

Mechanical Areas and APA Format for Attention in Scholarly Papers

1. Accept that APA (6th edition) is weird and hard; its oddest rules generally favor database clerks who need to minimize keystrokes. When in doubt, consult your APA manual.
2. Use the Regis cover page provided by your instructor. Use PhD, EdD, or DNP if applicable after the faculty member's name and omit "Dr." before (redundant).
3. Put a title above the text on the first page after the cover page.
4. Double space throughout (except possibly for content in tables) with no extra returns anywhere.
5. Insert a page break as needed to prevent one line from a paragraph being by itself at the top of the next page (called a "widow"). Also, insert a page break to keep headings from being the last line at the bottom of a page.
6. Do not bold headings.
7. Put one space after a period except for abbreviations listed in the APA manual (e.g., IQ). Put two spaces after a period at the end of a sentence.
8. Use commas **throughout** a series (red, white, and blue).
9. Use commas to separate independent clauses (subject-verb, and subject-verb): Patients enter acute care settings with an inherent vulnerability, and nurses do not expect them to engage as informed clients.
10. Omit commas between dependent clauses (subject-verb and verb): Patients enter acute care settings with an inherent vulnerability and depend on nurses to be stewards of their need for holistic care.
11. Maintain past tense throughout the paper when describing the author's work: The author stated ...
12. Maintain singular or plural agreement: a child...his or her; children...their; nurse...his or her; nurses...their
13. Double check singular or plural possessives: The parents' impressions vs. The father's impression
14. Use 1st or 3rd person, depending on section criteria. (Do not switch to "you.")
15. Spell out contractions in third person, formal writing (don't = do not).
16. Spell out numbers one through nine unless attached to lists with units of measure: 9 percent of women and 6 percent of men. Use symbols for units in parentheses: Few women (9%) and even fewer men (6%) ...
17. Give "this" a referent: This reasoning justifies ... (NOT This justifies ...)
18. Use double quotation marks unless quoting within a quotation. (The British use single quotation marks for terms or direct quotations.) Put periods and commas within quotation marks: "outcomes."
19. "Feel" should be followed by a feeling: I feel distressed when ..., so use "believe" instead of "feel" when you make an assertion: I believe that inadequate pain relief contributes to ...
20. Avoid starting a sentence with "However," which is considered a weak parenthetical word. Use "Yet," (or parenthetically) The nursing staff, however, took exception to ...
21. "Not only ... but also" is a writing convention that requires parallel construction (same verb form): Education not only supports critical thinking but also promotes patient safety.
22. Rewrite to prevent ending a sentence with a preposition: I admire the nurses I work with.
Rewrite as: I admire the nurses with whom I work.

23. Refer to people with “who” or “whom” even though the Word program may tell you to use “that”: I admire nurses who (NOT “that”) view nursing as stewardship of holistic human health and healing rather than as a subset of medicine.
24. Paraphrase whenever possible. When you quote, introduce quotations instead of dropping them in as text: Smith and McSherry (2004) asserted: “Key point” (p. 24). Block indent long quotes (> 40 words) at 0.25 inches.
25. Cite page numbers or paragraph numbers only for direct quotations (verbatim quotations within quotation marks).
26. Cite the reference after you have paraphrased the author’s point (and do so at least once in the paper or you have a bibliography instead of a reference). For multiple reference points within the same paragraph, cite at the end rather than after each sentence.
27. Cite the year once per paragraph for each reference: Smith and McSherry (2004) explored spirituality ... Smith and McSherry used a cyclical process to portray the development of spirituality ...
28. Italicize the journal name AND volume # (but not the issue #) in the reference list.
29. Follow usual capitalization rules in the body of the paper; follow APA rules in the reference list (initial cap and proper noun caps only for article and book titles; for some reason, each main word of a journal name is capped as you would expect).
30. Italicize titles without underlining (redundant).
31. Keep the authors in order according to how they are listed on the article (Gilbert and Campbell), which is not necessarily alphabetical but shows amount of contribution. Start the reference list on a separate page and submit references in alphabetical order according to the first author’s last name.
32. Use the date of publication for the reference rather than the date of acceptance to a journal.
33. Proofread to put your best effort forward. Catch careless errors: The degree to which patient's experience pain ... (which should be “patients experience pain”).
34. Use parallel construction in lists. Maintain verb form, noun form, or adjective form: Nursing students depend on faculty to submit grades, write recommendation letters, and hold periodic appointments to review plans for graduate school. (NOT Nursing students depend on faculty for submission of grades, writing recommendation letters, and occasional appointments to review plans for graduate school.)
35. Keep striving to put on the mantle of BSN RN! It’s worth it!