

Guidelines for Preparing Theses and Dissertations for Submission

Tables and Figures

Use tables only when you have substantial amounts of data (more than one or two columns or rows).

See page 325 of the APA manual for information on placement of tables and figures.

- For dissertations and theses, short tables may appear on a page with some text.
- Each long table and each figure is placed on a separate page immediately after the page on which the table or figure is first mentioned.

Review APA manual for formatting tables and figures

- Titles or captions of tables and figures are handled differently. Please check the APA manual to see the format for titles and captions for tables and figures.
- Tables for dissertations and theses can be single-spaced
- The title should be on the same page as the table or figure.
- The top of sideways tables should be on the left, whether it is on an odd- or even-numbered page.

Spacing

See page 326 for spacing information.

Double spacing is required throughout most of the manuscript. When single-spacing would improve readability, however, it is usually encouraged.

- Single spacing can be used for table titles and headings, figure captions, references (with double spacing between references), footnotes, and long quotations.
- Long quotations are placed in an indented block, whether they are double or single spaced.

Chapters and Chapter Headings in a Dissertation or Thesis

The sections of a dissertation or thesis are regarded as chapters.

- Each chapter or main section (e.g., Literature Review, Method, Results, Discussion) should begin on a new page. The main sections may or may not include a chapter number. (See page 325 in the APA manual.)
- If a chapter title is used (e.g., Chapter 3), it is the same level of heading as the name of the chapter (e.g., Method) and should be formatted in the same way.

See pages 113-115 in the APA manual for how to determine levels of headings.

- Level 4 is paragraph level (indented, italicized, lowercase paragraph heading ending with a period). It is indented, and text follows the period, as in a regular paragraph. An example of a level 4 heading appears below:

Alliteration versus rhyme development. The instructional program was more effective in developing Spanish- and English-speaking children's alliteration than rhyme skills, yielding comparable gains for alliteration in both groups.

- Do not use just one heading on any level in a section. Headings are used to divide a section into two or more parts.

Punctuation and Style Elements

Know when to italicize.

- Italicize words used as terms.
- Italicize for reference only sparingly.

Know how to punctuate before quotations.

- Note that a quotation that is 40 words or more is blocked, and the placement of the citation changes.
- A colon follows a complete sentence. Do not use a colon after an introduction that is not a complete sentence.
- Use a comma to set off a speaker tag: "Smith asserts," "Jones explains,"
- Use no punctuation if a quote is embedded in the sentence: "Johnson's opinion is "xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx" or "Larson claims that "xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx"

Lists, Seriation

See page 115 and 116 of APA for information regarding enumerating elements in a series.

- Within a paragraph or sentence, identify elements in a series by lower case letters in parentheses.
- List items that are placed in hanging indent or columnar form are identified by an Arabic numeral followed by a period but not enclosed in or followed by parentheses.

Use punctuation correctly with items in an indented series.

- Use periods at the end of items only if they are complete sentences.

- Use commas after items only if they are very short and very closely tied to an introductory fragment (stem), as in the following example.

The only valid options seem to be

1. to reject outright,
2. to accept with major reservations, or
3. to avoid the issue.

Places for Support

The APA manual is the official standard for formatting theses and dissertations.

In addition to the APA book, there are other resources:

- APA website
- Black, *APA for Novices*, available in the BYU bookstore
- *Grammar and Style for Idiots*
- Other universities' websites: Purdue and Indiana University
- MSE departments' graduate handbooks and web pages

External Editors

A list of individuals who can be hired to support students in the formatting and writing process appears on the MSE website.