

Key Differences Between APA 6th and 7th Editions

Academic Research provides this summary to highlight the major updates introduced in the 7th edition of the APA Publication Manual (released in 2019). These changes are designed to improve clarity, accessibility, and usability for students, educators, and researchers.

Paper Formatting (Chapter 2)

The 7th edition distinguishes between student and professional title pages. Professional papers include a title, author(s), affiliations, author note, running head, and page number. Student papers require a title, author(s), institutional affiliation, course number and name, instructor name and title, assignment due date, and page number. Running heads are omitted from student papers.

Heading Levels (2.27)

APA 7th edition revised heading styles, particularly Levels 3 through 5. All headings are now bold and in title case. They are distinguished through indentation and the use of italics or periods.

Other Paper Format Changes

- No 'Running head:' label in professional papers.
- Running heads must be in all caps and ≤50 characters.
- Abstracts and reference labels follow Level 1 heading rules.
- A variety of fonts are acceptable if used consistently.

Writing Style and Grammar (Chapter 4)

The manual endorses the use of the singular 'they' as a gender-neutral pronoun. Use 'they' when gender is unknown, irrelevant, or when someone identifies as nonbinary. Avoid anthropomorphizing non-human entities—use 'that' or 'which' for animals or objects.

Bias-Free Language (Chapter 5)

- Use person-first language (e.g., “a person with epilepsy” rather than “an epileptic”).
- Avoid using adjectives as nouns (e.g., “the poor” → “people living in poverty”).
- Be specific and relevant when describing identity.
- Respect how people describe themselves, understanding that terminology evolves.

Mechanics of Style (Chapter 6)

- Use one space after a period at the end of a sentence.
- Use quotation marks (not italics) for linguistic examples (e.g., press the “F” key).

Tables and Figures (Chapter 7)

Formatting is now consistent for tables and figures. Titles, notes, and numbering follow parallel structure. Tables/figures may be embedded within the text or placed at the end of the document.

In-Text Citations (Chapter 8)

- Use 'et al.' for all citations with 3+ authors.
- Indigenous oral traditions and traditional knowledge are treated as a distinct source type.
- Use modified personal communication citations for unrecorded oral traditions.
- Quotes from research participants do not require citations—just identify the participant in text using a pseudonym if needed.

Reference List (Chapter 9)

- List up to 20 authors; use an ellipsis (...) for more than 20.
- Present DOIs and URLs as hyperlinks.
- Omit 'DOI:' and 'Retrieved from' unless a retrieval date is needed.
- Include database information only when the source is exclusive to that database.