

{Note: Information within these curly braces “{” and “}” contains directions or editorial comment and is not part of the simulated article }

{This is a simulated journal article in the APA, 5th ed., style, written in my somewhat tongue in cheek sense of humor. Some paragraphs are very short, used only to illustrate a certain point. Typically journals will not desire one sentence paragraphs }

{Note: This is one format version; check with the specific journal for expected variations }

{To conserve space, the material in this simulation is single spaced. However, some periodicals require double spacing of everything. Note, too, that this simulation shows each new paragraph double spaced without a tab or 5 space indentation. However, some periodicals will require a tab mark at the beginning of each new paragraph. The best rule of thumb is always to look at articles published in the targeted periodical and model after them. For more information on professional writing and publishing, consider Hiemstra, R., & Brier, E. M. (1994). *Professional writing: Processes, strategies, and tips for publishing in educational journals*. Melbourne, FL: Krieger Publishing Company. 152pp., ISBN 0-89464-660-5; P.O. Box 9542, Melbourne, FL 32902-9542; Direct Order Line: 407-727-7270 }

{Note: Check ahead of time with the periodical you plan to target to determine their word count expectations or limitations in an abstract. The simulated article, containing explanatory information within curly brackets begins below }

*Writing Professional Articles*

{The running head is usually included at the top of each page, right justified}  
{sequential pg. # here or at the bottom – check with the specific journal }

WRITING ARTICLES FOR PROFESSIONAL JOURNALS:  
AN APA PRIMER

Roger Hiemstra

ABSTRACT

{Note: Check with the specific journal for expected 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, etc. order on the headings }

The purpose of this demonstration article is to serve as a model for adherence to APA Guidelines, 5th Edition. Presented are examples of most stylistic requirements, how an article is laid out, a

references section, and supporting materials. The primer models the editors' expectations regarding a well-presented article. Future authors also are encouraged to become quite familiar with all portions of the guidelines and to develop a final draft in compliance with the journal's stylistic expectations. A successful author is a person who not only writes well and has an important message, but one who also reviews past issues of the journal, understands what the journal publishes, and adheres strictly to the stylistic guidelines.

{Note: The abstract shown above is indented and in a smaller font. Check with the specific journal for the requirements for font, margins, whether it should be on a separate page, etc. }

## PREPARING AN ARTICLE

{Note: The above heading also could be in bold and/or italicized - stay consistent and check your target journal for their preferences }

One of the difficulties faced by a journal editor is preparing an accepted piece for publication. For example, the *Adult Education Quarterly* uses the *American Psychological Association's Publication Manual*, Fifth Edition (American Psychological Association, 2001). Depending on the rigor with which authors have adhered to the guidelines, it can take a copy editor many minutes per page to prepare the piece for publishing. Thus, authors can gain from a well-prepared manuscript as it frequently is published quicker. This demonstration article will use both real and fictitious examples, references, and quotes to provide examples of guideline features frequently violated.

### The Purpose

{Again, check with the specific journal on 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, etc. heading preference }

The purpose, therefore, is to demonstrate even such features as levels of headings (American Psychological Association, 2001). For example, the two earlier headings (ABSTRACT and PREPARING AN ARTICLE) are level 5 headings; note that all letters are in uppercase and centered (American Psychological Association, 2001, p. 113). The heading at the top of this paragraph is a level 1 heading. It is centered and with only the first letter of major words in uppercase format. Level 2 headings are centered, italicized, and with a combination of uppercase (for the first letter of major words) and lower case. Level 3 are flush left, italicized, uppercase and lowercase mixed. Level 4 are indented (usually five spaces or by using the "tab" key), italicized, lowercase paragraph heading in

format (only the first letter is in uppercase) and ending with a period. If you need all five levels, then start with level 5 and use the remaining header formats in sequential order. Check with the target journal's heading requirements or examine the journal's published articles to determine the heading level preferences. Whatever heading levels choices you make need to be used in a consistent manner.

### *Other Heading Levels*

The heading at the beginning of this paragraph is a level 2 heading. There will be occasions when only four levels are required. Typically you would place the title in the level 5 format and then begin with level 1 and proceed sequentially downward in level number depending on the number of different headings required. Check the manual for details, be consistent throughout the manuscript, and understand what the target journal expects or requires. It should be noted that authors seldom need more than two or three levels of headings.

### *Abstract Page*

Some periodicals require that an abstract of 100 to 150 words be included with the article (although some journals may specify a maximum number of words or characters). One format is to place it as a beginning section as shown for this simulated article. Some journals will require that it be a stand-alone first or second page of the article. This is used in those instances when the author has responsibility to prepare an article for peer review and the title page can simply be removed before it is sent out for critiques. Always read the stylistic guidelines or create your own by reviewing past issues of your preferred journal to determine the various stylistic requirements.

### *Page Header*

Note that at the top of the first page the author placed an abbreviated title on the right side referred to as a page header or sometimes as a running head. This is often shown as five spaces to the left of the page number. Some journals request such an abbreviated title be placed on each page and/or a suggested running head (abbreviated title descriptor) placed on the title page. Other journals may ask that the running head be placed above the page number or that the page number be placed at the bottom of each page. The abbreviated title should be three or fewer words (four words if short ones) and descriptive of the overall title. Some journals will require that the first two or three words of the actual title be used. Author's page numbers usually are placed at the top right hand side of each page.

## Punctuation Problems

These are several common punctuation errors that appear in 70% or more of submitted manuscripts. One correct usage just demonstrated that is often misused was the fact that a percent sign (%) should be used after numbers rather than the word spelled out. The purpose of this section is to highlight some of the most common errors and demonstrate correct usage. For more detailed information, refer to the stylistic manual (American Psychological Association, 2001).

### *Comma*

The major problem found in comma usage is failure to place a comma before “and” and “or” in a series of three or more items. One correct example would be that one, two, three, or more authors can be cited in an article. Another example is that andragogy, pedagogy, and eldergogy have all been terms used in the *Adult Education Quarterly*.

One more problem is that a comma needs to be used as follows: to separate two independent clauses joined by a conjunction. For example, “Andragogy was popularized around 1970 in the United States, and eldergogy was a contrived term used for a particular age group” (Drake, 1984, p. 14).

### *Commas, Periods, Quotations, and End Marks*

A general rule of thumb is that commas and periods come before the final quote mark and all other punctuation marks go after the final quote mark unless they are part of the quote. Deviation from this rule presents problems for editors and copy editors. An example is as follows: Smith (1986, p. 1) noted that “it is essential to make life easy for the editor.” Smith’s (1986) article, “Improving Your Chances,” is a fictitious reference.

### *Brackets*

Brackets are used to enclose parenthetical material that fall within parentheses. An example follows: Several authors used a sample size of 5 to 12 in the learning projects research (Able, 1991 [n = 5]; Able, in press [n = 12]; Adams, Calder, & Petering, 1983 [n = 9]; Billings, Drake, Elias, Jones, & Peters, 1992 [n = 6]; B.H. Diamond, 1983 [n = 10]; G.C. Diamond, 1981 [n = 6], 1983 [n = 11]; Smith & Thomas, 1985a [n = 12]; Smith & Thomas, 1985b [n = 12]). Readers of this article also should notice how single and multiple authors are cited and where punctuation

marks are used in the preceding sentence. Note the differences when cited names are not within parentheses: Billings et al. (1976), Carry (personal communication, April 1, 2001), Drake, Adams, and Smith (1992), and Judd and Ryner (1981) demonstrated the power of the instrument.

Brackets also are used to enclose material shown in a quotation that is from some person other than the original author. Drake (1984) found the following:

The use of the term, “andragogy,” has been documented to have appeared in publications as early as 1690. Furthermore, one source even induced that androgogy [*sic*] had been spelled out in an ancient rock formation. This formation was sighted by an *adult education helicopter crew* [italics added] flying over a plateau in the mountains of Chili [*sic*]. (p. 310)

### *Hyphenation*

Correct usage of the lonely hyphen, a much misused mark, is shown in Table 1. If you still are in doubt, as a rule of thumb use hyphens for clarity rather than omit them.

### *Capitalization*

Capitalizing the first letter of a word is required for five major areas: (a) the first word of a complete sentence, (b) beginning or major words in titles of books or articles, (c) nouns followed by numbers or letters, (d) proper nouns and adjectives, and (e) special situations. Specific instances are as follows:

{Note: the following seriated items are shown with the numbers indented. However, some periodicals will require either no indentation or an indentation of more than 5 spaces or by using the keyboard’s tab key twice }

1. The first word after a colon if part of a complete sentence.
2. Article headings and subheadings, major words in table and figure legends, included words of a hyphenated compound, the first word in a complete sentence clause following a colon, and the first word after a dash.
3. Proper names, names of university departments (Department of Adult Education), and trade or brand names. Laws, theories, and hypotheses are not capitalized.
4. Nouns followed by a number or letter denoting a numbered or series position (Table 1).

5. Test titles, factor analysis names or numbers, and names of variables (Self-Directed Learning Readiness Scale; Factor 1). Check the target periodical as some will require that such terms are italicized.

### Stylistic Requirements

There are several stylistic requirements of a more general nature. Several important ones are summarized in this section.

#### *Underlining, Abbreviations, and Acronyms*

Underlining should be used primarily for indicating words to be italicized if a journal requires that means of indication. If that protocol is not indicated by the prospective journal, use your word processing software to italicize the appropriate words. A general rule of thumb is to use italics and other marks of emphasis (i.e., such things as quote marks, dashes to separate words, and capitalized letters) sparingly.

Use abbreviations and acronyms sparingly. Excessive use of abbreviations actually hinders communication.

#### *Quoting Information*

Short quotations (fewer than 40 words) should be incorporated in the text and longer quotes in freestanding, indented blocks of lines (double spaced), without quotation marks:

Display a quotation of 40 or more words in a freestanding block of typewritten lines, and omit the quotation marks. Start such a *block quotation* on a new line, and indent the block about 1/2 in. (1.3 cm, or five spaces) from the left margin (in the same position as a new paragraph). (American Psychological Association, 2001, p. 117)

Quote accurately, using *sic* (i.e., [*sic*]) immediately after an error to indicate errors in the original material. Use three ellipsis points (three spaced dots) for omitted material within a quoted sentence and four ellipsis points for omissions between two or more sentences (literally a period followed by the spaced dots). Use page numbers in text only for identifying quoted materials; page numbers are not needed for non-quoted ideas. Quoting more than 500 words normally requires the author to obtain written permission from the original source (some publishers vary this

requirement and it is always best to determine if a journal or publisher has special requirements). Qualitative data excerpts also should be written as block quotations.

### *Figures and Statistical Terms*

Use figures to express numbers 10 and above except at the beginning of a sentence; spell out words for nine and below, except for numbers used in conjunction with a larger number (e.g., 5 to 12), numbers in mathematical functions, and numbers denoting place in a series (e.g., Grade 6). The latter could be rewritten correctly as the sixth grade.

Use the following for common statistical terms: *SD*; *N* (total sample); *n* (portion of a sample); % if preceded by a number or use *P*; *t* (in association with the computed value of a *t*-test); *Mdn* (median); *M* (mean); and  $p > .05$  (for probability greater than .05).

### *Footnotes and Endnotes*

Footnotes and endnotes should be used very sparingly (most articles are much better without them), although explanatory footnotes for tables and figures sometimes are necessary. Some periodicals forbid footnotes or will prefer that you use endnotes. If you use the footnote or endnote function of your word-processing software, move the note text to the appropriate spot in the manuscript (i.e., following the author note) and replace footnote references with superscript numbers (although some word processing software automates this task).

### *Additional Stylistic Requirements*

#### *Two Letter Abbreviations*

Use the common two-letter abbreviations for states and territories (e.g., AL, NY, WI, etc.) in the references list shown at the end of the article. (American Psychological Association, 2001, p. 218).

#### *Personal Communications*

Personal communications are cited only in the text and are not included in the references list.

### *Hyphenating*

Do not hyphenate words at the end of a line. Let the line run short of the margin instead.

### *Submitting Manuscripts*

Manuscript copy typically is double-spaced with margins of at least 1 inch (2.54 cm) on all four sides (this may vary in some periodicals). Onion skin pages, erasable bond, or other types of paper on which it is difficult to write generally are not acceptable. Copies usually are stapled together and many journals require the submission of four copies or more, so always check with the published stylistic requirements. Increasingly, journals are requiring or desiring online submissions.

Adhere carefully to guidelines to reduce bias in language (American Psychological Association, 2001, beginning on page 61).

Departmental affiliations, special circumstances, and acknowledgements are placed in a separate author note. This should be double-spaced, on a separate sheet of paper, and included after the references section, or on the title page if journal allows it. Include a complete mailing address for correspondence and an email userid if available. If online submission are allowed or encouraged, follow the recommended procedures for the periodical.

### *Tables and Figures*

Table 1 (described earlier) illustrates the stylistic expectations for table use in a typical journal. Use figures when a picture, model, or drawing augments text information. They should be easy to read and understand. Check with the target periodical to determine their stance on figures and whether or not they want you to prepare camera ready figures. Figure legends and captions should be concise, communicate well, and be shown flush to the left margin at the bottom of the page. The word “Figure” and any accompanying number are in italics followed by a period. This is followed by the figure title, but only capitalize the first word and any proper nouns and do not italicize these words. Any necessary notes go below the legend. Written permission is required for anything other than the author’s original work, including even prior work of the author published elsewhere. Figures and tables using reduced type usually are not acceptable.

## References

### *Reference Citations in Text*

There are several rules that need to be followed in referencing supportive materials. In addition to those shown earlier in this article, the following illustrations typify the most common rules:

- Drake (1984) discovered that . . .
- In a recent article (Drake, 1984) it was discovered . . .
- Drake, Adams, and Smith (1992) found . . .
- It was found later (Drake et al., 1992) . . . that {this illustrates a subsequent citation for Drake, Adams, & Smith}
- Judd and Ryner (1981) demonstrated . . .
- It was demonstrated (Judd & Ryner, 1981), . . .
- In 1981, Judd and Ryner demonstrated . . . the theory's viability {this illustrates a period and three ellipsis points used to indicate at least two sentences omitted}
- In 1981 (Judd & Ryner), it was demonstrated . . .
- B.H. Diamond (1983) and G.C. Diamond, (1983); G.C. Diamond (1981); Smith & Thomas, (1985b).

### *Reference List*

The final presentation in all articles (unless tables or figures are included) is a complete reference list of all citations noted in the paper, including even this electronic journal citation (Rossman, 2000). See the American Psychological Association (2001) for specific help on the various types of electronic citations so common today. Don't include references not cited. The general pattern of necessary elements is as follows:

1. Author's last name
2. Author's initials as shown on the original source
3. The year of the publication in parentheses
4. The title (if an article or book capitalize the first word, proper names, and the first word after any colon; book titles should be italicized)
5. For journal articles use journal names (italicized), volume number (italicized), and page numbers
6. For books use city, state (if city not well known), and the publisher.

Each element generally concludes with a period. Multiple by the same author in the same year should be alphabetized (see the “References” section). See this article’s reference list for several samples.

{Note: Only the fourth, Boyer & Kelly, and Rossman references represent a real source. All others are fictitious. In addition, APA 5th addition now allows the hanging indent reference or the tab key indent represented by the five dots shown below at the beginning of each reference. The references shown below are in a smaller font, but some periodicals disallow mixing different font types or sizes within a manuscript. Check with the target journal to see the preferred or required style. }

## References

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*Table 1.* Guide to Correct Hyphenation

{Note: Some periodicals prefer a table with no vertical lines; it also is shown here in a smaller type size but check the journal for preferences. }

Rule	Example(s)
Compound with a participle when preceding a modified noun	role-playing exercise
Adjective phrase when preceding a modified noun	one-or-two item questionnaire
Adjective and noun compound when it precedes a modified noun	lower-class cohort
Compound with a number preceding a noun	two-way analysis of variance 10th-grade class
Two or more compound modifiers for a common base	long-, short-term memory
Capitalized base word compounds	pro-Knowles
Number as base word in a compound	pre-1970
Abbreviation as base word in a compound	pre-SDLRS era
Several word compound	non-SDLRS-oriented
All self-compounds	self-directed learning
Words that could be misunderstood	re-pair the group [pair again]
Words that would be misread	anti-instructional

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{Note: Some periodicals do not require that author information be placed on a separate page, nor that the words “Author Note” be used. Check with the periodical’s stylistic guidelines or review past issues of the journal to obtain a “sense” of what is expected }

Author Note

Roger Hiemstra, Professor Emeritus, Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York, and Adjunct Faculty, Empire State College, New York. This primer was developed to assist beginning authors or authors unfamiliar with the American Psychological Association’s *Publication Manual*, Fifth Edition (American Psychological Association, 2001). The primer provides a simulated look at how a manuscript should be formatted prior to submission to a periodical. Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Roger Hiemstra, 318 Southfield Dr., Fayetteville, NY 13066. Electronic mail may be sent to [rogerhiemstra@gmail.com](mailto:rogerhiemstra@gmail.com).