APA Citations

This guideline was written to handle the growing confusion for students regarding APA format due to increasing exposure via the internet. There is only one official APA manual, but it is often updated over time when needs arise. When an update comes out, it becomes the official APA manual governing the writing of science and psychology papers. However, the older versions can still be found and are often still used by many institutions. Furthermore, researchers and professors use variations of the APA style to suit their needs and publication demands (for example, Chicago Style, IEEE Style, AAA Style; not to mention MLA Style used for English papers). The Thames Valley District School Board has an online-only version, On Your Own, based on the official fifth APA manual (and includes MLA and Chicago Style). The board also still supports an older version of On Your Own, available online and in print, which is based on the fourth edition of the official APA manual. Therefore, it is understandable that much confusion exists as to which style is the correct style to use.

Clarity and consistency are most important with APA Style so we will use the following guideline in my class as our definitive manual to write papers and how they will be marked when APA formatting is required. My goal is to simplify APA for high school students, so I may circumvent some of the rules just to make it easier as I am only trying to help you learn how to make a proper science report; I am not creating a complete guideline as one already exists (the official APA manual). Therefore, I have outlined the major, most commonly needed, instructions but there are numerous rules to cover the immense variety of situations that can exist, so if a situation is not covered here, refer to the **official APA guide** posted on my website.

Definition

A citation is a short link to a source of information. It outlines the author or authors of any source used to help you learn about a topic. It basically states that you learned this information/interpretation by reading this source. It gives this source credit and creates accountability. Without a citation, you are stating that the information is solely your own. By not giving credit to the original author or authors, you have committed academic fraud. Science papers are written for learning so you are displaying your interpretation of the work you read and not quoting. Science is interested in growth and expansion of ideas which does mean you may be wrong in your interpretation. Science is not centered around what was written; rather, it focuses on expansion of ideas and learning. Therefore, quoting will not be used in our science papers!

Placement

Citations appear in the body of the report, in figure captions and in table headings. In the body of the report, they can be placed at the beginning of a paragraph or at the end of the paragraph (typically, placement changes based on the flow of the paragraph. However, a research-based paragraph (not based on personal opinion or information) must have at least one citation and if there is only one citation in a paragraph, the assumption is that the entire paragraph of information originated from that citation. Finally, never repeat the same citation consecutively within a paragraph; only include a citation if it is a new citation.

Format

The citation may be directly incorporated in the sentence by using the author's or authors' last names followed by the publication date in brackets. For example:

> According to Foryng (2001) two significant scientific paradigms are reductionism and holism.....

It is possible to include both the author and date without a bracket if they begin a sentence but this is not used often as it only has one context. For example, the sentence above could be written:

> In 2001, Foryng claimed that the two significant scientific paradigms are reductionism and holism.....

The citation may simply end an entire paragraph if all the material in that paragraph originates from the same source or sources. In this case, both the author or authors and the date are included in the bracket at the end of the sentence before the final punctuation. For example:

> It may well be that neither theory can fully account for all scientific phenomena. Moving beyond the reductionist paradigm will fundamentally alter how science is understood and conducted (Capra, 2002).

Finally, citations may be intermingled throughout a paragraph, but it must be clear where information relating to one citation starts and stops. Both a beginning style or ending style may be used. For example:

> Capra (2002) noted that there has been an over-reliance on the reductionist approach such that other views such as holism are deemed less scientific. Whereas reductionism implies that nature is nothing more than a collection of individual components (University of Groningen, 2002), holism is an integrative approach (Autumn, 1995) stressing the relationship between the component parts and the whole (Cameron, 2000) such that the whole could never be reproduced by simply recombining those parts (Cameron, 2000; Emery, 2001).

Structure

The citations must match the source you actually read; that is, if a paper refers to paper within it, you can only cite the paper you are actually reading. For example, if you wished to cite the information according to Capra in the above box, you would cite Zuber because you read my paper and did not actually read the Capra paper. Remember, the purpose of citing is to give credit to the source from which you learned and then interpreted the information; you are not quoting or stating where information is contained. So the citation to Capra that I made has been influenced by my understanding of that paper and does not state that Capra directly stated that information; it is my interpretation so you cite my interpretation as it has now influenced your interpretation.

The citation and the reference (on the reference page) must match exactly in terms of order of the authors, spelling and date. The order of the authors implies who did the majority of the work or is the principle researcher and if they are in alphabetical order, it implies that the work was shared equally. If the citation and the reference does not match, it means there is no citation to link to the reference and no reference for the citation used; that is, two errors have been committed.

We will not be using et al. Students often like to use it when there are many authors; however, the rules about this are actually quite complex. For example, it can be used in a citation if there are three or more authors, but in a reference there must be more than six authors. Furthermore, there are numerous exceptions such as cases where the use of et al. creates two identical citations but not references. I have found the use of et al. in high school usually leads to errors so we will take the simple approach–use all the authors names. When listing more than one author in a citation, use commas to separate the authors until the last author. For the last author use the ampersand (&) as "and" is only used with et al. which we are not using. For example:

> Paradigms are defined by ontology (the way in which the nature of matter is explained), epistemology (uses and limitations), axiology (criteria of values) and methodology (processes used to study nature) (Van de Vijver & Braeckman, 2002).

Sometimes more than one source can be credited for the same information. In this case, each citation is separated by a semicolon (;). For example:

> Reductionists attempt to explain the functioning of the whole by reducing it to its smallest components (Autumn, 1995; Capra, 2002; Pigliucci, 2000).