

# Effective Writing



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Types of Paper  
Using Scholarly Sources  
Organization  
APA Style

# Introduction

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- All information about APA style in this presentation is based upon the Style Manual of the American Psychological Association:

American Psychological Association.  
(2001). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (5<sup>h</sup> ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

# Why is it Important to Write Well?

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## □ Practical Issues

### ■ Reputation

### ■ Referrals

- Writing quality impacts perceptions of competency by colleagues and referral sources

### ■ Professional Achievement

### ■ Liability Issues

- Lack of clarity can lead to lawsuits

# Why is it Important to Write Well?

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## □ Critical Issues

- Learning to Think Critically About Material
- Synthesizing Information
  - Integrating Materials
  - Dealing with disagreements, conflict, & paradoxes in the literature
- Helps You Learn to Communicate Better

# Additional Resources for Growth

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- Web Resources:
  - [www.louis-hoffman-virtualclassroom.com](http://www.louis-hoffman-virtualclassroom.com)  
writing resources
  - Student resources on the COSPP web site
- Read Your Feedback & Rewrite Your Papers
- Peer Collaboration
- Create Your Own Writing Guide Addressing Your Weaknesses

# Types of Papers

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- Journal
- Reaction Paper
- Position Paper
- Listserv or Blog Posts
- Literature Review
- Scholarly Paper/Research Paper (Non-empirical)
- Research Paper/Project (empirical)
- Case Reports
  - Test by Test v. Integrative

# Journal

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- ❑ Journal assignments generally expect students to react to various course material integrating reactions, critical thought, and life experiences.
- ❑ Important features:
  - Critical Thought
  - Use of Course Material as Stimuli
  - Integration with Prior Knowledge/Experience
- ❑ What to Avoid:
  - Summarizing & Paraphrasing
  - Long Quotes

# Journal

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- Why Journal Assignments??
  - Require students to think 'on their feet'
  - Facilitates comparison of values and worldview with the course material
  - Requires students to come up with their own thoughts on issues related to the course
  - Prevents plagiarism
  - Prepares students for writing papers by stimulating their thinking about issues related to class

# Reaction Paper

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- ❑ Reaction papers are similar to journals; however, they typically ask students to react to or critique a more focused topic.
- ❑ Important features:
  - Critical Thought
  - Use of Course Material as Stimuli
  - Integration with Prior Knowledge/Experience
  - Stay Focused on the Topic
- ❑ What to Avoid:
  - Summarizing & Paraphrasing
  - Long Quotes

# Position Paper

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- ❑ Position papers focus on a specific issue and require students to articulate their own personal opinion on the topic. Typically, students are required to support their position with scholarly resources.
- ❑ Important Features:
  - Clearly stated position
  - Several supports for their opinion
- ❑ What to Avoid:
  - Arguing for multiple positions while not taking one clear position
  - Stating position without support

# Listserv or Blog Posts

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- ❑ Blogs or listservs are increasingly being used as part of class. Posts on these 'communities' are generally expected to further the dialogue about class material.
- ❑ Important Features
  - Critical thought
  - Furthering the dialogue with new ideas
  - Including questions to invite dialogue
- ❑ What to Avoid
  - Just asking questions
  - Summarizing or paraphrasing
  - Praising/Criticizing others without adding content to the discussion

# Literature Review

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- ❑ Lit Reviews are often part of a larger project. When written separately, they focus on providing an overview of the current literature. The majority of the content will be based on other sources (but in your own words).
- ❑ Important Features
  - Include multiple perspectives
  - Connect similar ideas
  - Purpose is to give an overview of a topic
- ❑ What to Avoid
  - Going through paper by paper without attempts to integrate, synthesize, or compare/contrast the literature
  - Too many quotes

# Scholarly Paper/Research Paper (non-empirical)

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- ❑ A non-empirical research paper or scholarly paper provides an overview of a particular topic or issue based on the current literature. The difference between a literature review is that a scholarly paper generally attempts to demonstrate a point or take a position based upon the literature instead of just providing an overview.
- ❑ Important Features:
  - Make sure your paper has a point!!
  - Integrate various sources (generally both theory & research)
  - Provide a better balance between the thoughts of others and your own thoughts
- ❑ What to Avoid
  - Just doing a literature review (summarizing the literature)
  - Focusing only on the ideas of others

# Research Paper (empirical)

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- ❑ An empirical research paper involves writing up the results of a research project. It includes a literature review, methods section, and results.
- ❑ Important Features
  - Include important relevant articles in the literature review
  - Keep sections clear and distinguished
- ❑ What to Avoid
  - Including articles not relevant to the research project being conducted
  - Focus the paper around your research, not that which is reviewed

# Process of Writing a Paper

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- ❑ Identify a general topic
- ❑ Begin literature review
- ❑ Allow literature review focus your topic
- ❑ Identify a clear topic (i.e., the point of your paper!)
- ❑ Develop an outline of your paper
- ❑ Gather additional necessary resources
- ❑ Write your paper
- ❑ Gather resources to fill any holes in your paper & finish 1<sup>st</sup> draft
- ❑ Let the paper 'simmer' for a day or two
- ❑ Edit/Revise your paper
- ❑ Seek feedback from trusted peer/colleague
- ❑ Make final revisions

# Gathering Resources

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- ❑ Use scholarly resources!!
- ❑ Seek a mixture of books, edited books, and journals
- ❑ PsycInfo
  - Identifying keywords
    - ❑ Look for related keywords (listed after abstract)
    - ❑ Use a thesaurus
- ❑ Avoid relying too much on the internet (most are not based on scholarly sources)
- ❑ Read reference sections
- ❑ Rule of thumb:
  - Gather twice as many resources as you need; then narrow down the ones you will use

# Determining Scholarly Resources

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## □ Two Primary Criteria

### ■ Peer Review Status:

- Was the material reviewed by peers appropriate to review the material
- Peers should have the ability to make suggestions, accept, or reject the paper/book/web site

### ■ Audience

- Who was the book written for?
- Scholarly resources are written for professionals
  - i.e., self-help books are ***not*** scholarly resources

# Determining Scholarly Resources

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- Differentiating between:
  - Paper/Journal Article/Book/Book Chapter
  - Editorial/News Article
- Style of Writing
  - Professional papers are generally more technical
  - Editorial/News articles are less formal
- Both are scholarly; however, you should not rely too heavily on the latter.

# Determining Scholarly Resources on the Web

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## □ Rule of Thumb:

- Web resources are generally not scholarly and should be used cautiously & sparingly

- Examples of Scholarly:

- [www.depth-psychotherapy-network.com](http://www.depth-psychotherapy-network.com)

- Scholarly because it is written for professionals & articles are peer reviewed

- [www.psychjourney.com/Politics,%20Analysis,%20&%20Ethics.htm](http://www.psychjourney.com/Politics,%20Analysis,%20&%20Ethics.htm)

- This is a grey area. It is scholarly, but not a heavily weighted scholarly paper

- Examples of Non-scholarly:

- [www.existential-therapy.com](http://www.existential-therapy.com)

- [www.postmodernpsychology.com](http://www.postmodernpsychology.com)

# Organizing Your Paper

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- ❑ Begin with Clearly Defined Topic
- ❑ Group the Primary Information Gathered
- ❑ Develop an Outline of Your Paper
  - Note: This also helps you with your headers
  - Pay attention to the flow of your paper
- ❑ Be sure like ideas are connected
- ❑ Introduce Your Position (or Intent) Early
- ❑ Have Your Materials Build to Support Your Point
- ❑ Conclude with a Strong Point and Future Directions as a General Rule

# Organization Issues

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- References should be mixed and well integrated
- In other words, avoid:
  - Using one source throughout your paper and then forcing 4 others in a single citation to meet the minimum requirements of outside sources
  - Having several paragraphs citing just one source, then the next citing another source, etc.

# APA Style Essentials

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- ❑ We will not review everything about APA style, but rather will focus on the essentials
- ❑ Several additional resources are available through [www.cospp.edu/Student\\_Resources/Index.htm](http://www.cospp.edu/Student_Resources/Index.htm)

# Learning to Use APA

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- Read the Manual!!
- Learn the helpful shortcut guides – web
- Place tabs on your Style Manual
- Learn the Style Manual language
  - Helps you to use the index more efficiently

# General Issues

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- ❑ Gender inclusive and culturally sensitive language
- ❑ APA style discourages footnotes
- ❑ Do not use underline anywhere

# I, We, the authors, etc.

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- “We” should only be used to refer to the authors; never a population
- Difference between scholarly & editorial
  - You are given more freedom to use “I” or “we” in editorial styles of writing
  - In academic writing, the use of “I” or “we” should be avoided as much as possible
    - Also avoid “the author” as much as possible.
      - In other words, avoid self descriptors
      - The idea is objectivity
    - Always avoid “the authors”

# I, We, the authors, etc.

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- Academic Writing – Some variants & disagreements
  - I v. the author
    - Preference: “the author”
  - We v. the authors
    - Preference: “we”
  - In other words, plural personal pronouns use “we” while singular use “the author”
  - However, good to know there is some disagreement on this interpretation

# Reference & Reference Citations

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## □ Why Important?

- Incorrect use of reference and reference citations can lead to accidental plagiarism – a rather serious issue!
- It is important to direct people to your sources
- This helps keep clear what is your idea and what is another's idea

# Reference & Reference Citations

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## □ Reference Citation:

- This refers to citing the source in the text of the paper
- Example: The effective writing workshop helps students improve their writing (Cooper & Hoffman, 2005)

## □ Reference:

- This is the complete reference information on the source listed in the reference section of the paper
  - Example:
    - Cooper, S. & Hoffman, L. (2005). Effective writing. *Psychological Writing, 1*, 155-187.

# Reference & Reference Citations

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- When to reference:
  - *Any time you directly or indirectly refer to the ideas of another you must cite your source and provide all the necessary reference information for the reader to track down this reference.*
  - A reference is cited after the first time you refer to the source in a paragraph.
    - You do not need to cite this source again unless you refer to another source between references to this topic in the same paragraph
    - Each paragraph begins all over

# Reference & Reference Citations

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## □ Cautionary Note:

- *If you write an entire paragraph based on a source and then do not cite the source until at the end of the last sentence, you have technically just committed plagiarism!*

# Citation Information

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- ❑ You should only cite sources which you have read directly. If you do not have the paper you are wanting to cite, you need to be clear in your citation that this is a second hand source.

- ❑ Example:

May talks about the importance of anxiety in the learning process (as cited in Hoffman, 2005).

\* *Provide only reference information for Hoffman, not May in the Reference Section*

# Citation Information

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## □ General Format:

### ■ (Last Name, date)

- Do not include initials unless there are multiple authors with the same last name. Then include first initial.
- Page numbers are only including on quotes, not general citations
- If multiple reference are used in one sentence order them in alphabetical order by the first author's last name (Cooper, 2005; Hoffman, 2005; Robinson, 2000).
- Separate citations by a semi-colon (;)

# Citation Information

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## □ Listing Authors

- If one or two authors you always list all their names
- If 3-6 authors you write them all out the first time and then use the first name followed by "et al."
- If there are more than 6 authors you can use "et al." the first time

# Citation Information - Quotes

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- If a quote is less than 40 words it is included in the normal text; if it is 40 or more it is set off in a block style (indent .5 on the left side only; still double spaced).
- Page number(s) included
  - p. when referring to one page in the source
  - pp. when referring to two or more pages in the source

# Citations

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- ❑ Multiple items in parenthesis should be separated by semi-colon (;)
- ❑ ...used the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT; Hoffman, 2005).

# References

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- List all authors name in order
    - (Ed.) or (Eds.) also if edited book
  - Date in parenthesis followed by period
  - Title
- These are consistent across types

# References

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- Some general issues:
  - Titles generally should not be capitalized except for journals
  - Anything from the web ***MUST*** have the web address so the reader can look it up.
  - Indent after 1<sup>st</sup> line
    - Use auto function

# References

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- Most common:
  - Book
  - Edited Book
  - Book Chapter
  - Journal Article
- Again, it is very important to include all information needed so the reader could track down the source easily.

# The Use of Quotes & Other Materials

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## □ When to Quote:

- Don't over quote!
- Use for the most important points; emphasis
- Spread them out
- Most of the words should be your own

## □ Other Suggestions

### ■ Balance

- Don't just use others ideas or just yours
- Avoid group – several paragraphs just of them followed by several paragraphs just of you
- Integrate references

# When to Cite

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- General Note: You get more leeway on information which is considered generally accepted as a professional (if an expert in that area) than as a student. *In other words, when in doubt cite your source!*
  - When it is someone else's idea, your interpretation of their idea, or your reaction to their idea – cite!
  - You don't need to cite "givens"
    - However, difficult to determine what are givens & there are fewer & fewer agreed givens, so
    - When it doubt, cite!

# When to Cite

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## □ Language

- Any time you are making a factual claim you should have a reference (research reference)
- Most broad claims should have a reference
- If it is your opinion, be clear when possible
- Again, if in doubt, cite!

# Page Set Up

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- Margins should be consistent at 1"
  - No excessive margins to lengthen papers!
- Font size 12 in Courier New or New Times Roman
  - Some journals now accepting other similar fonts if readable
- All double spaced except quotes

# Title Page

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- Running head
- Title
- Authors Name & Affiliation

# Headers & Footers

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- Avoid Footers
- Headers
  - Use the Header Bar in Word; makes adjustments easier
  - Header & Page number

# Headings

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- See page 113 ff in the Style Manual
- Much easier to determine if used outline ahead of time

# Conclusion

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- Review
- Illustration