresses how authors can share and promote their work

following publication.

APA Style Online

The APA Style website (<https://apastyle.apa.org>) is the premier and authoritative online destination for APA Style. In addition to numerous free resources and instructional aids, it contains supplemental content that is referred to throughout the manual, including additional reference examples, sample papers, and guidance on using color effectively and accessibly in figures.

The JARS website (<https://apastyle.apa.org/jars>) contains the full repository of information about journal article reporting standards for a wide range of research designs; it is freely available to complement the orienting information in Chapter 3.

The APA Style blog (<https://apastyle.apa.org/blog>) and related social media accounts will continue to answer questions about and share insights into APA Style with the publication of the seventh edition, providing authoritative content from members of the APA Style team.

Academic Writer (<https://digitallearning.apa.org/academic-writer>) is APA's cloud-based tool for teaching and learning effective writing. Developed by the creators of APA Style, this product helps both student and professional authors compose research papers and master the application of seventh-edition APA Style.

Notes to Users

The *Publication Manual* refers to numerous products and services that are not affiliated with the American Psychological Association but that our readers may encounter or use during the process of research, writing, and publication. The trademarks referenced in the *Publication Manual* are the property of their respective owners. The inclusion of non-APA products is for reference only and should not be construed as an endorsement of or affiliation between APA and the owners of these products and their respective brands.

Finally, some eagle-eyed users have asked why every aspect of APA Style is not applied throughout this manual. The manual is a published work,

whereas the guidelines for APA Style are meant to be applied to manuscripts being submitted for publication or to student papers. Considerations for published works such as this book (e.g., typesetting, line spacing, length, fonts, use of color, margins) differ from those of draft manuscripts or student papers and thus necessitate deviations from APA Style formatting. Also, in this manual—in which we are writing about writing—it is often necessary to distinguish between explanatory text and examples through the use of font, color, and other design elements. Wherever possible, however, we have endeavored to demonstrate APA Style while writing about it and to present the information in a way that is accessible for our many users around the world.

1

SCHOLARLY WRITING AND PUBLISHING PRINCIPLES



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1

SCHOLARLY WRITING AND PUBLISHING PRINCIPLES

Research is complete only when scholars share their results or findings with the scientific community. Although researchers may post articles on scholarly collaboration sites or preprint servers or share them informally by email or in person, the most widely accepted medium for formal scholarly communication continues to be the published article in a peer-reviewed, scientific journal. Scientific journals contain our primary research literature and thus serve as repositories of the accumulated knowledge of a field.

Students are also important members of the scholarly community. Although most student work is not formally published, by writing papers students engage in critical thinking, thoughtful self-reflection, and scientific inquiry and thereby prepare to make unique contributions to the repository of knowledge. Therefore, student writing deserves the same level of care and attention to detail as that given to professional writing.

In this chapter, we provide important principles that professional and student authors should consider before writing their paper or, in many cases, before embarking on a research study. We begin with overviews of the different types of articles and papers professional and student authors write. This is followed by a discussion of ethical, legal, and professional standards

in publishing that all authors of scholarly work, regardless of the type of paper they are writing or their level of experience, must be mindful of and abide by. For example, research conducted with human participants or nonhuman animal subjects must be approved by an institutional review board (IRB), institutional animal care and use committee (IACUC), or another ethical committee. Similarly, an author writing about human participants must protect their confidentiality while following best practices for data sharing. Moreover, any written work, from a course paper to a published manuscript, should represent an original contribution and include appropriate citations to the work of others. Thus, scholarly writing and publishing, in all forms, are inherently embedded in and guided by an ethical context.

Types of Articles and Papers

Many types of articles are published in scientific journals, including quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods empirical articles and replications. These journal articles report *primary*, or original, research—that is, research that has not been previously formally published. Theoretical articles and methodological articles do not present research but describe advancements in theories or methods. Journal articles that review or synthesize findings from primary research include literature reviews and quantitative and qualitative meta-analyses. By understanding the characteristics of different types of articles and the types of information they most efficiently convey, you will be able to select an article type that fits your research and to follow the appropriate journal article reporting standards (discussed in [Chapter 3](#)). Students may write the same kinds of articles that are published in journals, as well as student papers (including course assignments, dissertations, and theses) not intended for publication in a journal (see [Section 1.10](#)). Sample papers are included at the end of [Chapter 2](#) and on the APA Style website (<https://apastyle.apa.org>).

1.1 Quantitative Articles

In *quantitative articles*, authors report original, empirical, quantitative research. *Quantitative research* refers to a set of approaches commonly used in the behavioral and social sciences and related fields in which the observed

outcomes are numerically represented. The results of these studies are typically analyzed using methods (statistics, data analyses, and modeling techniques) that rely on the numerical properties of the measurement system. Quantitative research studies use a variety of experimental designs and a range of analytic techniques. Some quantitative articles present novel hypotheses and data analyses not considered or addressed in previous reports of related data. Within the article, authors should describe elements of their study in the first person (see [Section 4.16](#)). Researchers who used a quantitative approach should follow the quantitative journal article reporting standards to report their findings (see [Sections 3.5–3.12](#)).

Quantitative articles typically include distinct sections that reflect the stages of the research process and appear in the following sequence:

- **Introduction:** a statement of the purpose of the investigation, a review of the background literature, and an explicit statement of the hypotheses being explored (see [Section 3.4](#))
- **Method:** a full description of each step of the investigation, including details about the materials used and the procedures followed (which should be sufficient to enable replication), a full statement of the research design, statements on the protection of human participants or nonhuman animal subjects and informed consent, and a description (in words and/or a figure) of the flow of participants through the study (see [Section 3.6](#))
- **Results:** data analysis and a report of the findings (see [Section 3.7](#))
- **Discussion:** a summary of the study, including any interpretation, limitations, and implications of the results (see [Section 3.8](#))

Reports of Multiple Studies. Authors of quantitative articles often report the findings of several conceptually linked studies in one manuscript. These authors should make the rationale, logic, order, and method of each study clear to readers. Headings should be used to label each study—for instance, “Experiment 1,” “Experiment 2,” and so forth. This format organizes the sections and makes them easier to discuss in the manuscript or in later research articles. Method and Results subsections can appear under each study heading. If appropriate, the authors can include a short subsection titled “Discussion” in which they explore the implications of the results of each

study, or they can combine the discussion with the description of results under a heading such as “Results and Discussion.” Authors should always include a comprehensive general discussion of all the studies at the end of the article, which often has the heading “General Discussion.”

1.2 Qualitative Articles

In *qualitative articles*, authors report original, empirical, qualitative research. *Qualitative research* refers to scientific practices that are used to generate knowledge about human experience and/or action, including social processes. Qualitative approaches tend to share four sets of characteristics:

- Researchers analyze data consisting of natural language (i.e., words), researcher observations (e.g., social interactions), and/or participants’ expressions (e.g., artistic presentations) rather than collecting numerical data and conducting mathematical analyses. Reports tend to show the development of qualitative findings using natural language (although numbers may be used adjunctively in describing or exploring these findings).
- Researchers often use an iterative process of analysis in which they reexamine developing findings in light of continued data analysis and refine the initial findings. In this way, the process of analysis is self-correcting and can produce original knowledge.
- Researchers recursively combine inquiry with methods that require researchers’ reflexivity about how their own perspectives might support or impair the research process and thus how their methods should best be enacted.
- Researchers tend to study experiences and actions whose meaning may shift and evolve; therefore, they tend to view their findings as being situated within place and time rather than seeking to develop laws that are expected to remain stable regardless of context.

Researchers who used a qualitative approach should follow the qualitative journal article reporting standards to report their findings (see [Sections 3.13–3.17](#)).

Case Studies and Other Types of Qualitative Articles. A variety of methods are reported in qualitative articles, and the structure of qualitative articles varies depending on the nature of the study. For example, in *case studies* researchers report analyses or observations obtained while working closely with an individual, group, community, or organization. Case studies illustrate a problem in depth; indicate a means for solving a problem; and/or shed light on needed research, clinical applications, or theoretical matters. Qualitative articles also describe studies with multiple participants, groups, communities, or organizations that identify commonalities and/or differences across these entities. Such research can have a systemic focus, examining the ways in which social processes, actions, or discourses are structured.

Regardless of the qualitative research approaches they use, when writing reports, authors should carefully consider the balance between providing important illustrative material and using confidential participant data responsibly (see [Sections 1.18–1.19](#) for more on confidentiality; see also [Section 1.15](#)). Qualitative reports may be organized thematically or chronologically and are typically presented in a reflexive, first-person style, detailing the ways in which the researchers arrived at questions, methods, findings, and considerations for the field.

1.3 Mixed Methods Articles

In *mixed methods articles*, authors report research combining qualitative and quantitative empirical approaches. Mixed methods research should not be confused with *mixed models research*, which is a quantitative procedure, or with *multimethods research*, which entails using multiple methods from the same approach. Mixed methods research involves the following:

- describing the philosophical assumptions or theoretical models used to inform the study design (Creswell, 2015);
- describing the distinct methodologies, research designs, and procedures in relation to the study goals;
- collecting and analyzing both qualitative and quantitative data in response to research aims, questions, or hypotheses; and
- integrating the findings from the two methodologies intentionally to generate new insights.

The basic assumption of a mixed methods approach is that the combined qualitative findings and quantitative results lead to additional insights not gleaned from the qualitative or quantitative findings alone (Creswell, 2015; Greene, 2007; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). Because there are many ways to design a mixed methods study, the structure of mixed methods articles varies depending on the specific nature of the study and the balance between the two methodologies. Researchers who used a mixed methods approach should follow the mixed methods journal article reporting standards to report their findings (see [Section 3.18](#)).

1.4 Replication Articles

In *replication articles*, authors report the results of work intended to verify or reproduce findings from previous investigations. The aim of a *replication study* is to examine whether the conclusions from an earlier study remain the same or similar over variations in the conduct of the original study. There are internal and external forms of replication; only external replications are addressed in APA journal article reporting standards (see [Section 3.10](#)). An *external replication* occurs when researchers obtain a new sample and duplicate, insofar as is possible or desirable, the features of the original study being replicated. New design, measures, and/or data-analysis methods can also be used to test whether a finding has generality beyond the particular situation studied in the original work, but any such variations must be clearly specified in the report.

Researchers conducting an external replication should report sufficient information to allow readers to determine whether the study was a direct (exact, literal) replication, approximate replication, or conceptual (construct) replication. In a *direct replication*, researchers repeat a study collecting data from a new sample in a way that duplicates as far as possible the conditions of the earlier study. A direct replication is called an *exact replication* or a *literal replication* when researchers use procedures that are identical to the original experiment or duplicated as closely as possible (e.g., with variations only in the location of the study and the investigators conducting the study). These forms of replication are useful for establishing that the findings of the original study are reliable. In an *approximate replication* (or a *modified replication*), researchers incorporate alternative procedures and additional

conditions into the features of the original study; such replications usually contain the original study design along with some additional study features. The purpose of an approximate or modified replication may be not only to replicate a study but also to determine whether some factors not included in the original formulation have an influence on the outcome. In a *conceptual replication*, researchers introduce different techniques and manipulations to gain theoretical information; it is possible that no features of the initial study are retained. Researchers may use other labels for or descriptions of replications (for further exploration of this issue, see National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2019); the descriptions provided in this section were adapted from the *APA Dictionary of Psychology* (<https://dictionary.apa.org>).

1.5 Quantitative and Qualitative Meta-Analyses

Meta-analysis refers to a collection of techniques in which researchers use the findings from a group of related studies to draw a general conclusion (synthesis) based on the extant research on a topic. Individual participant or subject data are not used in meta-analyses because the data analyzed are at the study level.

Just as the reporting standards for quantitative and qualitative studies vary by study design, those for meta-analyses vary by the particular questions asked in the study and the approaches used to answer those questions. Because the study is the input unit for a meta-analysis, the studies included are provided in the reference list and marked with an indicator that shows they were part of the meta-analysis. This indicator distinguishes studies included in a meta-analysis from other references. For example, in APA Style articles, references used in a meta-analysis are preceded by an asterisk (see [Section 9.52](#)).

Quantitative Meta-Analysis. Within quantitative approaches, meta-analyses generally stipulate a technique in which effect-size estimates from individual studies are the inputs to the analyses. Meta-analysis is also used to determine factors that may be related to the magnitude of the outcome in quantitative studies—for example, design factors (e.g., randomized vs. nonrandomized), demographic factors (e.g., percentage of the study sample below the poverty

line), and so forth. Meta-analytic reports usually follow the same basic structure as quantitative studies (see [Section 1.1](#)) and contain an introduction and Method, Results, and Discussion sections. Researchers who use a quantitative meta-analytic approach should follow the reporting standards for quantitative meta-analysis (see [Section 3.12](#)).

Qualitative Meta-Analysis. Within qualitative research, there are a variety of approaches to meta-analysis, including qualitative metasynthesis, metaethnography, metamethod, and critical interpretive synthesis. These approaches often use strategies from primary qualitative analyses to synthesize findings across studies. Qualitative meta-analyses can be used to highlight methodological trends, identify common findings and gaps, develop new understandings, and propose future directions for an area of research. Qualitative meta-analytic reports have a structure similar to that of qualitative primary reports, with the addition of a description of the perspectives and situatedness of the authors of the primary works included in the analysis. Qualitative meta-analyses do not entail a singular procedure but rather an aggregating function common to meta-analytic approaches. Qualitative meta-analyses are not to be confused with *quantitative reviews*, in which authors generate a narrative description of a quantitative literature base. We recommend referring to those studies as *literature reviews* or *narrative literature reviews* to avoid confusion with qualitative meta-analyses (see [Section 1.6](#)). Researchers who used a qualitative meta-analytic approach should follow the reporting standards for qualitative meta-analysis (see [Section 3.17](#)).

1.6 Literature Review Articles

Literature review articles (or *narrative literature review articles*) provide narrative summaries and evaluations of the findings or theories within a literature base. The literature base may include qualitative, quantitative, and/or mixed methods research. Literature reviews capture trends in the literature; they do not engage in a systematic quantitative or qualitative meta-analysis of the findings from the initial studies.

In literature review articles, authors should

- define and clarify the problem;

- summarize previous investigations to inform readers of the state of the research;
- identify relations, contradictions, gaps, and inconsistencies in the literature; and
- suggest next steps in solving the problem.

The components of literature review articles can be arranged in various ways—for example, by grouping research on the basis of similarity in the concepts or theories of interest, methodological similarities among the studies reviewed, or the historical development of the field.

1.7 Theoretical Articles

Theoretical articles draw from existing research literature to advance theory. Theoretical articles present empirical information only when it advances the theoretical issue being explicated. Authors of theoretical articles trace the development of a theory to expand and refine its constructs, present a new theory, or analyze an existing theory. Typically, they point out flaws or demonstrate the advantage(s) of one theory over another. Authors also may examine a theory's internal consistency and external validity. The order of sections in a theoretical article can vary.

1.8 Methodological Articles

Methodological articles present new approaches to research or practice, modifications of existing methods, or discussions of quantitative and/or qualitative data analysis. These articles use empirical data (quantitative, qualitative, or both) only as a means to illustrate an approach to research. Some use simulated data to demonstrate how methods work under varying conditions (e.g., different sample sizes, number of variables, level of nonnormality, size of coefficients).

Methodological articles provide sufficient detail for researchers to assess the applicability of the methodology and its feasibility for the type of research problem it is designed to study. Further, these articles allow readers to compare proposed methods with those in current use. In methodological articles, highly technical materials (e.g., derivations, proofs, data generation,

computer code, extensive details of simulations) should be presented in appendices or as supplemental materials to improve overall article readability. When having detailed information (e.g., parameters used in a simulation) is necessary for readers to understand the major points being made, those details should be presented in the text of the article.

1.9 Other Types of Articles

Additional types of published articles include brief reports, comments on and replies to previously published articles, book reviews, obituaries, and letters to the editor. Authors should consult the editors or author guidelines of individual journals for specific information regarding these kinds of articles.

1.10 Student Papers, Dissertations, and Theses

Although the *Publication Manual* originated as a guide for authors seeking publication in scholarly journals, it has been widely adopted by academic instructors, departments, and institutions that require students to use APA Style when writing scholarly papers. Students may write the same types of papers that are professionally published (e.g., literature review articles) or assignments that fall outside that scope (e.g., dissertations, theses, essays, response or reaction papers, annotated bibliographies). Likewise, this manual has historically addressed researchers working in the field of psychology; however, students and researchers use APA Style in other fields and disciplines, including social work, nursing, communications, education, and business. Some journals in these fields require APA Style, and others do not. Other field-specific requirements may also apply (e.g., nurses may have to adhere to a nurse's code of ethics rather than a psychologist's code of ethics).

Student assignments commonly written at the undergraduate level include annotated bibliographies, many types of essays, and response or reaction papers. The descriptions that follow are generally representative of these types of papers; check with your assigning instructor or institution for specific guidelines.

- **Annotated bibliographies** consist of reference list entries followed by short descriptions of the work called *annotations*. Instructors generally set most requirements for these papers, but many APA Style guidelines still

apply (see [Section 9.51](#)).

- **Cause-and-effect essays** report how specific events lead to particular results or advocate for a specific position. A clear and strong thesis provides a solid foundation for this type of essay. The paragraphs are generally structured by describing each cause and its collateral effect, with logical transitions between them.
- **Comparative essays** compare and contrast two (or more) items with the goal of linking disparate items under a central thesis. The paper structure can be organized to focus on Topic 1 and then Topic 2, or the topics may be interwoven.
- **Expository essays** follow a multiparagraph structure (e.g., five paragraphs) and explain or provide information on a specific topic. The paper structure includes an introduction, body, and a conclusion. Evidence should be provided to reinforce the written claims detailed in the paper.
- **Narrative essays** convey a story from a clear point of view and include a beginning, middle, and end. Narrative essays should have a clearly defined purpose and focus and include concise, evocative language.
- **Persuasive essays** are intended to convince readers to adopt a certain viewpoint or take a particular action. They present clear arguments, include logical transitions, and have a similar paper structure to the expository essay.
- **Précis** are concise summaries in students' own words of essential points, statements, or facts from a single work; the length of a précis is typically about a quarter of the length of the original work. The précis structure includes a brief thesis and sections that mirror the sections of the original work, such as Method, Results, and Discussion.
- **Response or reaction papers** summarize one or more works and describe students' personal reactions or responses to them, including how the work or works impacted them, are relevant to their life, and so forth. This type of paper is typically short (e.g., three pages or so). The first person is used in describing personal reactions (see [Section 4.16](#)).

Dissertations or theses are typically required of graduate students, but undergraduate students completing advanced research projects may write

similar types of papers. Academic institutions or departments have detailed guidelines for how to format and write dissertations and theses, and the requirements and acceptable format vary by discipline. Some dissertations and theses are hundreds of pages long and contain thorough literature reviews and exhaustive reference lists, whereas others follow a multiple-article format consisting of several shorter, related papers that are intended for individual publication. See [Section 12.1](#) for guidance on adapting a dissertation or thesis into a journal article.

As mentioned in the introduction to this manual, most of the guidelines in the *Publication Manual* can be applied to student papers. However, because the scope of what constitutes a student paper is broad and flexible, and because students submit papers to their academic institutions rather than to an APA journal, we do not designate formal requirements for the nature or contents of an APA Style student paper. Thus, questions about paper length, required sections, and so forth are best answered by the instructor or institution setting the assignment. Students should follow the guidelines and requirements developed by their instructors, departments, and/or academic institutions when writing papers, including dissertations and theses; these guidelines and requirements may entail adaptations of or additions to the APA Style guidelines described in this manual. We encourage writers, instructors, departments, and academic institutions using APA Style outside of the journal publication context to adapt APA Style to fit their needs.

Ethical, Legal, and Professional Standards in Publishing

In addition to abiding by standards specific to writing and publishing, authors of scholarly research should also follow ethical standards (e.g., Section 8, Research and Publication, of the APA *Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct*, hereinafter referred to as the APA Ethics Code; APA, 2017a; see also <https://www.apa.org/ethics/code>) and broader professional standards when conducting a research study. Moreover, individuals engaged in conducting, analyzing, or reporting any type of research should have acquired the requisite skills and experience to do so competently (e.g., Section 2, Competence, of the APA Ethics Code; see also the *Multicultural*

Guidelines: An Ecological Approach to Context, Identity, and Intersectionality; APA, 2017b).

Ethical and legal principles underlie all scholarly research and writing. These long-standing principles are designed to achieve the following goals:

- ensuring the accuracy of scientific findings,
- protecting the rights and welfare of research participants and subjects, and
- protecting intellectual property rights.

Writers in the social and behavioral sciences work to uphold these goals and to follow the principles that have been established by their professional disciplines. The guidance in this section is drawn from the APA Ethics Code (APA, 2017a), which applies to all APA members regardless of where they publish and contains standards that address the reporting and publishing of scientific data. The APA Ethics Code is not a static document—it is revised over time to reflect shifts or changes in the understanding and conception of the principles of beneficence and nonmaleficence, fidelity and responsibility, integrity, justice, and respect by the scientific community relative to advances in science and technology and evolving cultural norms. Revised or new versions of the APA Ethics Code appear on the APA website after adoption by the APA Council of Representatives.

Ensuring the Accuracy of Scientific Findings

1.11 Planning for Ethical Compliance

Regardless of the type of article, attention to ethical concerns should begin long before any manuscript is submitted for publication. Among the issues to carefully consider while research is in the planning stages are those related to institutional approval, informed consent, deception in research, participant protections, and data sharing. Most journals, including APA journals, require authors submitting a manuscript for publication to also submit forms affirming their compliance with ethical standards for research and publication and disclosing their conflicts of interest, if any (see [Section 12.13](#) for more information and a link to the APA ethical compliance form). We encourage all authors, whether or not they will submit their manuscript to an APA journal, to consult these ethics resources before beginning their research

project and at regular intervals throughout the research process. To ensure that they meet ethical standards, before starting a research project, authors should contact the appropriate IRB or ethical review group for their institution or country for information on the kinds of research that require ethics approval, procedures for obtaining ethics approval, ethical and research requirements, and so forth. Authors not affiliated with a university, hospital, or other institution with an IRB are still expected to follow ethical standards in conducting their research and should consult an external IRB if necessary. For more information on IRBs, see the APA website (<https://on.apa.org/2FuiPJ1>).

Authors are encouraged to report in the text of the manuscript the institutional approvals the study received, as described in the APA journal article reporting standards in [Chapter 3](#) (see [Sections 3.6](#) and [3.14](#) and [Tables 3.1–3.3](#)). Authors should also be prepared to answer potential questions related to these issues from editors or reviewers during the review process (see [Section 12.13](#)). As a final step prior to manuscript submission, authors should also consult the ethical compliance checklist in [Section 1.25](#).

1.12 Ethical and Accurate Reporting of Research Results

The essence of ethics in all scientific reporting is that authors report the methods and results of their studies fully and accurately. Therefore, the ethical and professional issues discussed in this section apply equally to quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods research (see [Chapter 3](#) for additional reporting standards).

Authors must not fabricate or falsify data (APA Ethics Code Standard 8.10a, Reporting Research Results). Modifying results, including visual images, to support a theory or hypothesis and omitting troublesome observations from a report to present a more convincing story are also prohibited (APA Ethics Code Standard 5.01b, Avoidance of False or Deceptive Statements). Similarly, representing data-generated hypotheses (post hoc) as if they were preplanned is a violation of basic ethical principles.

The practice of “omitting troublesome observations” includes

- selectively failing to report studies (e.g., in the introduction or Discussion section) that, although methodologically sound and relevant to the

hypothesis, theory, or research question at hand, had results that do not support the preferred narrative (i.e., that contrast with results obtained in the current study);

- selectively omitting reports of relevant manipulations, procedures, measures, or findings within a study, for similar reasons; and
- selectively excluding participants or other individual data observations, without a valid methodological reason, in order to achieve desired results.

To clarify expectations for reporting and help safeguard scientific integrity, APA (like other scientific organizations) has issued a series of reporting standards (Appelbaum et al., 2018; Cooper, 2018; Levitt, 2019; Levitt et al., 2018). These standards, which are discussed in [Chapter 3](#), address many aspects of the ethical reporting of experiments. They include expectations for describing all measured variables, for tracking participant flow through a study (with an accompanying prototype figure; see Figure 7.5 in [Section 7.36](#)) so that no participant is selectively excluded without mention, and for reporting special classes of studies such as clinical trials.

Reporting standards, like the APA Ethics Code, are not static; changes are continually made to improve how researchers report results. One of the more recent and important changes for quantitative research reporting is that hypotheses should now be stated in three groupings: preplanned–primary, preplanned–secondary, and exploratory (post hoc). Exploratory hypotheses are allowable, and there should be no pressure to disguise them as if they were preplanned. Similarly, qualitative researchers should transparently describe their expectations at the outset of the research as part of their research reporting.

1.13 Errors, Corrections, and Retractions After Publication

Careful preparation of manuscripts for publication is essential, but errors can still appear in the final published article. When errors are substantive enough to affect readers' understanding of the research or their interpretation of the results, authors are responsible for making such errors public.

Corrections. When a correction is needed, the first step is to inform the editor and the publisher of the journal so that a formal correction notice

(erratum) can be published. The goal of such a notice is to openly and transparently correct the knowledge base for current and future users of the information in the published article. A correction notice is usually appended to the original article's record in research databases so that readers will retrieve it when they access either the article or a database's record for the article; at times, the article itself may also be corrected. See also APA Ethics Code Standard 8.10b, Reporting Research Results, as well as [Section 12.22](#) of this manual for further information on when and how to write a correction notice.

Retractions. Occasionally, the problems with an article are so great (e.g., plagiarism, fabrication or falsification of data, belatedly discovered calculation or measurement errors that change the interpretation of the findings) that the entire article is retracted by the author or authors, their institution, or the publisher. Whatever the reason for the retraction, the intent is to remove the information from the scientific literature and thus avoid wasting the time and resources of other scientists who might rely on or attempt to replicate the compromised results. The retracted article may still be available in databases; however, a retraction notice will accompany it to notify readers of its status. Authors should avoid citing retracted articles unless the citation is essential; if authors do cite a retracted article, its reference list entry should reflect that the article has been retracted (see the APA Style website at <https://apastyle.apa.org> for an example).

1.14 Data Retention and Sharing

Data Retention. Authors are expected to retain the data associated with a published article in accordance with institutional requirements; funder requirements; participant agreements; and, when publishing in an APA journal, the APA Ethics Code (Standard 8.14, Sharing Research Data for Verification). When planning a research study and before beginning data collection, authors are encouraged to consider how the data will be retained (and shared) and to outline clear data-handling procedures in the study protocol submitted to an IRB or other ethics committee. During the informed consent process, authors should describe to study participants the data they intend to collect, save, and/or share with other researchers and obtain their

approval. In qualitative studies, data sharing may not be appropriate because of confidentiality, consent, and other limitations (see [Section 1.15](#)).

Data Sharing. The APA Ethics Code prohibits authors from withholding data from qualified requesters for verification through reanalysis in most circumstances (see Standard 8.14, Sharing Research Data for Verification), as long as the confidentiality of the participants is protected. The APA Ethics Code permits psychologists to require that a requester be responsible for any costs associated with the provision of the data. Increasingly, funders are also requiring that data be shared in an open- or secured-access repository or that a data-management plan otherwise be spelled out. Authors publishing in an APA journal are invited to share their data on APA's portal on the Open Science Framework (<https://osf.io/view/apa/>).

Notably, incentives are offered to researchers who wish to share their data, such as Open Science Badges offered through the Center for Open Science. Open Science Badges are awarded for the open sharing of *materials* used by researchers in the process of data collection and analysis (e.g., instructions, stimuli, blank questionnaires, treatment manuals, software, interview protocols, details of procedures, code for mathematical models); *source data*, meaning the original written, electronic, or audiovisual records of the study participants' responses (e.g., paper questionnaires, transcripts, output files, observational notes, video recordings); and *analysis data*, meaning the processed version of the source data used to produce the analyses reported in the paper.

Sharing During Review. Subject to the conditions and exceptions discussed next, authors are expected to share data, analyses, and/or materials during the review and publication process if questions arise with respect to the accuracy of the report. On request, the authors should share the raw data with the journal's editor and (if approved by the editor) with reviewers to verify the reported analyses and data and to assess their rigor. If questions arise about the integrity or processing of the source data, authors should also share access to them with the editor on request. Costs of sharing data requested during the review process should be borne by the authors. Similarly, students should expect to provide raw data to faculty reviewing their dissertation, thesis, or research project. A journal editor has the right to deny publication if the

authors refuse to share requested materials or data during the review process. In the case of student work, refusal to share requested materials or data may result in a failing grade or defense. See [Section 1.15](#) for additional considerations when sharing access to data from qualitative studies.

Sharing After Publication. Authors must make their data available after publication, subject to conditions and exceptions, within the period of retention specified by their institution, journal, funder, or other supporting organization. This permits other competent professionals to confirm the reported analyses using the data on which the authors' conclusions are based or to test alternative analyses that address the article's hypotheses (see APA Ethics Code Standard 8.14a, Sharing Research Data for Verification, and Standard 6.01, Documentation of Professional and Scientific Work and Maintenance of Records). *Competent professionals* are those who are currently accountable to a research institution or an educational employer and who demonstrate sufficient training and credentials to understand the research study's background, methods, and analyses. The journal editor may be asked to determine who qualifies as a competent professional given the topic of the research. See [Section 1.15](#) for additional considerations when sharing qualitative research data.

Typically, any additional costs of complying with a request for data beyond the general standards of internal data maintenance (e.g., anonymization, transfer of data, translation) should be borne by the requester, and these costs should be assessed at a reasonable local rate for the necessary services and materials. If it emerges that authors are unwilling or unable to share data for verification within the retention period, the journal's current editor may retract the article or issue an Expression of Concern about its findings according to the policy of the publisher.

Data and materials may sometimes be requested after publication for purposes beyond the ones outlined previously. Regardless of why the data and materials are requested, to avoid misunderstanding, it is important that the researcher requesting data and the researcher providing it come to a written agreement about the conditions under which the data are to be shared (see APA Ethics Code Standard 8.14b, Sharing Research Data for Verification). Generally, such an agreement specifies the limits on how the shared data may be used (e.g., for verification of already published results,

for inclusion in meta-analytic studies, for secondary analysis), who may have access to the data (e.g., only the requester, the requester and direct supervisees, anyone interested with no limits on further sharing), and how the requester will store and dispose of the data. Furthermore, the agreement should specify any limits on the dissemination of the results of analyses performed on the data (e.g., whether they can be published in conference presentations, internal reports, journal articles, or book chapters) and any expectations for authorship of publications based on shared data. Data-sharing arrangements must be entered into with proper consideration of the rights of the copyright owner (see [Section 12.20](#)), participants' consent, requirements of funding agencies, requirements of IRBs and other ethics committees that provided permission to conduct the study, and rules promulgated by the employer of the holder of the data.

Authors may choose or be required to share data and/or materials openly by posting them online. Journal editors may set a policy to encourage open sharing, to require it, and/or to require authors to give a reason why data and materials cannot be shared (e.g., risk to participant privacy). A permanent link to any data or materials to be shared openly should be included in the article, such as in an Open Practices section in the author note (see [Section 2.7](#)); the reference for the data set should also be included in the reference list of the article (see [Section 10.9](#) for how to cite). Federally funded or grant-funded research is often subject to requirements for data sharing; see, for example, the data-sharing policies of the National Institutes of Health (n.d.).

Conditions and Exceptions to Data Sharing. Before sharing or posting data and materials for any purpose, researchers must remove any personally identifiable information or code that would make it possible to reestablish a link to an individual participant's identity. Sometimes, a unique combination of demographic or other public information can be used to establish a participant's identity, and this possibility must be kept in mind and avoided as well. Researchers should consult the relevant policies of their institution or country (e.g., the European Union General Data Protection Regulation [GDPR], the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act [HIPAA]) for regulations and guidance on conditions for sharing data and deidentifying protected health information.

In addition to protecting the confidentiality of research participants, some proprietary arrangements may prohibit the sharing of data and materials (e.g., data provided in confidence by a business entity, a coding scheme developed commercially by the authors). Editors are responsible for setting policy for their journal about the acceptability for publication of research resting on proprietary arrangements, given that its accuracy and veracity cannot be checked in the usual way. This policy may depend on the availability of alternative ways to satisfy concerns about scientific integrity. For example, research using a proprietary personality scale may be acceptable if enough qualified researchers subscribe to it that someone can be found to help with independent verification.

1.15 Additional Data-Sharing Considerations for Qualitative Research

The sharing of qualitative data with editors, peers, and other researchers has distinct considerations in addition to those described in [Section 1.14](#). The APA Committee on Human Research and numerous qualitative researchers have expressed concerns about sharing qualitative research data (Data Sharing Working Group, 2015; DuBois et al., 2018; Guishard, 2018). Although consensus on how to navigate this issue has not yet been established, this section highlights several points that contraindicate or suggest alternates to data sharing.

Presentation of Raw Data in Research Reports. Data are typically reproduced in qualitative research reports. Segments of data (e.g., quotations from interviews) are presented to exemplify the process of analysis and to demonstrate the grounding of the findings in the data. Because these raw data are available for examination in the text of the article, they provide a basis by which readers, as well as editors and reviewers during the manuscript review process, can evaluate (and perhaps question) the appropriateness of the conclusions reached.

Confidentiality Limitations. The obligation to protect participants' confidentiality can present special ethical issues for qualitative data sharing. For instance, raw data from a qualitative study involving multiple detailed

stories about participants' lives may contain details that are necessary to make the data meaningful but that can be revealing in compromising ways when triangulated. Qualitative research may also involve intensive case studies of people who were selected because of their unique attributes. Although the researchers may try to mask participants' identities within a manuscript, it may not be possible to retain all that is meaningful to evaluate an analysis and at the same time protect participants' confidentiality if the complete data set is shared. The high burden on the researchers to remove all information that can lead to the identification of a participant is unjustifiable if it produces a set of data that is stripped of meaning. As a result, the researchers may instead need to withhold data to ensure participant confidentiality (see McCurdy & Ross, 2018, on the sometimes prohibitive complications of this process).

Consent Limitations. There is also the consideration that participants may give consent to participate in a study to a specific group of researchers and may not extend that consent to other researchers. This may be of particular concern with vulnerable populations. For instance, lesbian participants may consent to have their data analyzed by researchers who are in their community and who seek to support their rights, but that consent may not apply to other researchers with different motivations. Likewise, some researchers spend years developing the trust to collect and analyze data from a community, and community members may not extend that trust to other groups of researchers. Indeed, communities may be owners or co-owners of the data themselves and may refuse to share the data (DuBois et al., 2018; Tuck & Yang, 2014). As a result, the relationship between the researchers and the participants is an important ethical consideration and one that may contraindicate data sharing.

Researchers' Perspective Limitations. Many qualitative researchers view their own history and epistemological perspectives as legitimate influences on the process of inquiry. Thus, when sharing data from qualitative research, the researchers' perspectives and experiences must be taken into account. Research can be compromised if researchers are unreflective or not purposeful or explicit about this influence. However, when researchers are aware, they can deliberately elaborate on the investigative attitudes (e.g.,

phenomenological bracketing), personal experiences (e.g., ethnographic study), research teams (e.g., including researchers from the communities under analysis), or analytic lenses (e.g., critical theories) that enrich their research and thereby deepen the acuity they bring to the analytic task (Guishard et al., 2018). These qualitative researchers would not necessarily expect editors or external researchers to interpret their research in the same way when evaluating their analysis because they may not share their perspectives.

In qualitative inquiry, the researchers are the analytic tool, so those who have developed an intimate understanding of a data set or who have developed a perspective to enhance their sensitivity to the data typically are better attuned to nuances, implicit meanings, and systemic connections. This means that an editor or external researcher should not expect replication of the findings and should articulate an appropriate purpose and rationale for review of the shared data prior to the data being shared. Also, the approach to investigation selected may signify epistemological commitments of researchers and their participants, and these values need to be considered and honored in data-sharing efforts. In any case, a review of the data would need to be conducted with a keen awareness of the distinct epistemological positions and analytic processes within qualitative research.

1.16 Duplicate and Piecemeal Publication of Data

Reports in the literature must accurately reflect the independence of separate research efforts. Both duplicate and piecemeal publication of data misrepresent the amount of original research in the repository of scientific knowledge. *Duplicate publication* is the publication of the same data or ideas in two separate works. *Piecemeal publication* is the unnecessary splitting of the findings from one research effort into multiple works.

Duplicate Publication. Misrepresentation of data as original when they have been published previously is specifically prohibited by the APA Ethics Code (Standard 8.13, Duplicate Publication of Data). Duplicate publication distorts the knowledge base by making it appear that more information is available than actually exists. It also wastes scarce resources (journal pages and the time and efforts of editors and reviewers). The prohibition against duplicate

publication is especially critical for the cumulative knowledge of the field. Duplicate publication can give the erroneous impression that findings are more replicable than is the case or that particular conclusions are more strongly supported than is warranted by the cumulative evidence. Duplicate publication can also lead to copyright violations; authors cannot assign the copyright for the same material to more than one publisher. When submitting a manuscript for publication, authors are obligated to disclose whether they have posted the manuscript online, either in full or in substantial part; some editors may consider such posting to be prior publication.

Examples of and Exceptions to Duplicate Publication. Authors should not submit manuscripts that have been published in whole or in substantial part elsewhere, including manuscripts with substantially similar form or content to their previously published works. This policy also applies to translations; authors are not permitted to publish research in one language and then translate the article into another language and publish it again. Authors in doubt about what constitutes prior publication should consult the editor of the journal to which they are submitting their manuscript.

The policy regarding duplicate publication also means that the same or overlapping material that has appeared in a publication offered for public sale, such as conference proceedings or a book chapter, should not be republished elsewhere because these sources are considered widely available. For example, a brief report is published in an APA journal with the understanding that an extended report will not be published elsewhere because APA brief reports include sufficient descriptions of methodology to allow for replication; the brief report is the archival record for the work.

The policy regarding duplicate publication has some exclusions. Manuscripts previously published in abstracted form (e.g., in conference proceedings) or in a periodical with limited circulation or availability (e.g., report by a university department or government agency, dissertation) can be published again in a venue of wide circulation (e.g., in a journal). Consult a journal editor to determine whether a study reported in a dissertation or thesis or posted in a preprint repository could benefit from peer review and publication as a journal article.

Similarly, it is not considered duplicate publication to reanalyze already published data in light of new theories or methodologies, if the reanalysis is