

The  
APA 7<sup>th</sup> edition

# Cook BOOK



“

*A good style must first be clear.*

*Aristotle, The Art of Rhetoric, 350 B.C.E.*





## Introduction

This cookbook is not supposed to be a concise manual. Rather, it is supposed to list the best ingredients you need for writing a paper that is APA 7<sup>th</sup> edition proof. There are countless other summaries, how-to articles, cheat-sheets, and who knows what else available on the world wide web. However, as tempting as it might be to quickly search the net for a fast answer about writing that reference correctly, it might actually be the wrong answer. The reason is that countless universities apply their very own interpretation of APA styles (and in fact, you will see that we will do the same, even if it is just for a few tiny, tiny, details), and the answer you find will have an excellent chance to be, at least partly, wrong. If you want to have that feeling of security that the answer you will find is correct, then the following are the only go-to sources for all questions you have about APA 7<sup>th</sup> edition formatting:

1) the official style-guide:

American Psychological Association (2020). *Concise Guide to APA Style*, Seventh Edition. APA.

2) the official website:

<https://apastyle.apa.org/>

We hope that this cookbook will help you to find the most common answers to your questions quickly.

Fleurie Nievelstein & Phil Brüll

# ingredients



## General Guidelines

Conciseness and clarity	06
Continuity and flow	06
Sentence and paragraph length	07
Tone	07
Guidelines for citation	07
Author-Date citation system	08
Direct quotation	08

## General formatting rules

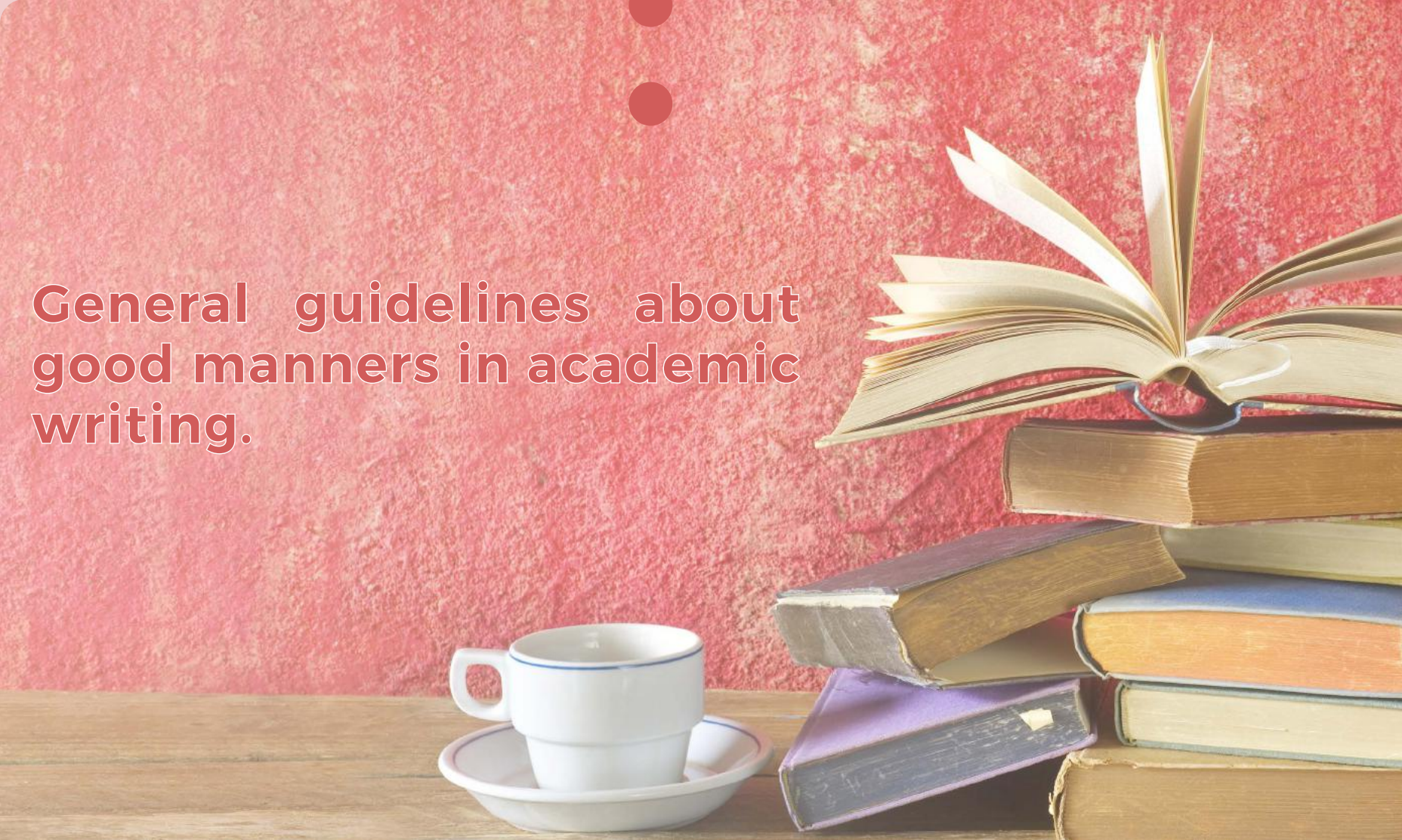
Paper margins	10
Font	10
Line spacing	10

## Paper elements

Page header and page number	12
Title page	12
Abstract	13
Text	13
Paragraphs	13
Headings	14
Reference list	14
Footnotes	14
Appendices	15
Tables and figures	15

# General Guidelines





## General guidelines about good manners in academic writing.

### Conciseness and clarity

- **Be short and concise:** say only what needs to be said in your writing. Conciseness and clarity in your writing ensure that readers understand your meaning.
- **Tighten language to eliminate wordiness and redundancy:** short words and short sentences are easier to comprehend than long ones.
- **Your writing must be clear:** ensure that every word means exactly what you intend.
- **Use a professional tone and language:** avoid informal, blog-like, or poetic expressions.

### Continuity and flow

- **Strive for continuity** (= logical consistency of expression) and **flow** (= smooth sequence of words and sentences without inconsistencies, contradictions, and irrelevancies). Without continuity and flow, your work may seem disorganized or confusing.
- **Improve continuity** and flow by using transitions between sentences, paragraphs, and ideas to make your text less choppy.
- **Use the full range of punctuation** (without overusing it) for signaling transitions and demonstrating relationships between ideas (similar to pauses, inflections, subordination, and pacing normally heard in speech).
- **Transitions help maintain the flow** of ideas if used strategically! Some transitional words and phrases include the following:
  - *time links* (e.g., “then,” “next,” “after,” “while,” “since”)
  - *cause-effect links* (e.g., “therefore,” “consequently,” “as a result”)
  - *addition links* (e.g., “in addition,” “moreover,” “furthermore,” “similarly”)
  - *contrast links* (e.g., “but,” “conversely,” “nevertheless,” “however,” “although”)
- **Use adverbs sparsely and strategically** (e.g., adverbs such as “certainly,” “consequently,” “conversely,” “fortunately,” “importantly,” “interestingly,” “more importantly,” “regrettably,” and “similarly”).

## Sentence and paragraph length

- **There is no minimum or maximum sentence length** in APA Style. However, avoid including multiple ideas in a single sentence; instead, break the sentence into shorter ones.
- **The paragraph length should also be used strategically.** Avoid single-sentence paragraphs as a new paragraph signals a shift to a new idea. Look for a logical place to break up a long paragraph.

## Tone

- **Present your ideas and findings in a direct, straightforward manner** by using language that conveys professionalism and formality by avoiding contractions and colloquialisms.
- **Avoid overuse of jargon** (specialized terminology that is unfamiliar to those outside a specific group) so that the language you use allows readers to understand your writing (even if they are not experts in your field).
- **Always define on first use** any specialized terms (e.g., provide a working definition).
- **Use verb tenses consistently**, avoiding sudden, unnecessary shifts in verb tense. Use the verb tenses shown in Table 1 to report information in various parts of the paper.
- **Do not use the editorial “we” to refer to people in general**, as in “We live in the same city”; especially in multi-authored papers as readers may be confused if you are referring to all members of your group.
- **Reading (learning through example)** to see the various ways in which information can be organized and discussed is one of the most effective practices to improve your writing.
- **Creating an outline ensures that the flow of your paper** reflects the logic of your ideas (identifying main and subordinate ideas, avoiding tangential excursions, and finding omissions)

**Table 1**

Use of verb tenses in a paper.

Paper section	Recommended tense	Example
Literature review	Past or present perfect	Quinn (2020) presented...
Method	Past	Participants completed a survey...
Method (description of procedure)	Present perfect	Others have used similar approaches...
Reporting results	Past	Results were nonsignificant...
Discussion of implications of results	Present	The results indicate...
Presentation of conclusions	Present	Limitations of the study are...

Source: American Psychological Association (2020). *Concise Guide to APA Style*, Seventh Edition. APA.

## Guidelines for citation

- Using APA Style helps readers identifying your contribution in context by citing the researchers who influenced your writing.
- **Cite only works that you have read** and ideas that you have incorporated into your writing. When possible, always use primary sources and secondary sources sparingly.
- The number of sources you cite in your paper depends on the purpose of your work. For most papers, cite one or two of the most representative sources for each key point.
- **Avoid overcitation** (repeating the same citation in every sentence when the source and topic have not changed) as it can be distracting and is unnecessary.
- **Plagiarism** (the act of presenting the words, ideas, or images of another as your own, whether deliberate or unintentional), violates ethical standards in scholarship. Students who plagiarize may fail the assignment, be placed on academic probation, or be expelled from their institution.
- Avoiding plagiarism can be done by providing appropriate credit to the source whenever you
  - *paraphrase (i.e., state in your own words) the ideas of others,*
  - *directly quote the words of others,*
  - *refer to data or data sets,*
  - *reprint or adapt a table or figure, even images from the internet that are free or licensed in the Creative Commons,*
  - *reprint a long text passage or commercially copyrighted text item.*

## Author-Date citation system

- In APA Style, each work used in your paper has two parts: an in-text citation and a corresponding reference list entry (see below). In-text citations can be parenthetical or narrative citations.
- **Parenthetical citation:** mention the author and the date, separated by a comma, in parentheses. A parenthetical citation can appear within or at the end of a sentence (then, put the period or other end punctuation after the closing parenthesis). When citing multiple works, place the citations in alphabetical order and separate them with semicolons. List citations in alphabetical order and arrange two or more works by the same authors by year of publication.
- **Narrative citation:** same as parenthetical citation, but the author appears in running text, and the date appears in parentheses immediately after the author's name.
- **The format of the author element** of the in-text citation changes depending on the number of authors and is abbreviated in some cases (see Table 2). In parenthetical citation use an ampersand (&) between names for a work with two authors or before the last author, in narrative citations, spell out the word "and."

**Table 2**

The format of the author element of the parenthetical and narrative citation.

Author type	Parenthetical citation	Narrative citation
One author	(Luna, 2020)	Luna (2020)
Two authors	(Salas & D'Agostino, 2020)	Salas and D'Agostino (2020)
Three or more authors	(Martin et al., 2020)	Martin et al. (2020)
Group author (first citation)	National Institute of Health [NIH], 2020)	National Institute of Health (NIH, 2020)
Group author (subsequent citations)	(NIH, 2020)	NIH (2020)
Group author without abbreviation	(Stanford University, 2020)	Stanford University (2020)

Source: American Psychological Association (2020). *Concise Guide to APA Style*, Seventh Edition. APA.

## Direct quotation

- **A direct quotation reproduces words verbatim** from another work. If possible, avoid direct quotations and paraphrase sources instead.
- However, use direct quotations rather than paraphrasing when reproducing an exact definition or when an author has said something memorably, or when you want to respond to the exact wording.
- **When quoting directly**, always provide the author, year, and page number of the quotation in the in-text citation (parenthetical or narrative) and enclose it within double quotation marks.



# General Formatting Rules





## General formatting guidelines in APA 7<sup>th</sup> edition.

### Paper margins

- **Use 2.54-cm (1-in.) margins** on all sides (top, bottom, left, and right) of the page. This is the default page margin in most word-processing programs.

### Font

- **Choose your preferred font** listed below, but then use the same font throughout the paper's text.
  - *Sans serif fonts: 11-point Calibri, 11-point Arial, or 10-point Lucida.*
  - *Sans unicode or aserif fonts: 12-point Times New Roman, 11-point Georgia, or normal (10-point) Computer Modern (the latter is the default font for LaTeX).*

### Line spacing

- **Double-space the entire paper**, including the title page, abstract, text, headings, block quotations, reference list, table and figure notes, and appendices.
- **Exceptions:** elements of the title page are double-spaced,
  - *and at least two additional double-spaced blank lines are inserted above the title,*
  - *and an additional double-spaced blank line appears between the title and name of the student,*
  - *and an additional double-spaced blank line also appears between the course name and word count,*
  - *and at least one additional double-spaced blank line also appears between the assignment due date and the organizational affiliation (your university).*

# Formatting Paper Elements





## Formatting of paper elements in APA 7<sup>th</sup> edition.

### Page header and page number

- **All pages** should contain the page number, flush right, and a running head, flush left, in the header of every page. The title page is page number 1.
- **Use the same font and size** as for your paper, but all capitalized.
- **The page header** should be a short version of your title.

### Title page

Please note that the title page format slightly differs from the APA 7<sup>th</sup> edition layout of a professional paper. We omitted the author's note and added several fields related to the student author, course, and paper.

- **The title should summarize** the main idea of the paper simply and, if possible, in a way that is engaging for readers.
- **For research papers**, a concise statement of the main topic of the research together with the variables or theoretical issues under investigation and the relationship between them is a better choice.
- **There is no prescribed limit for title length** in APA Style, but good titles should be focused and concise.
- **Name of each of the authors and their student IDs** (typically your name, followed by your student ID between brackets), preceded by the notion "Student:".
- **Name and academic title (if existing) of the tutor** (check with your tutor for the preferred form: e.g., Dr. Hilya F. Akis; Professor Levin; Kwame Osei, PhD; Mariam Sherzai, RN), preceded by the notion "Tutor:".
- **Course name and number** for which the paper is being submitted (use an "En-Dash" not a simple "minus" between course name and course number with an empty space before and after the dash); preceded by the notion "Course:".
- **Word count** of your paper, excluding title page, abstract, reference list, and appendices, preceded by the notion "Word count:".
- **Assignment due date**, written in the day, month, and year format with a period but no empty space between the numbers (e.g., 01.11.2020), preceded by the notion "Assignment due date:" (not the date you actually finished your paper!).
- **Affiliation for each author**, typically the university attended.

## Abstract

Please note that the abstract format slightly differs from the APA 7<sup>th</sup> edition layout of a professional paper. We omitted the keywords at the end of the abstract.

- An abstract is a **brief, comprehensive summary** of the contents of the paper.
- Abstracts typically are limited to **no more than 250 words**.
- **Start on a new page** after the title page.
- Write the section label “Abstract” in bold title case, centered at the top of the page, and place the abstract below the label.
- Abstracts are typically written as a single paragraph without indentation of the first line.

## Text

- **Start your text on a new page** after the abstract.
- The text, or body of the paper, contains the authors’ main contribution to the literature.
- On the first line of the first page of the text, write the title of the paper in title case, bold, and centered.
- **Most papers include an introduction** that addresses the importance of the work, contextualizes it within the existing literature, and states its aims. Because the first paragraphs of a paper are understood to be introductory, the heading “Introduction” is not needed. **Do not begin a paper with an “Introduction” heading**; instead, use the paper title at the top of the first page of text as a de facto Level 1 heading (see below).
- **A review paper (e.g., a literature review Bachelor thesis)** spends some paragraphs on a concise introduction of a single specific research question. More detailed theoretical background is provided in the middle part that specifies the answer to the research question. It represents the literature research of the author and provides a clear answer to the research question. These details may entail theories, notions, and findings.
- **An empirical research paper (e.g., a Marble Bachelor thesis)** describes in more detail the theoretical background that leads to the research question(s) or hypotheses. Such a paper contains a method section that describes how the research was conducted and includes a description of the participants, the measurements, possible tasks, and manipulations. It also details the procedure, the research design, and specifies the analysis of the data. The results section entails a systematic report of the results found and their confirmation by statistical tests.
- Both review papers and empirical research papers contain a **discussion at the end of the text**.
- **A discussion is not a summary!** In a discussion, the author discusses the findings or the paper’s analysis in light of the current academic publications. This may include implications, comparisons to existing theories and other research, or could entail practical or societal issues and may shape potential future research. A failure to find expected results may be related to study limitations and often leads to suggesting new research.
- An **hourglass schematically represents this general outline**. A problem is broadly introduced and then narrowed down to comprehensive proportions that will lead to a specific research question and answer (through a literature review or empirical research). The hourglass then widens again during the discussion section, where the answer is placed in a broader theoretical or practical perspective.

## Paragraphs

- The text should be double-spaced and left-aligned, leaving the right margin uneven (“ragged”).
- **The first line of each paragraph** has to be indented by one tab key.
- **Do not use full justification**, which adjusts the spacing between words to make all lines the same length (flush with the margins).
- **Do not manually divide words** at the end of a line, and do not use the hyphenation function to break words at the ends of lines.
- **Do not manually insert line breaks into long DOIs or URLs**; however, breaks in DOIs or URLs applied automatically by a word-processing program are permissible.
- Beyond the introduction, the paper should include paragraphs or sections explaining the main premises of the paper. There are many possible organizational structures for the rest of the text, depending on the paper’s topic and scope.

## Headings

- **A sound organizational structure** is the key to clear, precise, and logical communication. Before beginning to write, consider the best structure for your findings. Ordering your thoughts logically at both sentence and paragraph levels will also strengthen the impact of your writing.
- **Headings identify the topic or purpose** of the content within each section and help readers become familiar with how a paper's content is organized.
- **Concise headings help** readers anticipate key points and track the development of your argument.
- Do not start a new page or add extra line breaks when a new heading occurs; each section of the text should follow the next without a break.
- **There are five possible levels of heading** in APA Style, and all topics of equal importance should have the same level of heading.
  - Level 1 headings: top-level or main sections, centered, bold. Text begins as a new paragraph.
  - Level 2 headings: subsections of Level 1, left-aligned, bold. Text begins as a new paragraph.
  - Level 3 headings: subsections of Level 2, left-aligned, bold italic. Text begins as a new paragraph.
  - Levels 4 headings: subsections of level 3, indented by one key tab, bold. Text begins on the same line.
  - Level 5 headings, subsections of level 4, indented by one key tab, bold italic. Text begins on the same line.
- **Regardless of the number of levels of subheading** within a section, the heading structure for all sections follows the same top-down progression. Each section starts with the highest level of heading, even if one section has fewer levels of subheading than another section.

## Reference list

- The reference list allows locating the works you cite to acknowledge previous scholarship.
- Start the reference list on a new page after the conclusion.
- Label the reference list "References," capitalized, in bold, and centered.
- **Double-space all reference list entries** (including between and within references).
- **Use a hanging indent for all references**, meaning that each reference's first line is flush left and subsequent lines are indented by one tab key.
- Ensure that a period appears after each reference element (author, date, title, and source). Do not put a period after a DOI or URL because it may interfere with link functionality.
- Use commas between parts of the same reference element. Do not use a comma between the journal volume and issue numbers; place the issue number in parentheses instead. Write the journal and volume (not issue) in italics.
- List reference list entries in alphabetical order.
- Example 1: journal article

Grady, J. S., Her, M., Moreno, G., Perez, C., & Yelinek, J. (2019). Emotions in storybooks: A comparison of storybooks that represent ethnic and racial groups in the United States. *Psychology of Popular Media Culture*, 8(3), 207–217. <https://doi.org/10.1037/ppm0000185>

- Example 2: book

Sapolsky, R. M. (2017). *Behave: The biology of humans at our best and worst*. Penguin Books.

- Find more examples at the official website <https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/references/examples>

## Footnotes

- A footnote is a brief note that provides additional content or copyright attribution. Any type of paper may include footnotes.
- **They may supplement or enhance substantive information** in the text; they should not include complicated, irrelevant, lengthy, or nonessential information. Because they can be distracting to readers, they should be included only if they strengthen the discussion.
- **Number all footnotes consecutively** in the order in which their callouts appear in the text with superscript Arabic numerals.
- **Footnote callouts should be superscripted**, following any punctuation mark except a dash.
- Do not put a space before the footnote callout in the text.
- Do not place footnote callouts in headings.

- **To refer to a footnote again** after it has been called out, identify it in the text by the footnote number (e.g., Write “see Footnote 3”).
- **Place each footnote at the bottom of the page** on which it is discussed using the footnote function of your word-processing program.
- Footnotes may alternatively be placed in consecutive order on a separate page after the references; in this case, put the section label “Footnotes” in bold, centered at the top of the page; then write the footnotes themselves as double-spaced indented paragraphs that begin with a superscript footnote number, and put a space between the footnote number and the text that follows.

## Appendices

- **Contain material that supplements the paper’s content** but that would be distracting or inappropriate in the text of the paper.
- Include an appendix only if it helps readers understand, evaluate, or replicate the study or theoretical argument being made.
- Begin each appendix on a separate page after any references or footnotes.
- **Give each appendix a label and a title.** If a paper has one appendix, label it “Appendix”: if a paper has more than one appendix, label each appendix with a capital letter (e.g. “Appendix A,” “Appendix B”) in the order in which it is mentioned in the text. Each appendix should be mentioned at least once in the text by its label (e.g., “see Appendix A”).
- The appendix title should describe its contents.
- Place the appendix label and title in bold and centered on separate lines at the top of the page on which the appendix begins.

## Tables and figures

- **Embed** each table and figure within the text after its first callout.
- Placing all tables and figures on separate pages after the reference list is preferable for manuscripts being submitted for publication to facilitate copyediting; for student paper purposes, embedding tables and figures in the text is the better choice.
- **Align all tables and figures with the left margin** regardless of where they appear in the paper.
- **Position them after a full paragraph**, ideally the paragraph where it is first called out. Place the table or figure so that it fits on one page if possible.
- If text appears on the same page as a table or figure, add a double-spaced blank line between the text and the table or figure so that the separation between the text and table or figure is easier to see.
- Put a short table or small figure at the beginning or end of a page rather than in the middle.
- Tables and figures that support but are not essential to the text may be placed in one or more appendices.
- The table body (cells) and words within the image part of a figure may be single-spaced, one-and-a-half-spaced, or double-spaced, depending on what format creates the most effective presentation of the data.
- **Label each table and figure with a number** (e.g. “Table 1,” “Figure 1”) in the order in which it is mentioned in the text. Each table and figure should be called out at least once in the text by its label (e.g., “see Figure 1”).
- Tables and figures should have a left-aligned, bold heading and on the following line a short description of their content (one short sentence) that is left-aligned and italic.

ENJOY  
WRITING

