**Document Format:** Margins are 1 in. (2.54 cm) on all sides.

All text in the document should be double-spaced.

The font is 12-point Times New Roman. Other choices are 11-point Arial and 11-point Calibri.

The title page is page 1.

There is no running head for learner assignments. (See [Academic Writer: Publication Manual §§ 2.1–2.24](about:blank) for paper requirements.)

**Full Title of Your Paper**

Learner’s Full Name (no credentials)

School of Nursing and Health Sciences, Capella University

Course Number: Course Name

Instructor’s Name

Month, Year

# Abstract

An abstract is useful in professional papers, but not always in learner assignments. **In fact, unless you are instructed by your faculty or in the course syllabus, do not expect to use abstracts very often at Capella. If you are submitting for publication, remember to check with the journal or professional organization about their criteria for an abstract.** The abstract tells your reader about the article, is brief, and stands alone, so no citations are included. The format for an abstract is a single paragraph (not indented on the first line) that follows the title page and is less than 250 words in length. A structured abstract will have a single paragraph without indentation but having labels (e.g., Objective, Method, Results, and Conclusions) on the same line as the text and bold. For published works, the publishing organization will give you guidance on these. However, for student papers, no abstract is needed unless the faculty request one or the assignment requires it. Remember, no citations.

*Keywords:* include keywords in the abstract—they should be labeled like this, with the words all in lowercase and separated by commas. Only the first line is indented, like a regular paragraph. No period at the end.

# APA Style Seventh Edition Paper Template: A Resource for Academic Writing

American Psychological Association (APA) style is one of the most popular methods used to cite sources in the social sciences, but it is not the only one. When writing papers in the programs offered at Capella University, you will likely use APA style. This document serves as an APA style resource for the seventh edition guidelines, containing valuable information that you can use when writing academic papers. For more information on APA style, refer to the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, also referred to as the APA manual (American Psychological Association, 2020b).

The first section of this paper shows how an introduction effectively introduces the reader to the topic of the paper. In APA style, an introduction never gets a heading. For example, this section did not begin with a heading titled “Introduction,” unlike the following section, which is titled “Writing an Effective Introduction.” The following section will explain in greater detail a model that can be used to effectively write an introduction in an academic paper. The remaining sections of the paper will continue to address APA style and effective writing concepts, including section headings, organizing information, the conclusion, and the reference list.

# Writing an Effective Introduction

An effective introduction often consists of four main components, including (a) the position statement, thesis, or hypothesis, which describes the author’s main position; (b) the purpose, which outlines the objective of the paper; (c) the background, which is general information needed to understand the content of the paper; and (d) the approach, which is the process or methodology the author uses to achieve the purpose of the paper. This information will help readers understand what will be discussed in the paper. It can also serve as a tool to grab the reader’s attention. Authors may choose to briefly reference sources that will be identified later in the paper as in this example (American Psychological Association, 2020a; American Psychological Association, 2020b). The Writing Center has developed the acronym POETS to help describe the proper writing style for submissions. POETS is the acronym for *purpose*, *organization*, *evidence*, *tone*, and *sentence structure* (Capella Writing Center, n.d.). There will be more on this later.

In an introduction, the writer will often present something of interest to capture the reader’s attention and introduce the issue. Adding an obvious statement of purpose helps the reader know what to expect, while helping the writer to focus and stay on task. For example, this paper will address several components necessary to effectively write an academic paper, including how to write an introduction, how to write effective paragraphs, and how to effectively use APA style.

# Level 1 Section Heading Is Centered, Bold, and Title Case

Using section headings can be an effective method of organizing an academic paper. Section headings are not required according to APA style; however, they can significantly improve the quality of a paper by helping both the reader and the author, as will soon be discussed.

## Level 2 Section Heading Is Aligned Left, Bold, and Title Case

The heading style recommended by APA consists of five levels (APA, 2020b, pp. 47–48). This document contains multiple levels to demonstrate how headings are structured according to APA style. Immediately before the previous paragraph, a Level 1 section heading was used. That section heading describes how a Level 1 heading should be written, which is centered, bold, and using uppercase and lowercase letters (also referred to as title case). For another example, see the section heading “Writing an Effective Introduction” on page 3 of this document. The heading is centered and bold and uses uppercase and lowercase letters. If used properly, section headings can significantly contribute to the quality of a paper by helping the reader, who wants to understand the information in the document, and the author, who desires to effectively describe it.

### Section Heading Purposes

Section Headings Help the Reader. Section headings serve multiple purposes, including helping the reader understand what is being addressed in each section, maintain an interest in the paper, and choose what they want to read. For example, if the reader of this document wants to learn more about writing an effective introduction, the previous section heading clearly states that is where information can be found. When subtopics are needed to explain concepts in greater detail, different levels of headings are used according to APA style.

Section Headings Help the Author. Section headings not only help the reader; they also help the author organize the document during the writing process. Section headings can be used to arrange topics in a logical order, and they can help an author manage the length of the paper. In addition to an effective introduction and the use of section headings, each paragraph of an academic paper can be written in a manner that helps the reader stay engaged.

Section Headings Can Demonstrate Fine Detail. Short papers and assignments may not require or need a Level 5 heading, but these will be indented, bold, italic, and title case and end with a period. Note the text starts on the line at the end of the heading following the period.

# How to Write Effective Paragraphs

Capella University’s Writing Center (n.d.) has adopted a new set of writing standards to assist learners in their goals to improve their scholarly writing. It is based on five skills known by the mnemonic POETS. In other words, a well-developed Capella paper will demonstrate the following standards. The paper will have a clear **purpose** statement, be logically **organized**, utilize current and appropriate **evidence** that is properly cited, maintain a scholarly **tone**, and demonstrate proper grammar and writing mechanics in the **sentence structure** (Capella Writing Center, n.d.). Academic writing is sometimes considered dry and boring. A learning experience may need that formula to encourage learning in different ways as the learner moves from passive learner to active scholar. This growth, according to Gilmore et al. (2019), requires the writer to not only think but also to write differently.

# Bias-Free Language

In the seventh edition of the APA manual, another focus is on eliminating bias in language in order to provide a more inclusive tone in scholarly writing. While long considered a grammar issue, it is acceptable in APA to utilize *they* as a singular pronoun (APA, 2020b). In fact, there is an entire chapter of the manual dedicated to ways to reduce bias in scholarly writing. It is important to use an appropriate level of specificity in descriptions and use sensitivity with the use of labels. Other sections include guidelines on age, disability, gender, race and ethnicity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, and participation in research. Be aware of *intersectionality*, a term used to describe a person based on their identified multiple identities, interconnectivity, social context, power relations, complexity, social justice, and inequalities that can result in oppression (Cole, 2019; Hopkins, 2017).

# Considering Direct Quotations

Another important point to consider is the use of direct quotations in papers. While plagiarism is considered an academic integrity issue, many learners are concerned with issues such as self-plagiarism and unintentional plagiarism, and there are others who may go as far as purchasing papers for submission (Colella & Alahmadi, 2019). As a learner travels along their chosen academic pathway, their writing skills and mechanics are expected to improve. It is imperative that the learner transition from finding information and quoting the author word for word to using the information to support an idea, paraphrase, and then synthesize and express the findings in one’s own words. Having said that, there are situations in which quotations may be appropriate, so it is important to cite them properly. According to the seventh edition of the APA manual, “When quoting directly, always provide the author, year, and page number of the quotation in the in-text citation in either parenthetical or narrative format” (APA, 2020b, p. 270). If there are not page numbers, identify the location in another manner (such as a paragraph number).

Notice that the above quote contains fewer than 40 words. There is a different style for quotes containing 40 words or more. These longer quotes use a block quotation format:

Do not use quotation marks to enclose a block quotation. Start a block quotation on a new line and indent the whole block 0.5 in. from the left margin. If there are additional paragraphs within the quotation, indent the first line of each subsequent paragraph an additional 0.5 in. Double-space the entire block quotation; do not add extra space before or after it. Either (a) cite the source in parentheses after the quotation’s final punctuation or (b) cite the author and year in the narrative before the quotation and place only the page number in parentheses after the quotation’s final punctuation. Do not add a period after the closing parenthesis in either case. (APA, 2020b, p. 272)

# Conclusion

A summary and conclusion section, which can also be the discussion section of an APA style paper, is the final opportunity for the author to make a lasting impression on the reader. The author can begin by restating opinions or positions and summarizing the most important points that have been presented in the paper. For example, this paper was written to demonstrate to readers how to effectively use APA style when writing academic papers. Various components of an APA style paper that were discussed or displayed in the form of examples include a title page, introduction section, levels of section headings and their use, the POETS format, bias-free language, in-text citations, a conclusion, and the reference list.

# References

American Psychological Association. (2020a). *Ethical principles of psychologists and code of conduct* (2002, amended effective June 1, 2010, and January 1, 2017). [https://doi.org.apa.org/ethics/code/index.aspx](about:blank)

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Gilmore, S., Harding, N., Helin, J., & Pullen, A. (2019). Writing differently. *Management Learning, 50*(1), 3–10. [https://doi.org/10.1177/1350507618811027](about:blank)

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# Appendix

# Tips for the Reference List

* Always begin a reference list on a new page. It should be placed before any appendices, figures, or tables and titled **References**.
* Set a hanging indent that starts with the second line and is double-spaced. You can look in the Paragraph menu of Microsoft Word for formatting the hanging indent so that you will not have to tab the indent. It gives the text a smoother look that remains consistent, even if you make edits.
* The reference list is in alphabetical order by the first author’s last name. A reference list only contains sources that are cited in the body of the paper, and all sources cited in the body of the paper must be included in the reference list. If you did not cite it, do not list it.
* The reference list above contains an example of how to cite a source when two documents are written in the same year by the same author.
  + The lowercase letters are used after the date to differentiate the sources. The “a” reflects the alphabetical order in the reference list—not whether it appeared first in the text.
  + The year is also displayed using this method for the corresponding in-text citations, as in the following sentence: The author of the first citation (American Psychological Association, 2020b) is also the publisher; therefore, the word *Author* is no longer used in the seventh edition.
* DOI is the digital object identifier.
  + It can be found on the first page of an article, on the copyright page of a book, in the database record of a work, or by searching [Crossref](about:blank).
  + Even if the book is in print, if there is a DOI, use it.
  + Always use the hyperlink format for a DOI—it will always start with [https://doi.org/](about:blank) and will be followed by a number. If the DOI is not in this format, convert it. Do not alter this format, and do not add a final period.
  + There is a short DOI service at [http://shortdoi.org/](about:blank).
* URL is the uniform resource locator.
  + If there is no DOI, the URL should be used in the reference.
  + Copy and paste the URL directly into your list.
  + Do not add a period at the end.
  + Do use “Retrieved from” before a URL.
* The Colella and Alahmadi reference is an example of how to cite a source using a URL. Please note that you will not use the Capella link that is often provided in the courseroom. If the URL contains a database title, such as EBSCO or ProQuest, or the name Capella, do not use that in your citation as it will only work for Capella learners and faculty.
* For examples and further information on references go to:
  + [Academic Writer: Sample References](about:blank).
  + [Academic Writer: Reference List](about:blank).