

# Essay Formatting, APA

## Essay Content Order

- **title page**
- **abstract** (optional; rarely used in high school and undergraduate college essays)
- **text of paper**
- **references list**
- **tables**
- **figures**
- **other appendices** (rarely used: explanatory notes; research notes; supplemental material)
- **footnotes** (rarely used)

## Title Page

Page one of your essay is a title page. It will have a header in which you type the following beginning at the left margin: Running head: A SHORTENED TITLE IN ALL CAPS  
Insert a page number at the top right margin. Page numbering will begin with the title page.  
Centered in the middle of the page, type the following:

Your Essay Title

Your Name

Desert Hills High School

Class, Period

Date

Formatting an Essay in APA Style

Ima Goode Ryder

Desert Hills High School

My Subject-area Class

Per. #

Date

### **Abstract**

An abstract is a short summary of your essay topic and the main points it will make. Most scholarly journals require an abstract, but high school and undergraduate college papers rarely require an abstract.

### **Text**

Type your essay in Times New Roman 12 and double space the entire essay, including your References page. Your pages should have one-inch left and right margins, as well as top and bottom. Your shortened title should appear in the header on every page, at the top left in all capitals. The page number should appear in the header at the top right. Set your word processing program to not add extra spacing between paragraphs. The text should be evenly double spaced throughout the essay.

If you use headings to guide your reader through sections of your essay, center your header and type it in bold, capitalizing all words of four or more letters. (See the example that follows.)

### **Indenting Paragraphs**

Indent new paragraphs one tab space (1/2"). If you use a direct quotation of more than 40 words, use block formatting, in which the entire quotation is indented 1/2" (use the ruler bar or the paragraph settings window). Indent another 5 spaces for any paragraph breaks within a block quote. The paragraph below is an example of a block quotation, described in the *Norton* text:

The block quotation usually is introduced with a full sentence that gives the source and ends with a colon to introduce the quotation. Because the block formatting shows the text is a long quotation, no quotation marks are used. The quotation ends with a period, followed by the page number(s), if applicable. (571)

## References

Following your discussion type a References page on which you list every source cited in your essay (except sources of any tables or figures; these are sourced in a caption below the material). At the top of the page, type References, and use a hanging indent and double spacing to type your list of sources cited in your essay. (See the website page on Citations for formatting help.)

## Tables and Figures

**NOTE: Cite the source material in a note below a Table or Figure and do not repeat the citation on the References page.**

### Example:

*Note.* (for a Table) / *Figure 1.* Short-term memory test involving pictures. Reprinted [or adapted] from *Short-term Memory Loss* (p. 73), by K. M. Pike, 2008, New York, NY: Mackerlin Press. Copyright 2008 by the Association for Memory Research. Reprinted with permission. [Cite the copyright information only if reprint permission was necessary to obtain; most sources follow “fair-use” laws (your use is limited and not for profit).]

## Tables

In APA style, a *table* presents information in tabs—rows and columns. Tables should be used to help your reader visualize information in your essay. The material presented should be discussed in your essay, not just appear in your table. In discussing the findings or conclusions from the data, refer to the table in your text. (See Table 1.) Each table appears on its own page following the References page(s), and they are labeled in sequence: Table 1, Table 2, etc.

Type the word Table and the table number above the table, flush left (not in italics).

Double space and below Table #, type a descriptive title in italics, upper and lower case, above the

table. Double- or triple-space before and after the table; be consistent. Information regarding abbreviations or symbols used in a table and source information, must be located in a note below the table (*Note.*).

Use "Retrieved from" for copied and pasted tables; use "Adapted from" for tables you have accessed from a source but changed in any way.

### **Sample Table Format**

See the next page for an illustration of a table and how to format it in your essay:

**Table 1***Comparison of Boys and Girls by Height and Weight*


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<b>Variable</b>	<b>Average height</b>	<b>Average weight</b>	<b>Average behavior incident</b>	<b>Average truancy</b>
Boys ( <i>n</i> = 60)	5 ft 1 in	120 lbs	14	6 days
Girls ( <i>n</i> = 62)	5 ft 2 in	105 lbs	4	0.5 days

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*Note.* Retrieved from “Analysis of Middle School Hormones,” by W. Steeves, 2001, *Journal of Despair*, 98, p. 11.

### **Figures**

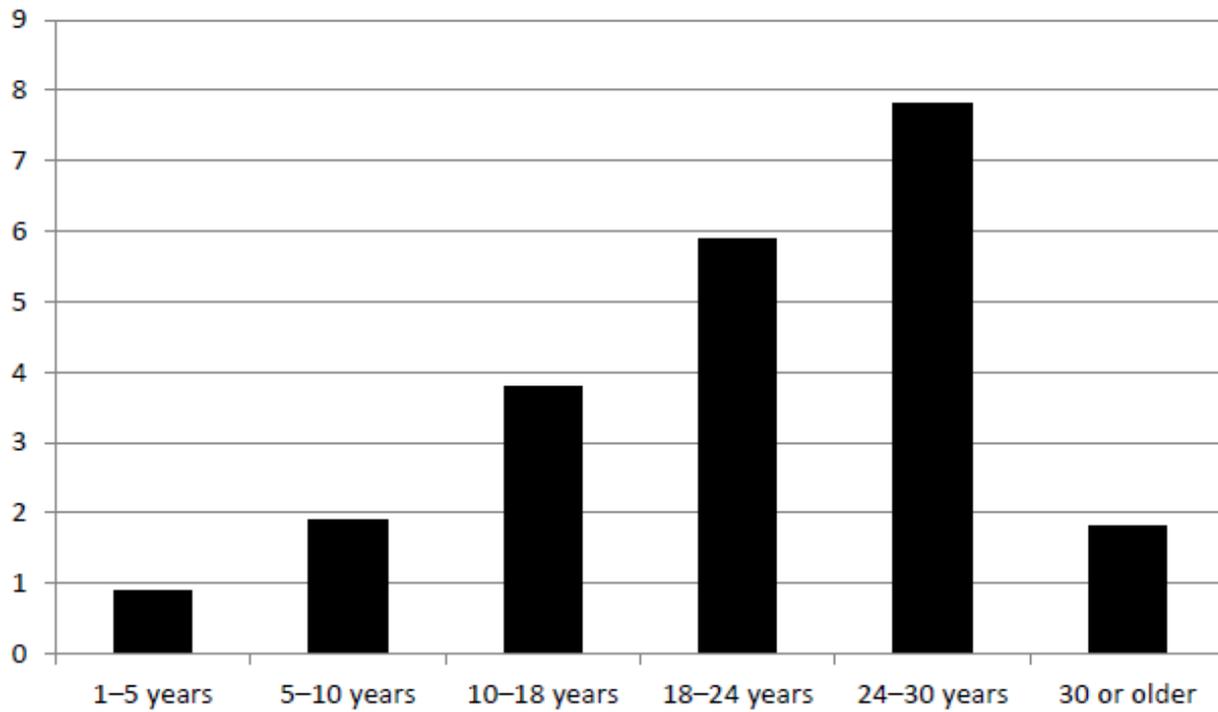
In APA style, a *figure* is any representation of information that does not use rows and columns (e.g., a line graph, pie chart, map, drawing, or photograph). Figures are placed following tables and are numbered in sequence, with each figure on its own page. Figures are labeled **BELOW** the image, in italics (*Figure 1*).

As with tables, discuss the information presented in the figure in the text of your essay, and refer to the figure (see figure 1).

Beneath the figure, type any explanatory notes and cite the source of your figure (Retrieved from . . .) or the information it contains (Adapted from . . .). If you created the image yourself, do not cite yourself, but cite the source of any information it contains (From . . .). See the next page for an example:

### **Sample Figure**

See the next page for an illustration of how a figure should appear on your Figure page: no title above the figure. Instead, an explanatory comment and a source citation are placed below the figure.



*Figure 1.* Bar graph showing hours of television watched per week by age group. From “Impact of Television on Teenagers,” by A. B. Alphabet, 2010, *Journal of Television*, 4(1), p. 145.