



Department of Criminal Justice

**Department Paper Guidelines
&
Writing Manual**

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Department Paper Requirements

Students enrolled in Criminal Justice courses must abide by the following paper requirements. Following these guidelines will ensure that your paper meets the minimum standards required by the Department, regardless of which Criminal Justice course you are enrolled in or who your professor is in that course. Any draft papers required also must conform to these guidelines. Papers that do not meet these requirements will be returned to the student for revision. Please note that these are the minimum requirements. Your specific professor may include additional requirements and will note these accordingly on their respective syllabi.

All papers must conform to the following requirements:

- Your paper must include an APA formatted title page with the following additional information included: course name, name of professor, date, and citation style.
- Your paper should be given a title reflective of your analysis. Labeling your paper “Practicum Term Paper” or “Seminar Term Paper” is not acceptable.
- You must use 12-point Times New Roman font only. Arial, Courier, and other fonts are not acceptable.
- Margins of 1” should be used on all four sides.
- Each page, including title page, should include an APA formatted running head with page numbers.
- Headings and subheadings should be used to organize your paper into topical areas.
- In-text citations must be used for any information that is not your own original thought or work and should be formatted according to APA specifics.
- Your paper should include an APA formatted references page listing all sources used within the paper.
- Only recent scholarly sources should be used. Sources should be published within the last ten (10) years to be considered recent. Older sources may be used as supplementary information at the instructor’s discretion.
- You must satisfy the minimum page requirements for the particular assignment. Papers that do not meet the minimum length may be returned to the student for revision or subjected to a deduction of points at the professor’s discretion.
- Your paper should have an introduction, body, and conclusion. Your introduction should include a clear and concise thesis statement that lets your reader know exactly what you are going to address in the remainder of the paper.
- Your paper must conform to the general rules of academic writing (see Page 2).
- Your work should be proofread your work prior to submission. There is no excuse for typos, misspellings, or misuses of common words.
- Papers should be submitted in a Microsoft Word document with the file extension .doc or .docx. Your last name should appear in the file name (e.g., Term Paper – Schildkraut.docx).

General Rules of Academic Writing

The following section is designed to assist you with academic writing. Following these guidelines will not only help improve your grade, but also your overall writing.

Write in an Objective Tone

In your academic papers, you are being asked to write about a subject (oftentimes of your choosing) to an audience that theoretically does not know anything about your topic. Accordingly, your role is to provide information as an authority or expert on the subject while still maintaining an objective or neutral one.

Objective writing is that which can be verified through evidence and facts, oftentimes which is supported by the research you include (via citations). This type of writing is neutral in tone. Conversely, *subjective writing* is that which cannot be verified or empirically evaluated. This type of writing often includes feelings, judgments, or personal opinions. Subjective writing is not appropriate for an academic paper, unless you are being asked to write a reflection of some sort.

In order to ensure that your writing remains objective, follow these tips:

- Avoid use generalizations or vague terms. Instead be specific / explicit in conveying your ideas. For example, say “in 2015” or “two years ago” rather than “some time ago;” “75% of respondents” instead of “most people;” or “five” instead of “several.”
- Avoid using first- and second-person language, unless a specific assignment calls for its use (be sure to check with your professor if you have any questions about whether or not it should be employed). This makes it more professional and authoritative in tone and less about you and your opinions. First-person language includes (but is not limited to) I, we, me/my, us, our, and other similar pronouns. You or your are examples of second-person language.
- Avoid opinionated or similar language, particularly when coupled with first-person language, such as “I believe,” “I feel,” or “I think.” Opt instead for a credible source to help you prove your point through research: “Smith (2008) found that ...” or “According to Jones (2015), ...”
- Avoid language that explicitly excludes any group of people, such as gendered pronouns (“he,” “his,” or “men,” particularly when applying blanketly to both genders). Instead, rephrase the sentence to be able to use plural nouns and pronouns, such as “they” or “their.” You also may wish to use “the” in lieu of “his,” or use a noun (e.g., the researcher, the person, the individual) in place of the pronoun.
- Avoid flowery or exaggerated wording that can intensify or sensationalize your writing, such as “awfully,” “very,” or “really.” These words can make your argument appear falsified or weak. Instead, stick to the facts and support them with statistics or other research findings.

Use Formal Writing

In addition to writing in an objective tone, formal / academic writing skills should be employed in all course paper assignments. This is a good practice to get into as it will help to prepare you for writing tasks you may encounter in post-collegiate employment.

In order to ensure your writing is formal, follow these steps:

- *Avoid slang or informal language.*

As a rule of thumb, your paper should sound like you speak – but to a point. Your paper should reflect the stance of an authority or expert – even if you do not feel you are one, the time and effort that you are putting in to researching your topic will give you the knowledge base of someone who clearly knows their subject. Accordingly, your word choice also should reflect the stance of an expert rather than someone having a conversation with their friends. Avoid using slang or informal language, such as “kids” or “cops.” Instead, opt for more proper wording, such as “children,” “police,” or “law enforcement officers.” Text chat also should be avoided in academic writing.

- *Avoid using jargon.*

In the same vein, your writing should not sound like you are speaking in NASA code. Accordingly, jargon (any word or phrasing that loses meaning when using it for an audience beyond your field) should be avoided – it does not make us sound smarter, especially when we do not understand the wording ourselves, and instead just confuses the reader who is trying to follow what you are saying. If there is something that is discipline-specific and adds to your paper, it is okay to include so long as there is a reasonable explanation attached that would help a layperson understand the message you are trying to convey. Ask yourself if someone who is not familiar with your discipline would understand it. If not, you may wish to come up with another word or phrase to convey your meaning or simplify the language. This does not mean you are downplaying the importance of the idea – just making it clearer to the reader.

- *Avoid using exclamation marks (!).*

Exclamation points are meant to show surprise or emphasis. That said, they do not belong in formal academic or professional writing. Unless being utilized within a direct quote, one should avoid using exclamation marks as it can detract from the credibility or finesse of the work and can make the writing appear undisciplined in structure. As writer F. Scott Fitzgerald once said, “An exclamation point is like laughing at your own joke.”

- *Avoid using contractions.*

Contractions also should be avoided in academic writing. Instead of “don’t,” “you’re,” “can’t,” or “shouldn’t,” among other commonly used contractions, use “do not,” “you are,” “cannot” (noting that this is one word, not two), or “should not.”

- *Avoid flowery or sensational language.*

As noted, flowery or sensational language should always be avoided in academic writing. Let the facts speak for themselves without added emphasis. If there is a word or phrase that is particularly important, you may opt to use italics as emphasis – this, however, should be used sparingly. If using italics within a direct quote where the original source does not include such formatting, one should note that the emphasis is added in the in-text citation:

As Cohen (1963) has noted, the media “may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling people what to think *about*” (p. 13, emphasis added).

Verb Tense Consistency

It is important when writing that ideas be conveyed consistently. One place where this often is problematic is in the use of verbs. Oftentimes, we consider the three main tenses of verbs when writing: past, present, and future. Theoretically, there actually are six different tenses of verbs:

<i>Simple Present</i>	They talk.
<i>Present Perfect</i>	They have talked.
<i>Simple Past</i>	They walked.
<i>Past Perfect</i>	They had walked.
<i>Future</i>	They will walk.
<i>Future Perfect</i>	They will have walked.

In most academic writing, the work already has commenced, particularly when reviewing previous literature. Accordingly, past tense (either simple or perfect) should be used. If the writer is performing original research, they may opt to use a form of present tense to show that their findings are new. In all writing, however, the use of future tense to convey what already has happened is not acceptable. If the work is done or an action has happened, future tenses should not be employed. (As an aside, they really should only be used for discussions of future research directions, which would occur beyond the timing of the paper itself).

Once a tense is selected, it should be used consistently throughout the paper and throughout each sentence. It can become quite confusing to the reader to follow along if the tenses bounce and change from sentence to sentence. Using tenses consistently will help to improve the overall flow of the writing for the reader.

Sentence and Paragraph Construction

Sentence and paragraph construction also are important in helping to ensure that your paper achieves maximum readability. When your writing construction follows these tips, your reader will have an easier time not only reviewing your paper, but also really absorbing the ideas that you are trying to convey.

To ensure maximum readability, follow these key tips:

- *Be as clear and concise as possible while avoiding run-on sentences.*

When sentences are too long, it makes it hard for a reader to keep their place. When you find that sentences are running on and/or you are trying to convey too many ideas in a single sentence, break it up into multiple lines. This will help keep your ideas and their conveyance focused.

- *Avoid repetition in wording by using synonyms.*

Using the same word (or a variation of the same word) repeatedly in a sentence can cause confusion for the reader and also cause the message you are trying to convey to be lost. Accordingly, it is best to use synonyms in these instances to help focus your thoughts while simultaneously eliminating the redundancy and potential confusion.

INCORRECT: **Strain** also occurs when beliefs are imposed that the individual finds to be **straining** on them, which leads the person to remove the source of **strain** from the situation (Miller et al., 2015).

CORRECT: **Strain** also occurs when beliefs are imposed that the individual finds to be **harmful** to them, which leads the person to remove the source of **frustration** from the situation (Miller et al., 2015).

- *Avoid writing stilted sentences.*

At the same time, you want to avoid stilted sentences. This occurs when all of your sentences are the same length, causing your writing to seem fixed and robotic. An ideal work will have variation in sentence lengths to keep the reader's attention.

- *Ensure your paragraph lengths are manageable for the reader.*

Paragraphs that contain few sentences can read very choppy to the reader, especially when multiple short paragraphs are offered in succession. Likewise, those paragraphs that are longer in length can cause what is called "reader fatigue," whereby the reader's eye will be strained in trying to follow along, subsequently causing them to lose their place and potentially miss out on key information. Ideally, to combat both issues, all paragraphs should be between four and six sentences each.

Writing Mechanics: Punctuation and Grammar

An important part of ensuring that you are putting your best foot forward in your paper is to ensure that your punctuation and grammar issues have been addressed prior to submission. This section will discuss common errors in these areas and how they can be corrected for your papers.

Punctuation

Punctuation is very important to academic writing in that it helps the reader to understand and/or detect emphasis or tone in the work. While emphasis can be made through the change of tone or pausing in our voice when words are spoken, punctuation acts as a substitute when the words are written. Accordingly, it is important that punctuation be used correctly to ensure the tone is properly conveyed to the reader.

Commas. Commas (,) are used to separate full sentences into more manageable segments. When used correctly, they also represent pauses in a sentence. Accordingly, it is important to understand how and when commas should be used in academic writing.

Without commas, sentences can become run-on blocks of text without any breaks. This is very similar to speaking full run-on sentences without any pauses. An example of this would be:

INCORRECT: I went to bail my friend out of jail but the bonds agent had not yet processed the necessary paperwork so I went home.

To correct this issue, it always is recommended that you read your sentence(s) out loud, making sure to take note of any breaks in your speech. Thus, if it sounds like you should be taking a pause, or you are changing gears in your sentence, be sure to add in a comma.

CORRECTED: I went to bail my friend out of jail, but the bonds agent had not yet processed the necessary paperwork, so I went home.

At the same time, it is possible to overuse commas in a given sentence. Reading out loud, as recommended earlier, will help combat this in part because if it does not sound as though you should pause, you can remove the comma. If, however, it does sound like you should pause at a greater number of places within the sentence, it may be best to break the line up into two or more sentences rather than inserting a host of commas.

The Oxford Comma

When writing items in a list format, the Oxford comma should always be used. Standard in British writing, the Oxford comma separates the last item of a given list with a comma. While used differently across disciplines in the U.S., it is best to include this and to do so consistently.

WITHOUT OXFORD COMMA: For his final meal in prison, Bill ate chicken, potatoes and pie.

WITH OXFORD COMMA: For his final meal in prison, Bill ate chicken, potatoes, and pie.

Quotation marks. Quotation marks (“”) typically are used to indicate a quote in your writing. This is to show that the wording being used is exactly as written in another source (usually the original work). Quotation marks always are used in pairs – the first is for opening the quote and the second is for closing it. Always be sure to include both so it is clear where the direct quote begins and ends.

There are several additional rules with regard to using quotation marks, as outlined here. First, when quoting a complete sentence, the first letter of the direct quote is capitalized:

As one crisis management training provider noted, “I can foresee the day when freshman orientation includes a video on the campus emergency-response plan, as well as training” (in Sander, 2008, p. 26).

Next, if using only a portion (incomplete fragment) of the quote, the wording should not be capitalized:

Agger (1989) refers to the dependence on the mass media as *fast capitalism*, whereby the media operate in an economic model that serves the public by “objectifying and commodifying all human experience” (p. 6).

Notice in the first use (quoting a complete sentence) that there is a comma prior to the start of the quote. Conversely, there is no comma when only a fragment is used in part of the sentence.

Direct quotes should be used sparingly. In a paper of 15- to 20-pages, no more than three (3) direct quotes should be used. Shorter papers will permit the use of fewer direct quotes. Be sure to check with your professor about their specific requirements for how many can be included within a particular assignment.

Instead of using direct quotes, you instead can (and should) paraphrase the material. Also considered indirect quotations, the use of paraphrasing allows you to convey the ideas of the original author or speaker, but to do so in your own language. Essentially, you will explain the material and ideas to the audience in the way that you understand it.

Both direct and indirect (paraphrased) quotes require the proper citations, which are discussed further on Page 17.

Apostrophes. Apostrophes (') are used to indicate possessives, meaning when something belongs to you or someone else.

INCORRECT: The business owners car was stolen.

CORRECT: The business owner's car was stolen.

Apostrophes should not be used to indicate a plural noun. If you want a noun to be plural, simply add a "s" with no apostrophe.

INCORRECT: That watch is all your's.

CORRECT: That watch is all yours.

Apostrophes also are used in conjunctions, but these, as noted earlier, should be avoided in academic writing.

Hyphens and dashes. Hyphens (-) and dashes (–) are used for different reasons but often are confused with one another. Hyphens are used to combine two words into a single phrase or idea, most commonly in adjective form. Conversely, dashes are used to indicate a shift in ideas or train of thought within a given sentence.

WITH HYPHEN: Beyond individual-level correlates, several additional factors also have been found to predict increased newsworthiness among homicide events.

WITH DASH: A total of 32 people – 27 students and 5 professors – were killed and an additional 23 were wounded in the attacks.

Semicolons and colons. Like the hyphen and dash, semicolons (;) and colons (:) often are mistaken for one another and subsequently are misused. Semicolons are in three specific scenarios:

First, use a semicolon when joining two independent clauses together and when the second clause restates the first or is of equal value:

An additional 25 minute passed before a Virginia Tech Police Department representative met with the Policy Group; by the time the first emergency email notification about the shootings at West Ambler Johnston was transmitted at 9:26, the shooter already was in the process of chaining the doors to Norris Hall shut.

Second, semicolons are used when joining two independent clauses together and when the second clause begins with either a conjunctive adverb (e.g., however, therefore, moreover, thus, otherwise, etc.) or a transition (e.g., in fact, for example, additionally, on the other hand, etc.):

The status of the shooter (whether they lived or died in the attack) was a significant predictor of a case receiving any coverage when considering the total victim count; however, when disaggregating between fatalities and injuries, this effect did not hold.

Finally, semicolons are used to join elements of a series that already are separated by a comma, such as with a series of locations:

Acts of domestic terrorism have occurred in cities across the nation, including Boston, Massachusetts; Atlanta, Georgia; New York City, New York; Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; and Washington, D.C.

Conversely, colons are used when joining two independent clauses while emphasizing the second:

The present study was guided by the question: How is the discourse on the phenomenon of mass shootings as a social problem constructed in the media?

Furthermore, colons may be used after an independent clause when followed by a list or quotation, such as in the following examples:

George had a list of conditions to comply with for parole: anger management, submitting to random drug testing, and paying restitution to his victims.

NOTE: In the above example, one should not use a semicolon in lieu of the colon after "parole."

Even when an actual number is reported, as in the following passage, it may be ambiguous: "Thirty-thousand Americans are killed by guns every year – on the job, walking to school, at the shopping mall" ("Lock and load," 2008).

Colons also may be used in writing out time (separating the minutes from the hour; e.g., 9:35) as needed.

In sum, when you want to establish a list of items, use a colon preceding the list. If you want to separate two similar but distinct thoughts, use a semicolon or opt to break up the thoughts into two separate sentences.

Words That Sound the Same

Homophones, or words that sound alike but are spelled differently, can create confusion when trying to convey ideas through writing. These misuses of common words can detract from the overall quality of the paper, and should be addressed accordingly. The following is a list of commonly misused homophones along with their definitions and examples:

Words	Definitions	Examples
Accept Except	(v) To receive or agree (p) All but, other than	I was happy to accept the award on her behalf. Everyone went on the trip except Joan.
Advise Advice	(v) To recommend or suggest (n) An opinion or suggestion	I advise you to be careful out there. Can I get your advice about something?
Affect Effect	(v) To influence (n) Result or consequence	Will studying affect your grade? Will studying have an effect on your grade?
Aloud Allowed	(av) Something said out loud (v) Something permitted	We read the textbook aloud. No dogs are allowed on campus.
Are Our	(v) To be (aj) Plural possessive of we	We are going to clas. This is our class.
Bare Bear	(aj) Lack of adornment (n) A large mammal	We have the right to bare arms. There is a bear roaming the neighborhood.
Definitely Defiantly	(av) Without a doubt (av) Showing resistance	I definitely want to attend that event. He acted defiantly toward the officer.
Ensure Insure	(v) To guarantee (v) To protect or secure	I want to ensure I graduate on time. I need to insure my car before I drive it.
Hear Here	(v) To listen (av) Location	I can hear the sounds of bars slamming. The bars are here in the prison.
Its It's	(aj) Possessive form of it (c) Contraction for it is or it has	The crime had lost its appeal. It's time to head to court.
Lead Led	(n) A metallic substance (v) Past tense of guide or direct	The victim was wearing lead shoes. The dog led us to the victim.
Loose Lose	(a) Not securely fastened (v) To misplace or not win	The handcuffs were loose on the suspect. How did you lose that piece of evidence?

Passed Past	(v) Past tense of pass (a) Beyond a time or place	Time has passed since the crime took place. The scene is just past the next intersection.
Than Then	(j) Used in comparison (av) Denoting of time	Steve had more convictions than Fred. She was shorter then.
Their There They're	(aj) Possessive adjective (aj) A place (c) Contraction for they are	They visited their parents. I went over there to see them. They're doing the laundry.
To Too Two	(p) First part of a verb (av) Very, also (n) The number	He wanted to commit a robbery. There are too many people in prison. She had two prior convictions.
We're Were Where	(c) Contraction for we are (v) Past tense of to be (n) Location	We're glad to help with the event. We were at the event to help. Where is the event going to be held?
Weather Whether	(n) State of the atmosphere (j) Choice between alternatives	The weather outside is sunny today. I will go visit her whether it is sunny or not.
Who's Whose	(c) Contraction for who is (aj) Possessive form of who	Who's going with me on the field trip? Whose watch is this?
Your You're	(aj) Possessive form of you (c) Contraction for you are	Your car needs more gas in it. You're going to the gas station.

Key: (aj) adjective; (av) adverb; (c) contraction; (j) conjunction; (n) noun; (p) proposition; (v) verb

Capitalization

Knowing when to capitalize words is important as there are certain phrases that should be emphasized in writing. The following are instances subject to capitalization in writing:

- The first word of a sentence
- Proper nouns (e.g., names of people, organizations, places, and sometimes things)
 - Antonin Scalia; The United States Supreme Court; Washington, D.C.; Department of Justice; The White House

- When referencing the Constitution as a document, it should be capitalized; it is not when using it as an adjective for the amendments or rights
 - The Constitution is a living document that grants U.S. citizens their rights.
 - The right to privacy is inferred through various other constitutional guarantees.

- Constitutional amendments always are capitalized when referring to a specific amendment; when generally talking about amendments, they are not capitalized
 - The Fourth Amendment discusses unreasonable search and seizure.
 - The first ten amendments are known as the Bill of Rights.

- Family relationships (when used as a proper noun but not otherwise)
 - Norman Bates lives with Mother in the main house.
 - Norman Bates runs the motel with his mother.

- Titles preceding names, but not following them
 - Governor Andrew Cuomo passed legislation giving free tuition for college.
 - Andrew Cuomo is the governor of New York.

- Directions that are names (when used as regions of the country) but not as compass directions
 - New York is situated in the Northeast.
 - Syracuse is south of Oswego.

- The first word in a sentence that is a direct quote

- Members of national, political, racial, or ethnic groups
 - African-Americans; Democrats; Anti-Semites; Al Qaeda; Chinese

Additional Helpful APA Rules

Beyond the mechanical issues previously discussed, there are several general APA rules that also should be incorporated when writing one's research paper. The following list includes key points, but is not exhaustive in nature. For full specifications related to APA, students should consult the most recent edition of the style manual.

Numbers

- Numbers that are less than 10 should be written out in words (e.g., five).
- If 10 or greater, they should be written out in Arabic numerals (e.g., 74).
- If beginning a sentence with a number, however, the number should always be written out in words (e.g., Fifty people confirmed their attendance at the event.).
- When discussing percentages, these should always be written in Arabic numerals and followed by the percent sign (e.g., 63%).

Quotes

- As noted, direct quotes used within a sentence should always be in quotation marks.
- If, however, the quote itself is more than 40 words, a block quote should be used, as in this example:

More specifically, moral panics are best described as:

A condition, episode, person or group of persons emerges to become defined as a threat to societal values and interests; its nature is presented in a stylized and stereotypical fashion by the mass media; the moral barricades are manned by editors, bishops, politicians, and other right-thinking people; socially accredited experts pronounce their diagnoses and solutions; ways of coping are evolved or (more often) resorted to; the condition then disappears, submerges, or deteriorates and becomes more visible. (Cohen, 1972, p. 9)

Wording

- Words like “data” and “media” are plural. Any corresponding verbs should then reflect that (e.g., data are; media do).
- “That” refers to inanimate objects. “Who” refers to a person. They should not be used interchangeably.

Finding Scholarly Sources

As an academic writer, you will be basing your paper on scholarly sources – mainly that of secondary research. Using secondary research involves finding other studies to synthesize together into a coherent discussion of the topic. Primary research, on the other hand, is that which you have conducted on your own (e.g., performing your own experiment and reporting the results). Accordingly, it is important to know what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable sources for the purpose of using scholarly literature.

Acceptable Sources

The most common form of acceptable source is a peer-reviewed journal article. These articles, typically found in academic journals, have been through a rigorous review process where experts in the field discern the merit of the methodology, soundness of the findings, and legitimacy of the overall discussion of each. By using these types of sources, you can ensure that you are presenting the highest quality of work in your own research.

Another form of source is a scholarly book. These resources often are topic specific and are printed by an academic press. These sources also are peer-reviewed and go through an extremely rigorous process before being accepted for publication.

Other acceptable resources may include (but not be limited to):

- Government-sponsored research reports
- Law review articles
- White papers
- Textbooks
- Discipline-specific encyclopedias

To ensure a specific source is acceptable for the specific project you are working on, be sure to check with your professor before using.

Unacceptable Sources

There are certain sources that should not be used in academic writing. These sources may provide good insight in helping you to familiarize with your topic, but should never be cited within your academic work. This includes (but is not limited to):

- Magazines
- Newspapers

- Trade journals
- Web sources (e.g., personal blogs, RSS feeds, online versions of newspapers or other sources)
- Wikipedia
- Other non-discipline specific encyclopedias
- CQ Researcher

Where To Find Sources

The Penfield Library website is a great starting point for various types of searches, including journals, research databases (e.g., PAIS, Social Sciences Abstracts, Criminal Justice Abstracts, Westlaw), and the library catalog. Each can be searched with the box labeled “peer reviewed” checked to help you ensure you are finding scholarly materials.

Another great starting point is Google Scholar. This website functions similar to the main Google search engine with a specific focus on scholarly sources. You can perform keyword searches, starting from broad and working towards more narrow parameters, to help you find exactly what you are looking for. In some instances, you will be able to directly access a document from the search results. In other cases, you only may be able to locate the citation information and will subsequently need to retrieve using the Penfield Library journal database or Interlibrary Loan if the journal is not cataloged at SUNY Oswego.

Writing Tips

Getting Started

In some instances, your professor will require you to submit an outline for your paper. Even if they do not require this, preparing an outline can be helpful in organizing your ideas before you get started in writing. Sources should be organized into major sections, also referred to as topical areas. Relevant points can be listed from each article in the respective sections, which will help you to synthesize the material later in the writing process.

When Writing

Once you are ready to write, sit down with your outline and articles / scholarly sources and just focus on writing. Do not try and edit as you go as it will make the process more difficult – this can be done later once you have the material in place (once you have a draft).

Organizing Your Paper

Your paper should be comprised of several key sections:

- *Introduction*
Your introduction is the first chance your reader has to learn about the topic you will be writing about. Accordingly, the introduction should not only include an overview of the topic, but also must include a clear and concise thesis statement that will let the reader know exactly what the paper is going to address. Think of the introduction as a road map that will let your reader know the journey you will take through the rest of the paper.
- *Discussion*
Your discussion is where the bulk of the paper will be written. Here, you will have at least three (3) different sections related to your content. There should be one idea or main focus per section, and each section should be a synthesized “clump” of the literature that relates to that specific topic. Each section should begin with a topic sentence to let the reader know what to expect and should end with a sentence that transitions to the next section.
- *Conclusion*
The conclusion is the wrap-up of the paper. Here, you will want to show the reader how you have accomplished laying out your research in support of the initial thesis statement while wrapping the paper up with key takeaways, such as policy implications or directions for future research.

Understanding APA Citations

Any time you are incorporating information into your paper that is not your own original thought or research, you must give credit where credit is due in the form of a citation. Citations are used not only to give credit to the original author of the work, but also to provide the reader with a valuable source to refer back to if they would like to read more than what you are briefly offering in your paper. This section of the guide will discuss citation basis in terms of where they are used and how they should be formatted. For additional information, consult the Purdue Owl's APA site or the APA Style Guide Manual (see the resources list at the end of this document).

In-Text Citations

As noted earlier, direct quotes – those that use another author's words verbatim – should be kept at a minimum. In lieu of stringing together a bunch of direct quotes, the use of indirect quotes or paraphrased information (synthesizing and summarizing the author's main argument or findings) is more common in academic writing. In either instance, an in-text citation must be included to give credit and reference to the original work. Research papers consistently will have citations throughout the whole paper. At a minimum, each paragraph should have at least one citation; in some instances, each sentence may feature one or more citations.

The following are examples of how to properly cite material in-text. Examples are provided with citations at the beginning of the sentence, as well as with full citations at the.

Single author

Carnevale (2006) has indicated that students are checking their email accounts less often than they used to, which could lead to delayed reading of emergency messages.

OR

Students are checking their email accounts less often than they used to, which could lead to delayed reading of emergency messages (Carnevale, 2006).

Two authors

Cohen and Felson (1979) suggest that capable guardianship is needed to disrupt the convergence of a motivated offender and suitable target.

OR

Capable guardianship is needed to disrupt the convergence of a motivated offender and suitable target (Cohen & Felson, 1979).

NOTE: When starting with the authors names, "and" is used as a separator. In the parenthetical citation at the end, "&" is used.

Three or more authors

Sorenson, Manz, and Berk (1998) suggest that one of the most salient predictors of coverage of a homicide is whether or not it involved a “worthy victim.”

OR

One of the most salient predictors of coverage of a homicide is whether or not it involved a “worthy victim” (Sorenson, Manz, & Berk, 1998).

NOTE: All three authors would be listed as above in the first citation. In subsequent citations, the parenthetical reference would read (Sorenson et al., 1998). If there are six or more authors on the piece, do not list them all the first time – jump to using et al. from the first citation. If referencing all at the beginning of the sentence, you can say Sorenson and colleagues to replace using et al. in the sentence itself.

Multiple citations to support a single point

If felon disenfranchisement and voter identification laws disproportionately limit the suffrage rights of non-whites, these citizens would be subjected undemocratically to a criminal justice system they largely disagree with, due to their inability to vote for state and national politicians (Magleby et al., 2014; Marion, 2011; Siegel, 2011).

NOTE: When linking together multiple citations to support a given point, they should be listed alphabetically by the first author’s last name.

Direct quote

Bursik and Grasmick (1993) posit that a neighborhood where “the area is becoming characterized by a growing number of signs of disorder and incivility (such as loitering groups of unsupervised teenagers, vandalism, graffiti, abandoned buildings, and public drug and alcohol use)” exhibits reduced informal social control and thus an increase in fear and a decrease in cooperation among residents (p. 101).

OR

A neighborhood where “the area is becoming characterized by a growing number of signs of disorder and incivility (such as loitering groups of unsupervised teenagers, vandalism, graffiti, abandoned buildings, and public drug and alcohol use)” exhibits reduced informal social control and thus an increase in fear and a decrease in cooperation among residents (Bursik & Grasmick, 1993, p. 101).

NOTE: When starting with the authors names, “and” is used as a separator. In the parenthetical citation at the end, “&” is used.

If the quote itself is 40 or more words, then the author should use a block quote:

Consequently, the Supreme Court decided to determine whether Rees had the

capacity to appreciate his position and make a rational choice with respect to continuing or abandoning further litigation or on the other hand whether he [was] suffering from a mental disease, disorder, or defect which may substantially affect his capacity in the premises. (*Rees v. Peyton*, 1966, p. 314)

NOTE: In the above example, this is a court case, but the case name would be substituted for the author's name if the quote came from an article rather than a case file. The block quote is always single spaced and indented, and no quotation marks are used.

References Page

At the end of each paper, you should include a references page (not bibliography or works cited) that provides the full citations for all resources used in the paper. The references page should be headed with the word "References" (no quotation marks) in the following format: centered, unbolded, and the initial letter capitalized. Citations should then be listed alphabetically by the first author's last name and formatted according to APA guidelines.

Generally, most references will contain the same general material: author(s)' names, publication date, title, and information for the publisher or source more generally to retrieve the source. You should always create your own citations, as opposed to using a citation generator, to ensure that they are 100% correct.

The following are examples of several key types of sources you may use in your paper. This list is not exhaustive but will reflect the most common sources. Additional citation formatting information can be found in the APA style manual or on the Purdue Owl's website.

Peer-Reviewed Journal Article

Author, A. A., Author, B. B., & Author, C. C. (Year). Title of article. *Title of Periodical*, volume number(issue number), page range.

Sampson, R. J., Morenoff, J. D., & Earles, F. (1999). Beyond social capital: Spatial dynamics of collective efficacy for children. *American Sociological Review*, 64(5), 633-660.

NOTE: In certain instances, such as an annual journal, there will not be an issue number. In that case, it is acceptable to omit this information. Additionally, DOI number is not included unless the article is ahead of print (meaning that it has been accepted by the journal and is published online but has not yet been assigned a volume and issue number and page range). In this instance, substitute the DOI number for the latter information.

Book

Author, A. A. (Year). *Title of book: Subtitle also capitalized if present*. Location: Publisher.

Graber, D.A. (1980). *Crime news and the public*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Chapter in an Edited Book

Author, A. A., & Author, B. B. (Year). Title of chapter. In A. A. Editor & B. B. Editor (Eds.), *Title of book* (page range of chapter). Location: Publisher.

Muschert, G. W., & Larkin, R. W. (2007). The Columbine High School shootings. In S. Chermak & F. Y. Bailey (Eds.), *Crimes and trials of the century* (pp. 253-266). Westport, CT: Praeger.

Government Report

Author(s) or Agency. (Year). *Report title* (Publication number of available). Location: Printing Agency.

U.S. Department of Defense. (2013). *Internal review of the Washington Navy Yard shooting: A report to the Secretary of Defense*. Washington, D.C.: Secretary of Defense for Intelligence.

Vossekuil, B., Fein, R.A., Reddy, M., Borum, R., & Modzeleski, W. (2002). *The final report and findings of the Safe School Initiative: Implications for the prevention of school attacks in the United States*. Washington, D.C.: United States Secret Service and United States Department of Education.

Reports also may be available online, in which case, a link also should be provided:

Mink, T. (2006). *Sheriff Ted Mink's statement regarding Columbine tapes*. Golden, CO: Jefferson County Sheriff's Office. Retrieved from http://www.co.jefferson.co.us/jeffco/news_uploads/sheriff_statement_061906.pdf

Virginia Tech Review Panel. (2007). *Mass shootings at Virginia Tech April 16, 2007: Report of the review panel*. Arlington, VA: Governor's Office of the Commonwealth of Virginia. Retrieved from <http://www.governor.virginia.gov/TempContent/techpanelreport.cfm>

Supreme Court Case

Plaintiff v. Defendant, Case Citation (Decision Year).

Roper v. Simmons, 543 U.S. 551 (2005).

Website

Agency. (Year, Month and Day if available). *Title of webpage*. Retrieved from URL

U.S. Department of Justice. Federal Bureau of Investigation. (2012). *Crime in the United States, 2011: Annual Uniform Crime Report*. Retrieved from <http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s/2011/crime-in-the-u.s.-2011/index-page>

With respect to the references page, there are also a few common errors that are important to be mindful of when crafting your citations:

- All APA citations should be double spaced. There should not be an extra line break between sources.
- When listing the authors' first and middle initials, always include a space between. Only the authors' last names should be written out; initials should be used for the first and middle names.
- Author names should be separated by "&" not "and."
- All publication names should be in sentence case, meaning the first word of each segment (pre- and post-colon) should be capitalized. All other words should be in lowercase, unless a proper noun (e.g., a name or specific location).
- Journal titles, no matter how long, should never be abbreviated. They should appear in italics, as should the volume number. The issue number of the journal is not in italics but does appear in parentheses.
- All sources must include a publication date. Even online sources will generally have a date if you scroll down to the bottom of the page. If one absolutely cannot be found, substitute n.d. (no date) in place of the year.
- No colons should be used in website references (e.g., after "Retrieved from").

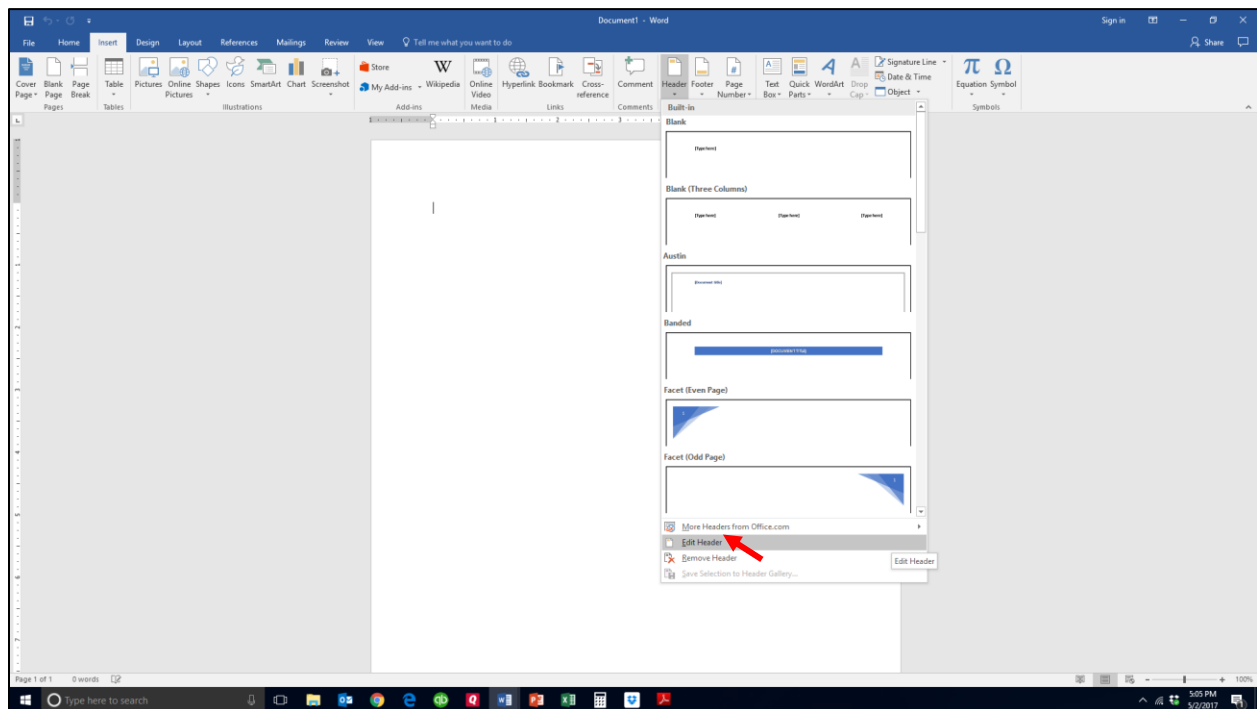
Formatting Your Paper

There are several different aspects of formatting your paper that require a key attention to detail and a little computer magic. Oftentimes, students will try and make these insertions or formatting changes manually, which leads them to be done so incorrectly. This portion of the guide will show you step-by-step instructions on how to properly format key components of your document.

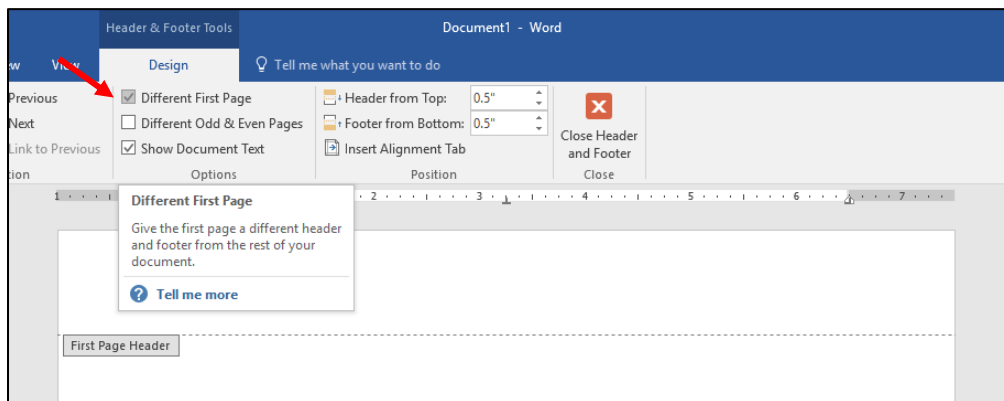
Running Headers

Each document should be formatted with running headers, which is an abbreviated version of your paper title (no more than 50 characters including spaces) and page numbers. The first page, per APA guidelines, denotes the running head title, and thereby is different than the remaining pages of the paper.

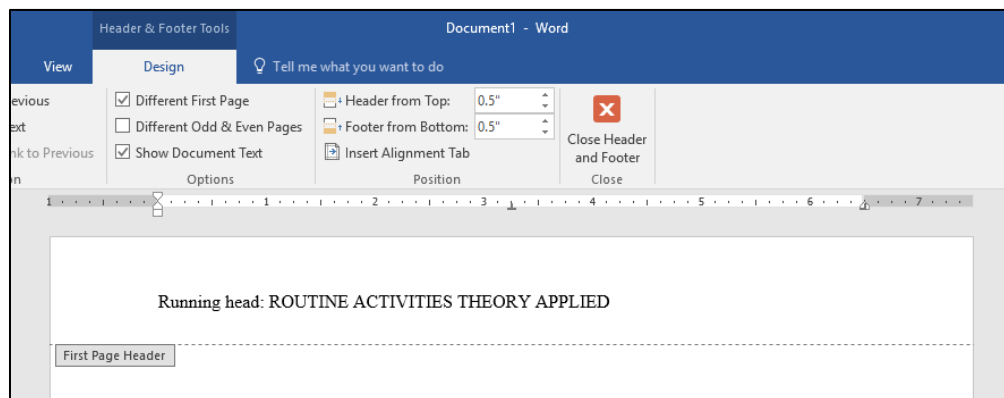
Step 1: Start with a blank document, click on the INSERT tab, then drop down the menu for HEADER and select EDIT HEADER. This will open your header section. Do not choose any of the pre-formatted options as they will not be compliant with the APA style guide.



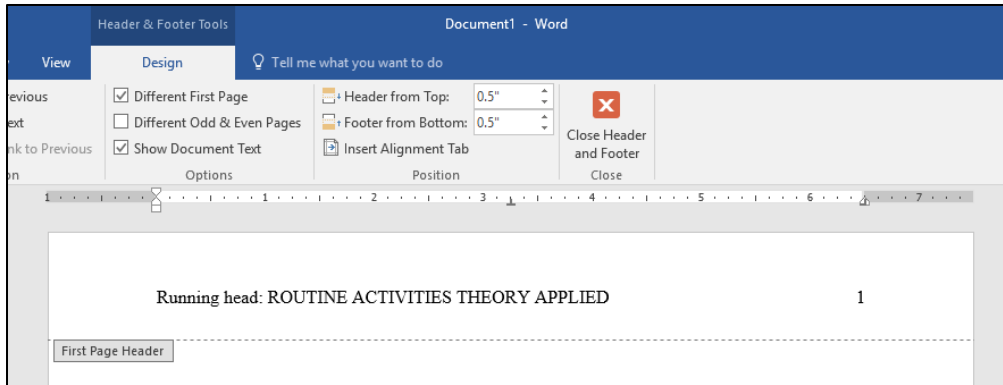
Step 2: Under the design box, be sure to select DIFFERENT FIRST PAGE so that you can insert the Running Head label as required.



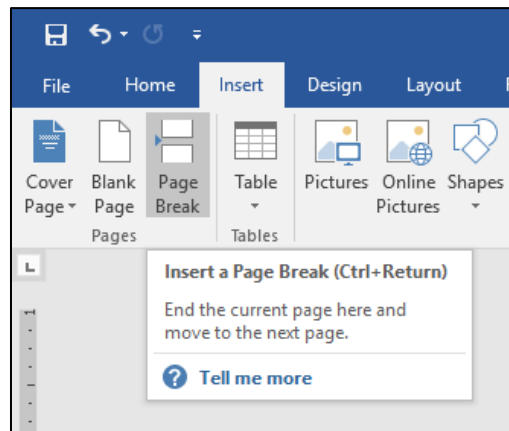
Step 3: Enter your title in all capital letters following the words Running Head and a colon. Again, your actual running head title is a shortened version of the paper title itself. Be sure to change the title to the correct font and size required by the paper assignment before continuing.



Step 4: Once you have the title entered, you need to add page numbers. Make sure that your cursor is at the end of the running head title. Then, on the left-hand side of the menu, drop down the menu that says PAGE NUMBER. Select CURRENT POSITION and then PLAIN NUMBER (the first selection) from the expanded menu. This will insert your page number directly after your running head. Next, move your cursor in between the title and the page number and hit your tab key one time. This will move your page number to flush right of the header against the margin. Once done, your header for the first page is now formatted. Before closing, make sure to highlight the enter running header, including page number, and copy (you can do this by hitting CONTROL + C on your keyboard). Then, click on the button that says CLOSE HEADER AND FOOTER.



Step 5: Next, you will need to add a blank page so you can set up your header for your subsequent pages. Click on the INSERT tab, and then select PAGE BREAK. This will insert a second page into your document.



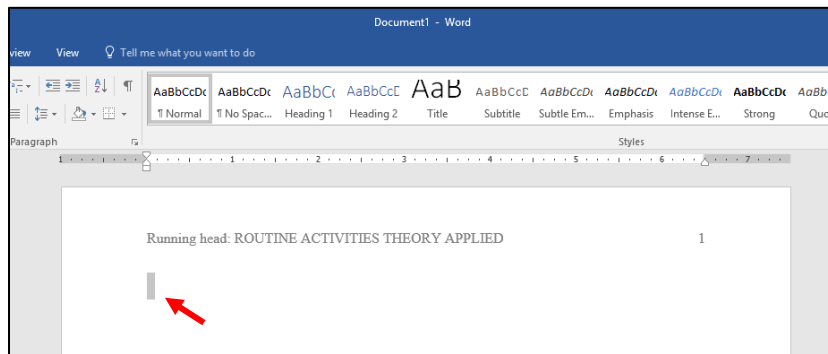
Step 6: On the page you have now created, repeat Step 1 to open the header. Once it is open, you can paste the original header you copied from the first page (the shortcut code to paste is CONTROL + V). This will now insert the original header onto Page 2 of your file. Once it is pasted, delete the words Running Head, leaving just your shortened title and page number (which should be 2). You may need to insert an extra tab between the title and page number to push the page number back to the flush right position. This will now automatically populate on all subsequent pages. You can now close the header and footer and begin working on your paper. The first page will serve as your title page, and you will begin your actual paper discussion on Page 2 (or Page 3, if you choose to include an abstract).



Removing Extra Line Breaks

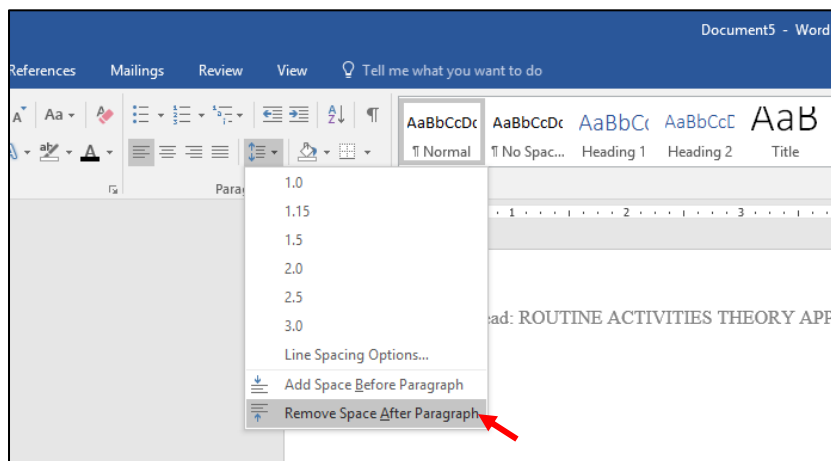
When beginning a new document, there is extra spacing built in to your default settings. In order to provide an accurate measure of length of your work, this extra spacing should be removed. This can be done at any stage of the process (either before you start writing or once the work is complete), but it should be done prior to submission.

To remove the extra line spacing, position your cursor anywhere in the document and select all text (even if it is blank, there still will be spaces). The shortcut for this is CONTROL + A. Everything that is available to be edited will now be highlighted in light gray.



Once everything is selected, drop down the line spacing menu under PARAGAPH and select REMOVE SPACE AFTER PARAGRAPH. This will now remove all extra spacing, even when you set your line spacing to double (which is standard).

Tip: If you do this before you start writing, it is a good idea to run through again after you are finished to ensure your formatting was not compromised in any way.



Headings and Subheadings

Headings and subheadings are a great way to add organization to your paper and improve the overall flow between topics. Accordingly, they must be formatted consistently with APA guidelines. The following table shows the different levels and formatting for headings.

Level	Format
1	Centered, Boldface, Uppercase and Lowercase Headings
2	Left-aligned, Boldface, Uppercase and Lowercase Heading
3	Indented (using tab), boldface, lowercase heading with a period. Begin body text after the period.
4	<i>Indented (using tab), boldface, italicized, lowercase heading with a period.</i> Begin body text after the period.
5	<i>Indented (using tab), italicized, lowercase heading with a period.</i> Begin body text after the period.

Level 1 headings are typically reserved for main sections of the paper, such as the introduction (which often is not labeled), literature review, methodology, results / findings, discussion, and conclusion. Headings that are Levels 2 through 5 are reserved for organizing within these broader sections. For example, in discussing the methodology, the author may choose to talk about their sample, survey instrument, and data collection procedures. Each of these could have a Level 2 subheading beneath Methods (Level 1). From there, specifics within each of these categories could be organized with a Level 3 subheading, and so forth.

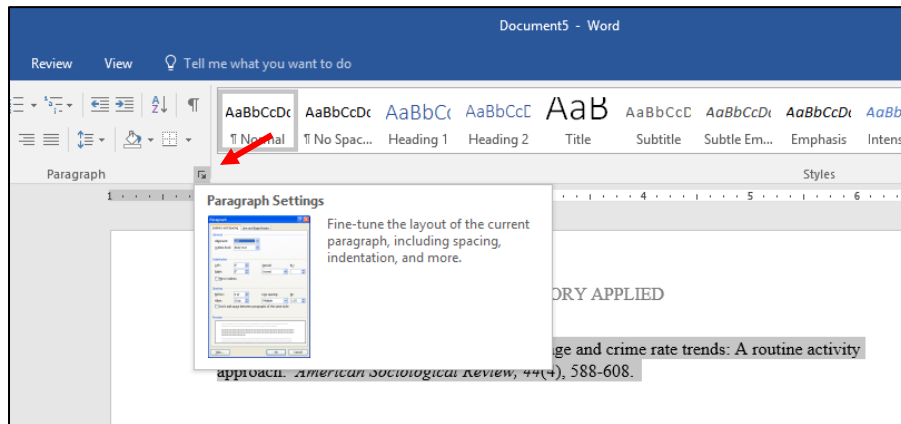
Hanging Indents for Citations

APA-formatted citations involve a special type of indent known as a “hanging indent.” This refers to the idea that the first line of the citation is flush to the left margin and any additional lines thereafter are indented or “hanging.” Oftentimes, students will try and recreate this manually, which inevitably messes up the overall formatting of the citation. This also can create double work with reformatting the citation during the editing process. The following steps will ensure all citations are formatted correctly each and every time.

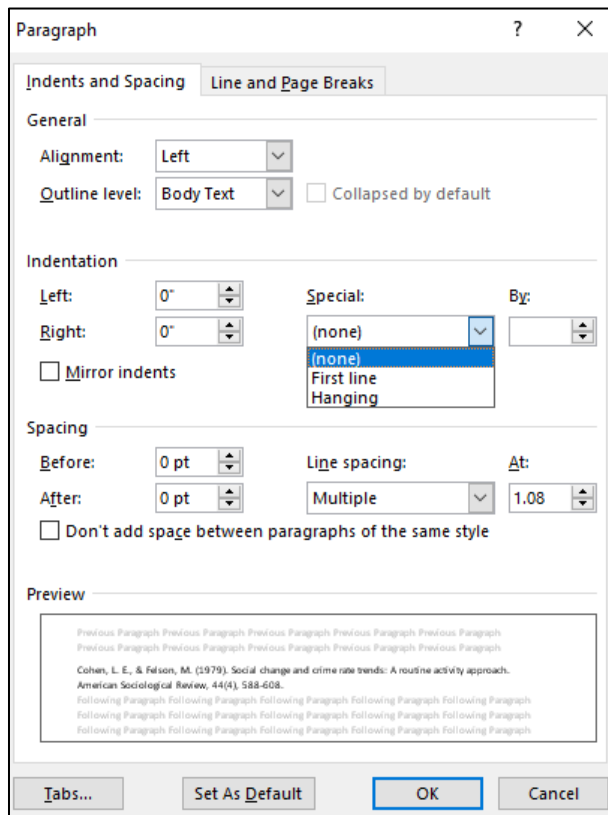
Step 1: Begin with a citation that is typed out and includes all required components per APA.

Cohen, L. E., & Felson, M. (1979). Social change and crime rate trends: A routine activity approach. *American Sociological Review*, 44(4), 588-608.

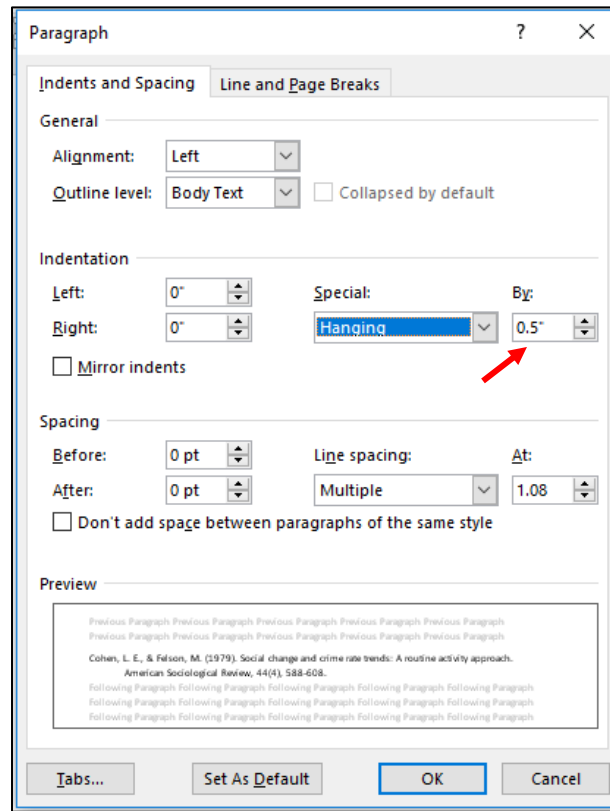
Step 2: Highlight the citation and click on the menu PARAGRAPH SETTINGS. To get the menu, you can click on the little arrow at the bottom right corner of the PARAGRAPH box.



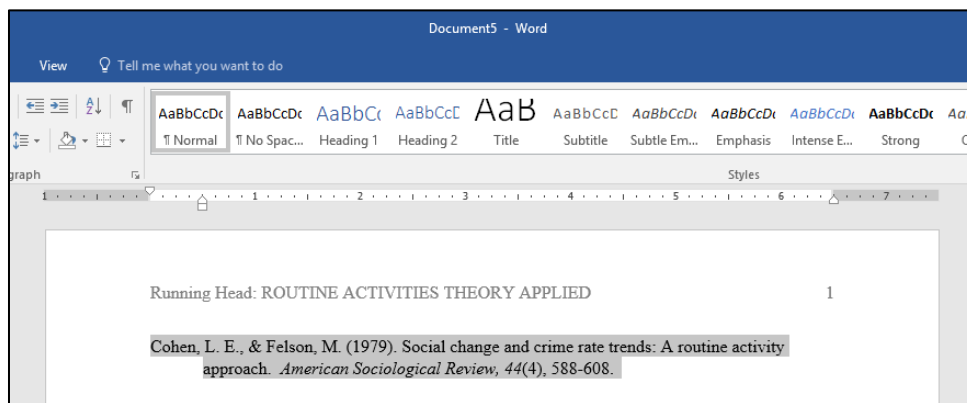
Step 3: Under the INDENTATION section, drop down the menu under SPECIAL and select HANGING.



Step 4: Confirm the settings – the hanging indent should be by 0.5”.



Step 5: Click OK and review your citation. It should now have the hanging indent built in.



Tip: If you do this before you start writing, make sure you hit enter (or start at the beginning of the citation and enter there to drop down the existing citation) so that you can ensure all sources are formatted as you write them. Alternately, you can type them as normal, SELECT ALL, and then follow Steps 2 through 5.

Proofreading Your Paper

Proofreading your paper is the final stage before submission and the time when you will edit with a critical eye to ensure all of the rules in this document have been followed and your paper is in the best form possible for submission. The following tips are designed to help facilitate your proofreading process:

- Do not proofread as soon as you are done writing. Take some time away from the paper so that you are able to edit it with fresh eyes.
- Proofread a hard copy of the paper as opposed to reviewing it on the computer screen. The change in format also will help you catch more errors and will make it easier to notate issues as you go.
- Read the paper out loud to yourself. As noted earlier, you will catch a lot more issues with your ear than with your eye, especially as you hear things that do not sound correct.
- Focus on a small section at a time, but do not correct as you go line by line. Instead, make sure that you are notating things that need your attention, but do not attempt to fix them in the initial readthrough. Read through, notating all errors, and then go back and attempt to fix them.
- Do not wait until the last minute to edit. When you feel rushed, your editing will suffer. Be sure to leave yourself enough time to go back and properly read through the paper, edit it, and then let it sit and review again.

Before You Submit

Before you submit your paper, it is a good idea to go through the following checklist to ensure that you are submitting the best possible version.

- Your paper includes a title page with all required information.
- You have included an APA-formatted running header with page numbers.
- Your paper is all in a standard 12-point Times New Roman font. There is no highlighting, no extra spacing, or other formatting errors.
- Your paper is organized into clear topical sections with the appropriate headings and subheadings to improve organization.
- Each paragraph is indented at the first line. To accomplish this, use the TAB key. Do not manually space your first line.
- All information that is not your own original work is cited with the proper APA in-text citation(s).
- You have a complete references page at the end of the paper with APA formatted citations. Any work that appears in the paper is referenced on this list, and vice-versa.
- Be sure to run both your spellcheck and grammar checker. Microsoft Word will notate issues as you write – words that potentially are misspelled will be underlined in red, while those issues that arise with grammar will be underlined in blue. Right-click on these errors for correction suggestions and make sure these are addressed throughout.
- Ensure that your paper is in the correct format with your name in the file name, as well as on your paper.

Writing Resources

The following is a list of references that will help guide you through your academic writing process. Additional sources can be found by working with the Penfield Library staff or consulting with your professor(s).

University Resources

- Penfield Library Website
<https://www.oswego.edu/library/>
- Penfield Library Public Justice Research Guide
<http://libraryguides.oswego.edu/publicjustice>
- SUNY Oswego Writing Center
<http://www.oswego.edu/academics/support/OLS/writing.html>

APA Resources

- The Purdue Owl is the go-to academic source for things APA. You can access their main page for APA here: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>. From there, you can access a host of additional pages, including information on in-text citations, references formatting, headings, and more.
- For all things APA, you can check out their direct site here: <http://www.apastyle.org/>.

Other Writing Resources

- Hamilton College's Writing Resources Lab
<https://www.hamilton.edu/academics/centers/writing/writing-resources>
- Harvard University's Strategies for Essay Writing
<http://writingcenter.fas.harvard.edu/pages/strategies-essay-writing>
- Sacramento State's Guide to Writing an Undergraduate Research Paper
http://www.csus.edu/wac/wac/students/research_guide.html
- Temple University Law School's Legal Research Tips
<http://www.temple.edu/lawschool/dpost/guidelines.html>
- The Elements of Style (an abridged version of a great resource on writing mechanics)
<http://www.bartleby.com/141/index.html>
- University of Wisconsin-Madison's Writing Center (includes information on multiple types of writing, including job applications)
<http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/Assignments.html>