This is a tutorial from the librarians at Lone Star College – North Harris. The purpose of this tutorial is to teach library users how to cite their sources according to APA guidelines.

The best tool for citing sources according to APA is the APA handbook. If you don’t own one, there are several available for you to examine at the library reference desk. You can’t check them out, but you can use them inside the library.

Whether or not you own an APA handbook, you’ll probably find the library citation help page handy. Here’s how you get there.

Go to the library’s homepage and find the section called “Research Guides.” Click on “North Harris.” Then click on “Citation Help – LSC—North Harris.”

Here is our citation help page. It’s divided into three sections: MLA style, APA style, and Chicago Style. The APA resources are in the middle.

These include a sample paper called “Herding Cats.” You can open it by clicking on the link. This sample paper shows you how to correctly format a paper, including how to write the title page, how to write a parenthetical citation and what a Reference list page looks like.

Returning to our citation help page, you can find links to good websites about citing your sources. There’s also a link to a pdf file of our 2-page handout. Print copies of this handout are available at the library.

You can also find a link to the video that you’re watching now, as well as a video about how to engage APA formatting requirements in Microsoft Word 2007.

Now let’s examine how to cite your sources in the APA format.

APA uses parenthetical citation, which means that as you write your paper, you should cite your sources in parentheses as you use them. At the end of a sentence or a few sentences in which you’ve used a source, place the author’s last name, the year of publication, and the page number of that source in which you found the relevant information. Alternatively, you can introduce the author by name in the text of your paper and simply provide the date of publication and the page number in parentheses. If you have two authors, provide both authors’ names, the date of publication, and the page number. If your source has three or more authors, provide the first author’s name, the words et al period, the year of publication, and the page number. “et al.” is an abbreviation for the Latin term “et alli”, which means “and others”. It tells the reader of your paper that the listed author is only one of three or more authors responsible for the source.
If your source has a corporate author, such as a government agency, a business, or an institution, then provide an abbreviation for that author if the abbreviation is well-known. For example, you could list a publication of the US Air Force with USAF. But for a more obscure organization, such as Silver Lake College, you should write out the full name.

Sometimes your source will provide no pagination – that is, no page numbers. This is particularly common with database articles and webpages. When this happens, it is acceptable to use just the author’s name and date of publication.

But a superior option is to provide the paragraph number of the section of text that you are referencing.

Each parenthetical citation refers to the reference list – a list of sources that you used, provided at the end of your paper. Here are just a couple of points that you should keep in mind.

First: if you’ve used APA in the past, you may have noticed a recent change in how citations are structured. It’s called the DOI, which stands for digital object identifier. It is a way to distinguish between individual documents. Think of it as a unique identification number for a published source.

When your source has a DOI, provide it in your citation. If it doesn’t provide a DOI, don’t worry about it.

Second: reference list citations are different for different formats. For example, the citation for a book that you’re reading in print and the citation for the same book that you’re reading online are different. Make sure that your citation fits the format of your source.

Writing a reference list is a complex task, but here’s a step-by-step process that will help you.

First, determine what type of source you’re using. Is it a book by three or more authors? Is it a magazine article on a subscription database? Is it a speech? Until you have figured out what the source is, you’re not ready to write a citation. Do not proceed until you’ve completed this step.

Next, locate the instructions for citing that type of source on your APA handout or APA handbook.

Then follow that guide to compose your citation.
If you have questions about how to cite a source, please contact a librarian. We’ll be glad to help you.

APA uses parenthetical citation, which means that as you write your paper, you should cite your sources in parentheses as you use them. At the end of a sentence or a few sentences in which you’ve used a source, place the author’s last name, the year of publication, and the page number of that source in which you found the relevant information. Alternatively, you can introduce the author by name in the text of your paper and simply provide the date of publication and the page number in parentheses. If you have two authors, provide both authors’ names, the date of publication, and the page number. If you have three or more authors, provide the first author’s name, the words et al period, the year of publication, and the page number. “et al.” is an abbreviation for the Latin term “et alli”, which means “and others”. It tells the reader of your paper that the listed author is only one of three or more authors responsible for the source.

If your source has a corporate author, such as a government agency, a business, or an institution, then provide an abbreviation for that author if the abbreviation is well-known. For example, [ani] you could list a publication of the US Air Force with USAF. But for a more obscure organization, such as the Silver Lake College, you should write out the full name.

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