What is APA Style?
APA Style is the formatting style used mainly in the sciences. It privileges the currency of sources and facilitates research by separating the main parts of a study under specific headings that indicate content.

Headings and Levels
APA uses headings and levels to effectively organize papers. A heading is a title used to label sections of a paper. Headings are formatted with five levels. Students will usually only need three levels.

Level 1: Centered, Boldface, Uppercase and Lowercase Heading

Level 2: Flush Left, Boldface, Uppercase and Lowercase Heading

Level 3: Indented, boldface, lowercase paragraph heading ending with a period.

Here is an outline with three levels:
I. Infant Respiratory Illnesses
   A. Illnesses Caused by Air Pollution
      1. Asthma in overpopulated cities.

An outline helps determine how many levels a paper needs.

The three levels in a paper would look like this:
Infant Respiratory Illnesses
   (Paragraphs for this heading would go here.)
Illnesses Caused by Air Pollution
   (Paragraphs for this heading would go here.)
   Asthma in overpopulated cities.
   (Paragraphs for this heading would go here.)

The DOI
A new feature of APA, which makes finding electronic documents easier, is the DOI. The DOI is a long number that is formatted as follows:
10.xxxx/xxxxxxxxxxxx
See the References panel for more examples.
The DOI is typically located on the first page of an electronic journal article near the copyright notice. It can also be found on the database page for the article. The DOI always begins with the number 10. The DOI should be placed in the citation on the References page.

Tables and Figures
Tables are organized lists of numerical data. Figures are visual displays of information. Tables and figures can be included in the text, or they can be gathered into an appendix at the end of the paper. They are not listed on the References page. All tables and figures should be numbered in the order they appear in the paper.

Keep tables and figures simple and easy to understand and refer to them in the text. Do not repeat information.

Figures
Example:

Figure 1. Dendritic Neurons. Adapted from “Dendritic organization in the neurons of the visual and motor cortices of the cat,” by D. A. Sholl, 1953, J Anat., 87, p. 387-406.

The words under Figure 1 serve as a brief title and explanation, organized like this:
1) figure number in italics
2) figure title
3) caption
The caption explains the figure and includes definitions and citations. Make sure the caption is not too brief. A clear description is better than a short description.
In-Text Citations
APA citations should include the author’s name and the year of publication (a page number is optional). Citations go before the period, as in the examples below.

Works by One Author
(Hawthorn, 1994, p. 3).

Works by Two Authors

Works by Three to Five Authors
(James, Smith, & Clark, 2001, p. 7).

*If the same work by three to five authors is cited again, use the last name of the first author followed by et al. as shown in the next example of works by six or more authors.

Works by Six or More Authors
(James et al., 2001, p. 17).

Works from a Secondary Source

Works with No Author

References
All sources that are cited in a paper must be listed on a new page after the body of the paper. The page title, References, should be centered at the top of the page. All references are double-spaced and flush left with a hanging indent. References are listed in alphabetical order according to the first word. If no DOI is available for an online source, include a URL.

Book
doi: 10.1037/4932-5849.34.2.445

Periodical
doi: 10.1080/1445526775783990023

Newspaper Article
doi: 10.1037/0278-4911.33.6.290

Online Source (no doi available)

Works by One Author
(Hawthorn, 1994, p. 3).

Works by Two Authors

Works by Three to Five Authors
(James, Smith, & Clark, 2001, p. 7).

*If the same work by three to five authors is cited again, use the last name of the first author followed by et al. as shown in the next example of works by six or more authors.

Works by Six or More Authors
(James et al., 2001, p. 17).

Works from a Secondary Source

Works with No Author

Government Documents
(U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 1992).

Block Quotations
Use a block quote format for quotations 40 words or longer. In a block quote, the citation comes after the period. Double space the quote and start it on a new line, usually after a colon:

Indent the entire quotation—as shown here. Do not use quotation marks. Citations for block quotes go after the period. (West, 2006, p. 3)