

Instructions on using this sample APA format paper:

Read through and replace the content of the sample paper with your content, leaving all formatting intact except for the section headings. You will need to copy the format of the section headings and insert your headings where they belong in your text. When you have finished replacing the text, go to the “Review” tab at the top of the MS Word program and look for the “Reject” option below a red X on a page of paper. Click on the arrow below “Reject” and select “Reject all changes in document” to remove all of the comment bubbles and these instructions as well as the list of resources at the end of the sample paper.

Title of Your Paper

Your Name

University of Southern California

Professor

Course and Date

**Comment [S1]:** All elements of the paper, including the cover page, abstract, body and references page should be double spaced in Times New Roman or similar font, 12 point, 1 inch margins, without extra spaces before or after paragraphs.

Prepared by:

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4/6/2011

SHORTENED TITLE OF YOUR PAPER

### Abstract

Not all academic papers written for class will require a summary. Check your assignment or ask your professor if you're not sure. Write a summary of your paper using between 150 and 250 words. Include the topic of your paper and the main points you will be covering; look at your main headings to help you decide what to include. If you are doing a research paper, include your research topic, research questions, participants, methods, results, data analysis, and conclusions. If your paper is not about your research, use only the elements relevant to your paper. You will not need to list key words because this is not meant for publication.

**Comment [S2]:** Do not italicize, bold, or otherwise format

**Comment [S3]:** Do not indent the first line of the abstract.

SHORTENED TITLE OF YOUR PAPER

### Title of Your Paper

**Comment [S4]:** Do use bold, italicize, underline or format the title in any way.

In the body of your paper, make sure you begin with an introduction, regardless of whether one was specified in the instructions. An introduction is always expected in American Psychological Association (APA) format unless otherwise stated by your assignment or your professor. Your introduction should conclude with a thesis that describes the topic you will be discussing in your paper – this should be the topic for the *whole paper* – as well as an opinion of judgment or why the topic is important. In your thesis, you should make clear to the reader why the topic is so significant that the reader should be interested in finding out more about it and about your position on the topic.

**Comment [S5]:** Every first line of a paragraph should be indented.

**Comment [S6]:** The first time you introduce an abbreviation or acronym, spell out what it stands for in the body of the paper and include the shortened version in parentheses. Later in the paper, you may use only the abbreviated version without the parentheses. You must mention the full name once per paper.

**Comment [S7]:** In your introduction, this is where your thesis would appear.

### The Topic Sentence

**Comment [S8]:** 1<sup>st</sup> level heading

Each subsequent paragraph should begin with a topic sentence. The topic sentence should follow a similar format to your thesis in that it should include the topic of the paragraph and an opinion of judgment or why the topic is important. The reader should get a sense from the topic sentence of what will be covered in the paragraph and why the reader should want to read about it. The topic sentences should also relate directly to the thesis support it.

**Comment [S9]:** In supporting paragraphs, this is where your topic sentence goes.

### Supporting Paragraphs

**Comment [S10]:** 2<sup>nd</sup> Level Heading (or Sub-Heading)

Following your topic sentence, you should include sufficient supporting sentences to prove or validate every element mentioned in your topic sentence. Support may include data or studies – but make sure you indicate the significance of the information and how it helps to support your topic sentence. You may also include expert opinion in your supporting sentences as well as your own ideas on the topic.

When citing your source, do not insert the in-text citation at the end of a paragraph to “cover” the preceding paragraph. Remember, when you use an in-text citation you are

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essentially saying that the ideas presented in the *sentence* in which the citation appear belong to the person or organization mentioned in the citation. Do not include anything in that sentence that should not be attributed to your source. If you use ideas from the same source in following sentences, you may indicate this by stating “The article goes on to say that...” or “The author also says that...” Any way you choose to do it, you must indicate that the idea came from the source you used in the preceding sentence. More information about the APA format can be found on the Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL), including information about the APA 6<sup>th</sup> edition format for “research papers, in-text citations, endnotes/footnotes, and the reference page” (Angeli et al., 2010).

### 3<sup>rd</sup> level heading.

Every paper must have a conclusion, and your conclusion *must not restate your thesis or summarize your paper*. Your reader has read this far; you can assume that he or she remembers what you’ve written. In your conclusion, consider the thought with which you wish to leave your reader. What big idea would you like him or her to take away from your paper? Another approach is to consider what would happen if your topic were allowed to continue as it has in the past. What effect would that have on society? On an individual? On a community? In the same way, you might consider what would happen in the future if your topic *were* changed. Either way, you are still contemplating your topic but projecting on into what *might* be. Other approaches to concluding a topic are possible and you should explore any that make sense in concluding, rather than restating, a topic.

**Comment [S11]:** Generally, you will use a (last, year) format for in-text citations. The “et al.” is used when seven or more authors wrote the resource referenced.

**Comment [S12]:** When paraphrasing, no page number is necessary. When doing a very close paraphrase or quote, include the page number(s) in the in-text citation (last, year, 11-12) if the page numbers are available. In this case, the online source did not provide page numbers.

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## References

Angeli, E., Wagner, J., Lawrick, E., Moore, K., Anderson, M., Soderland, L., & Brizee, A.

(2010, May 5). *General format*. Retrieved from

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>

Lastname, A. A. (2002). Title of the article. *Title of the Journal or Publication*, *11*, 7-10.

As you're working on midterms, finals, and everything in-between, here are several resources to make the process a little easier:

### 1. The USC Social Work Libguides

These are fantastic for finding any number of research and study directions as well as quicklinks for the USC library system. Go to <http://libguides.usc.edu/socialwork>.

### 2. USC Social Work Writing Resources Videos

Also on the libguides, here are a few videos that I filmed for anyone who couldn't make it to a tutorial (and a few extras on topics I think are important) with more to follow. Go to: <http://libguides.usc.edu/content.php?pid=26798&sid=1407598>.

### 3. For APA formatting, check out the Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL).

Not only do they list many, many rules in an easy to search format, but they also have a sample APA paper to show you how it should look when you're done. Go to: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/10/>.

### 4. Google Scholar

Some of you are familiar with this; others are yet to discover its wonders. Google Scholar, when properly configured, will search USC's many databases so you don't have to look in each one separately. To configure, go to the Google Search page and look for the "more" tab on the top of the page, slightly left of center. Scroll down to "Scholar." When you get to "Google Scholar beta," look at the top right corner for "Scholar Preferences," and select it. On the left, about four down, you'll see "Library Links" with a space to the right of it in which you should enter "University of Southern California" and click on "find library." Several checkboxes will appear below; select them all and click "Save Preferences" in the upper right of the page. From now on, all searches on this computer through "Google Scholar" will look for articles in the USC databases and link directly to them if such a link is available. If not, you can still search for the article in the USC databases directly or (in the rare case that USC does not have it) request that a copy be obtained for you.

Papers can be tough, but you are not alone. You have all the resources of an amazing university behind you. Search for the answers, ask for help, keep at it, and good luck!

**Comment [S13]:** Use academic, peer-reviewed sources whenever possible. Investigate other sources carefully to find out if they are reliable. Government (.gov) and university (.edu) tend to be more reliable than other sources.

**Comment [S14]:** Alphabetical order, by author's last name.

**Comment [S15]:** Online source

**Comment [S16]:** Do not indent the first line of every entry

**Comment [S17]:** Do indent every following line of the entry.

**Comment [S18]:** Print source or online source that was originally print and has been added to a database.

**Comment [S19]:** If you cannot find a date, use n.d. for "no date."

**Comment [S20]:** Volume

**Comment [S21]:** Pages used in the writing of this paper