CHAPTER 1

Hoops and Barriers

THINGS THAT SHOULDN'T MATTER, BUT DO
To some, following American Psychological Association format is like one of the stunts in those ultimate gross-challenge television shows: swallowing beetles, diving into a vat of worms, enduring the embrace of a rattlesnake or a cobra. At least beetles don’t have comma legs or period legs depending on what they follow in the reference list format, and you don’t have to count the segments in a worm to know whether to embed it or isolate it in a text.

If you’ve ever been tempted to flaunt APA by turning your masterpiece in on purple paper, using 2-inch margins all around, putting only three lines of text on three of your ten minimum pages, using a 14-point font, blocking 10-word quotations, or being sure that not one APA convention is followed on a reference list—be assured that students before you have tried all of these, with varying professorial responses.

But you can begin to wonder if your degree is worth the hoops you have to jump through and the barriers you have to crawl past in order to get it. Why should nitty-gritty forms and formats matter? You’ve “done your time,” and hopefully you’ve done your work as well. Why should the word count of your abstract or placement of your headings matter so much? Why do your professors, graduate committee members, or collegiate deans keep handing things back to you and insisting that you “clean up your APA”? What is so difficult and so terrible that you may end up having to pay some smart-aleck English major $20 an hour or so to clean up for you?

Whether you save the world may not depend on whether you do so in perfect APA format, but whether you save your course grade or graduate program may. Some give the reason that APA can get desperately needed funding by selling massive printings of each new edition. Others place the blame on the constituents and say that professors and deans need the ego boost of finding something wrong with dissertations they don’t have time to read. But blame-laying aside, there really are a number of reasons for academic formats, most of which come down to a deceptively simple explanation: professionalism.

Sometimes those of us who have given our lives and sanity to the social sciences wince as someone says, “But of course you’re not in the hard sciences” or, even worse, “You really ought to go into a ‘profession.’” Perhaps the composition and laws of the social sciences, including education (for nothing really is more social than education), are a little softer than the composition of metals or the laws of physics. This doesn’t make them less important or less professional. But if we want to be considered as

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professionals and respected as professionals, we need to behave as professionals and produce our professional materials in professional ways.

Theses and dissertations no longer hide on the back shelves of university libraries—mute testimony that the writer has obtained a degree but the work probably hasn’t much connection to anyone in the “real world.” With electronic storage, access, and indexing, anyone—from college freshmen to experienced academic researchers—may end up finding your work and looking into it. You, your work, and the university that approved it will be judged as professional or not according to (1) how professional it looks, (2) how professional it sounds, (3) how professionally it has been carried out, and (4) how professionally it is expressed. You’re carrying your research out professionally—your professor(s) and/or your graduate committee will see to that. This manual is designed to help you with the other three.

This chapter will look at the hoops and barriers you have to deal with as far as formats and formalities are concerned. Some are simply formalities: the specific number of words in the abstract or the spacing of footnotes, for example. We have to get around or past them because they are there. Others, such as a carefully constructed abstract and purposeful introduction, can contribute significantly to the coherence and accessibility of your writing.

Settings and Set-Ups

FAMILIARITY AIDS CLARITY

Don’t you love it when some “do gooder” rearranges your desk, your drawers, or—worse still—your bathroom? No matter how sensible the new arrangement may be, the sense of discomfort and disorientation is frustrating, and you may waste a lot of time looking for things that are in logical (but not familiar) places. Similarly, a professor, dean, or future researcher who is trying to find important information in your paper or dissertation feels comfortable and oriented when things are arranged in familiar places. There is conscious or subconscious routine/structure in reading, just as there is in daily necessities. Some of these set-up points have logical reasons, some don’t.
Many of the visual formats and conventions really do make reading and processing more efficient for the reader. And you want to make things as easy for your readers as possible.

**Paper:** Use relatively heavy white bond: 8 1/2" by 11" (Yes, a student did once try purple on a research paper; the teacher, a published writer, was not amused.)

**Font:** APA insists on 12-point Times New Roman. (You can no longer stretch your pages with inefficient fonts.) This type of font is called *serif*; others include Courier, Cambria or Times. Ironically, the extra “flourishes” (or *serifs*) actually make reading faster.

A serif font (like this one) draws the eye forward.

You may use a sans-serif font for tables and figures. (APA doesn’t specify which, so you get to choose.) Helvetica and Geneva are examples of *sans-serif* (literally translated “without serif”) fonts. The absence of serifs gives a cleaner, clearer line, which can be helpful in processing and retaining labels and numbers.

Note how this sans-serif font is sharp and clear.

**Alignment:** Do not justify lines. The left margin will, of course, be flush, but let the right margin be ragged. The irregular spacing of the words that results from justification actually makes reading slower and more difficult.

**Numbers and headers:** Number all pages consecutively including the title page. Use an Arabic numeral in the top right-hand corner, at least one half inch from the top of the page and one inch in from the side.

**Paragraphs and other indentations:** Set your indentation tab at one half inch (5-7
Margins: Margins should be one inch all around. If your document is to be printed and bound, you may extend an extra half inch on the left to allow for this.

Spacing: The manuscript should be double spaced throughout, including block quotes, reference list, endnotes, table notes, and other pesky insertions.

Headings and subheadings: Headings and subheadings are not miscellaneous labels inserted on a whim wherever you think your reader could use a visual rest. They are extremely important in both the writing and reading of your text. Why, how, and when to create them and insert them will be treated in detail in the next chapter. The format is mentioned here because the format change is the most obvious change between APA 5 and APA 6; if the visual aspects aren’t mentioned among the nitty gritties, someone may get worried. Don’t worry. The new system is easier than the old.

Level 1: Centered and Bolded with Initial Caps

Level 2: At the Left Margin, Bolded, Initial Caps

Level 3: Indented and bolded, with only the first word capitalized, followed by a period.

Level 4: Indented and bolded, also italicized, with only the first word capitalized, followed by a period.

Level 5: Indented and italicized without bolding, with only the first word capitalized, followed by a period.

Introductory Components

Introductory materials such as the title page, the abstract, and the introduction are not merely formalities. They welcome the reader into your project—your research and ideas. They can have important effects on the way(s) your work is read and interpreted.
TITLE PAGE

Many professional journals and graduate schools require their own title page formats, and of course you need to follow these directions. The basic APA title page consists of the following components:

Title. With the era of electronic databases and advanced library searches, the title carries more responsibility than it used to. Someone seeking to narrow a broad search may limit to words used in the title, and if you don’t include the right words your article or dissertation may be not found. The following steps may help you in composing your title.

- Go backwards for a minute. Think of the words you used in the database searches that yielded the strongest, most focused sources.
- List additional words that express your most important processes, relationships, and findings.
- Using these words construct a title that previews fairly accurately what a reader will find in your work.
- Cut out extra words—a 10- to 12-word title is ideal.

Byline. Type the name(s) of the author(s) one double space below the title. Forget “Buffy,” “Mickey,” and even “Bill.” Give your name in its most identifiable form: first, middle initial(s), last. Resist the temptation to add “MA” or “PhD.” If you are submitting an article for publication, include your institutional affiliation as well. If no institution acknowledges you, give your city and state.

Running head. At the top of each page in the left hand corner, place an abbreviated form of the title—a running head. Try to keep in under 50 characters (including spaces and punctuation). On the title page it is labeled as “Running head”; on the other pages it just appears.

Additional information as requested: Some journals use the title page as a place to record your contact information, work address, telephone, fax and email,
even home address and telephone. Some of them ask for so much information that
the title page no longer appears tidy and professional—but we have to give them what
they want.

This is the basic title page required by most publications using APA format.

Use of Oral Retellings in Second Graders’
Word Problem Comprehension
Susan R. Smith
Brigham Young University
Mary J. McKenzie
Provo, Utah

Author Note
This research was completed by Susan R. Smith as part of her doctoral
dissertation.
Correspondence should be directed to Susan R. Smith, 314 McKay
Building, Brigham Young University.
Dissertation Dispensations

- Your graduate school will probably give you a format for the title page. The page heading and running head will not be required, and the number will probably be eliminated. Your degree and program will probably be identified with word choice and sequence that will be given to you.

- If your work is to be copyrighted, a copyright page will follow the title page. Check with your department or graduate school to learn the necessary procedures and forms.

- Your graduate school or department will give you the approval page(s) that must be signed by the proper authorities.

- Following the approval page(s), you get a page to express your own approval—an opportunity to thank those who sustained and helped you throughout the process. It’s customary to thank your chair and committee (if you want to stay in their good graces), and it’s common to thank your spouse and/or other members of your family who have been good to you (if you plan to go home after this is over). If you want to add in your typist and/or editor and the friendly clerk who went out of her way to help you at midnight at Kinkos, you may do so, and your committee can’t stop you.

- The thesis or dissertation will need a table of contents and a list of tables and figures. Fortunately, your word processing program can help you with these; if not, use ice cream to bribe a spouse or a typist.

Abstract

Most scholarly submissions, including your thesis or dissertation require an abstract: an efficient one-paragraph summary of your masterpiece. Most journals request about 120-150 words. Your dissertation may allow up to a whopping 350. You will want to work in as much solid, specific information as you can; there is no room for repetition or fluff. Since abstracts for doctoral dissertations will be published in dissertation Abstracts International and other databases, include names of specific relevant places and full names of specific individuals, along with keywords that will be useful in electronic retrieval.

Following is a fairly easy process for putting your abstract together.

List out your chapter titles and your first- and second-level headings. If you have formed these carefully, they should express in simple and condensed form the main

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ideas and the groupings of supporting information for each chapter. As you look at this list, you can see at a glance both the outline of content and the key words you have chosen to express it.

**Choose the most important points.** The APA publication manual suggests no more than four or five (p. 13). You may want to discipline yourself to reflect your pattern of development and the main relationships that you bring out in your work.

**Just summarize.** Do not use the abstract as a “hook” to catch attention or as a place to validate your topic (unless it is BADLY in need of validation). Resist the temptation to use the abstract to make an evaluation of your “excellent” work. Leave statements of your strengths and limitations for later.

**Trim the excess.** Eliminate repetition: Just a hint—repeated words and phrases are often key to noticing repeated content. Synonyms are also commonly found in verbal excess.

- Consolidate sentences: If two or more sentences have essentially the same subject or very similar predicates, they can often be easily collapsed into one clear statement.

- Use pronouns efficiently but not carelessly: It may take several words to repeat an antecedent that can be replaced by it, they, or which.

- Eliminate unnecessary words: “It is a fact that,” “it can be conceded that,” “it is important to notice,” “we have found it significant” etc. If these things weren’t facts and weren’t important or significant, you wouldn’t be including them in the abstract.
For articles submitted to APA journals and for most course papers, the format involves the normal page headings, the title Abstract and the double-spaced one-paragraph text.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Oral Retellings of Word Problems</th>
<th>2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This study investigated the effects of the strategy of oral retellings on second graders' ability to comprehend and solve word problems. A sequence of 10 lessons teaching and implementing this strategy was conducted, reinforced</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**INTRODUCTION**

The introduction welcomes your readers and makes them comfortable with your presentation by acquainting them with topic and approach and by orienting them in terms of literature and developments in the field.

The introduction is not labeled unless necessary to avoid having a first page of a chapter with no heading.
The following suggestions are adapted from the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (2001, pp. 15-17). They do not comprise a sequence or process, only a checklist for inclusion (or lack thereof).

**Introduce your work and orient your reader.**

- ✓ Introduce the problem and establish its importance.
- ✓ State the purpose and rationale for your research.
- ✓ Summarize relevant arguments and data.
- ✓ Present the hypotheses and the experimental design as related to the problem.
- ✓ Discuss theoretical propositions and implications.
- ✓ Give necessary historical and research context.
- ✓ Refer the reader to general overviews or surveys of the topic that will provide further orientation if desired.
- ✓ Introduce important terminology.

**Avoid wasting your space and your reader’s time.**

- ✗ Don’t let it get too long or heavy. Initially most introductions are way too long. Eliminate everything that is not really necessary for a reader to understand your piece. If you are uncertain about certain aspects, get your professor or graduate chair to advise you.

- ✗ Do not include an exhaustive historical review of the literature unless instructed specifically to do so. Include what you need to portray background and continuity of the research and to provide a reference base that the reader can appreciate. But do not include things that are tangential or irrelevant.

- ✗ Do not use the introduction as a soapbox to denounce opposing views. If these views need to be brought up early in order to orient the reader, do so efficiently and reasonably.
Tables and Figures

TABLES

Preparing course papers may not involve tables—at least not very many of them—as most courses do not have time for heavy data gathering. However, tables are an important component for theses and dissertations. Your committee and statistics helpers will guide you in composing the tables. This manual deals only with placements and formalities.

Tables and figures can be efficient ways of presenting information: packing a large amount of data in small space, emphasizing relationships, bringing in a visual learning modality. But they should be used only when they accomplish these functions. Do not overuse figures and tables.

CHECKLIST


☑ Be sure that all tables are actually identified and discussed in the text. What is obvious evidence to you may not be so easy for a reader to interpret.

☑ Number tables consecutively throughout the text. Use separate numbering for tables in the appendix (A1, A2) or for separate appendices when you have them (B1, B2, C1, C2 etc.).

☑ Avoid using unnecessary or repetitive tables. Keep tables as simple as you can: Data should be easily accessible.

☑ Use horizontal lines between table title and headings and between headings and body of table. Thereafter use horizontal lines only for clarity. Do not use vertical lines in tables.

☑ Place explanatory notes immediately following a table. A general note is labeled Note; a note specific to part of a table is indicated with a superscript number.
# Oral Retellings of Word Problems

Table 1

Subjects' Use of Two-factor Retellings in Solving Multiplication Word Problems in Post-treatment Interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Use</th>
<th>Self-identified</th>
<th>Subconscious</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jace</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rory</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haley</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olya</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kayla</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Data represent transcriptions of student interviews recorded in both audio and visual formats.

* Child has recently moved from Russia and has very limited English skills.
CHAPTER 1

DISSEMINATION DISPENSATIONS

- Though tables and figures are placed at the end of a manuscript which is to be published, in the thesis or dissertation they are generally located close to the place they are referenced in the text.
  
  A small table may be placed on a page along with text.
  
  A long table should be on its own page, immediately following the page on which it is discussed.

- You may single space tables if doing so makes them clearer or easier to interpret.

- If a table is placed sideways, the top should be on the left, regardless of whether it is on an even- or odd-numbered page.

- The title must be on the same page as the table, even if it means a little extra space at the bottom of the page.

FIGURES

Figures attract attention and can represent complicated relationships in ways that are easy for a reader to process and remember. They are more striking and less precise than tables.

CHECKLIST

(See Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association,

☐ As the purpose of a figure is to supplement and enhance the text, it should be discussed with enough detail that a reader can easily interpret and remember it.

☐ Be sure that figures are simple and clear; avoid crowding in too much detail.

☐ Number figures consecutively with arabic numerals outside the boundaries of the figure itself.

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A figure should be self-contained. A reader should not have to return to the text in order to interpret it.

Be sure that the caption and legend explain symbols and abbreviations.

- **The legend** appears as part of the figure; thus it is within the boundaries of the figure and uses the same typeface.

- **The caption** is both a title and an explanation. It consists of a brief descriptive phrase, often followed by additional explanations of symbols or measurements. If material is to be published, captions are listed on a separate page rather than on the figures.

**Legend**

Accumulation of insight through synthesis

**Caption** *Figure X*. Process by which language use enhances critical comprehension as child uses words to retell a problem.
Purposes for Figures and Tables (Adapted from APA 6th edition, pp. 125-126)

- **To explore.** To allow your readers to explore the data with you

- **To communicate:** To share the data that support the meaning you have found so that the readers can understand your meaning on a deeper level

- **To calculate:** To invite your reader to calculate a statistic or function related to the data

- **To store:** To allow both you and your reader to have the data available for easy retrieval

- **To decorate:** To attract attention and give your manuscript more visual appeal (depending, of course, on the nature of the data and the purpose and target audience for the paper)

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Dissertation Dispensations

- Like tables, figures are placed at the points where they are discussed rather than at the end of the thesis or dissertation.

  Small figures can be placed on the same page with the text.

  Large figures should be placed on the following page.

- The figure caption is typed below the figure rather than on a separate page.

- Any figure notes are placed directly below the caption.

![Figure 2. Comparative data generated by the study.](attachment)

*Note. This includes both semesters.*
Follow-up Items

APPENDIX

If you have something that's a little bulky or tangential, but someone is apt to be curious about it (and/or your chair really likes it), you can include it in an appendix. The specialist may gaze at it all he/she wants, but the casual reader who finds your dissertation on the Internet doesn't have to be bothered.

Items for Inclusion. Any of the following might be included in an appendix (see Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 2001, p. 205):

- Word list(s)
- Mathematical proof(s)
- Large table(s), particularly those too detailed for the text
- Technical information on methods beyond that required in the text
- Computer program(s)
- Questionnaire or survey instrument (you designed), instructions to participants
- Parts of published survey instruments only if copyright permission is obtained
- Participant recruitment materials: sign-up sheets, informed consent forms
- Case studies or other illustrative resources
- Statistical calculations that are relevant but not necessary to the text
- Additional data that are not vital to and are possibly awkward or bulky within the text

An appendix should contain related materials. If you have diverse appendages, you may have more than one skeletal closet. If you do have more than one, label them with capital letters: Appendix A, Appendix B etc. Refer to them by these labels in the text. (A copy of the questionnaire is provided in Appendix A). As far as form and numbering are concerned, Appendix A and Appendix B are separate closets.
Appendix A

Sample Lesson Sequences

Introductory Lesson

Anticipatory Set

Appendix label: centered, initial caps
Appendix title: centered, initial caps
Text: double spaced, standard paragraph indentation
First level heading: same as body of text
Second level heading: same as body of text

NOTES: FOOT AND OTHERWISE

Notes are convenient little "asides" that help you keep from overloading your sentences and diverting your paragraphs. They allow you to be explicit without being weighty.

There are three kinds of notes you will probably be involved with in papers, dissertations, and basic articles: author notes, content footnotes, and copyright permission footnotes.

Author Note. The author note gives the 'author(s)' names along with affiliations. Support acknowledgements and special circumstances relevant to consideration of the piece are sometimes included.
• Author notes are usually placed on a separate sheet at the end of a manuscript (following references or appendix), but may be placed on the title page if a manuscript is being submitted for publication.

• A contact address should be given. When there are multiple authors, only one need be designated as a contact.

Footnotes (Endnotes)

You are very fortunate that an APA footnote page looks like this one (and this is just the top of it). Not all formats are this kind. Some formats require that all references be in the form of footnotes rather than parenthetical citations like APA uses.

No—that's not a typo; APA now refers to all miscellaneous note collections as footnotes.

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ORAL RETELLINGS OF WORD PROBLEMS

Footnotes

1 The strategies used were closely related to the CGI approach, the classroom teacher as well as the researchers were trained in this method.


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Title: Footnotes (even if you called them “endnotes” in Freshman English.

Note number: Superscript Number consecutively throughout.

Double spaced within and between

Examples illustrate the two kinds of footnotes that are used by APA. Explanations are on the following page. No. 1 is content; No. 2 is copyright permission.
Footnotes.

- *Content footnotes* allow you to make expansions and explanations that would interrupt the flow of your text and not be of interest to all readers: for example, definition of a term, identification of a key individual, explanation of an instrument or procedure beyond what is required in the text, reference to sources with more detailed explanations, or additional historical or contextual information.

- *Copyright permission* footnotes acknowledge the copyright holder giving you permission to use material.

Both content and copyright permission footnotes are numbered throughout the text consecutively. Indicate their position in the text by a superscript number, and place the notes on a separate page following the author note. If your thesis or dissertation is being submitted electronically, you may be required to put footnotes on the bottoms of the pages where the information is relevant (see Appendix A).

Now that you have the hoops and barriers visualized so that you can discipline yourself and your computer to follow them, you're ready for the important work: actually writing the paper, thesis, or dissertation. The next chapter gives you a few hints that may help you to make the text more coherent and easier for the reader to process.