CITING GRAPHICS AND VISUALS IN APA STYLE

Sometimes writers find that a picture is, indeed, worth a thousand words. Statistics and laboratory results, for instance, are often best presented in the form of a table, and a well-designed chart or graph can sum up pages of text. The American Psychological Association (APA) distinguishes between two types of graphics or visuals: tables and figures. This tutorial explains using, citing, and providing copyright statements for tables and figures in APA style.

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USING GRAPHICS AND VISUALS

When using graphics and visuals, writers should address the following:

• The visual is essential to the meaning of the text as the friendly reminder in Figure 1 explains.

• You may want to analyze or further discuss the visual in your text, but avoid repeating the same information provided by the visual.

• All graphics should be clearly labeled and easy to understand.

• Readers expect consistency throughout a paper, and this also applies to visuals (figures and tables). Figures and tables of equal importance should be similar in size, numbered consecutively, and use the same font.

• Readers should be able to interpret the figure or table without the text, so all abbreviations and symbols should be consistent as well as defined or explained in the table notes or figure captions.

TABLES

Tables often compare data and are organized in a row and column format. Tables are numbered as in “Table 1,” titled according to the table content, and captioned with a note below the table that

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explains any abbreviations or symbols and provides source and copyright information. Table 1, a “Quick Table” template in Microsoft Word 2007, illustrates basic table design with rows and columns, a title, headings, and a note below the table.

Table 1
Enrollment in Local Colleges, 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College</th>
<th>New students</th>
<th>Graduating students</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Undergraduate</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cedar University</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>+7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elm College</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>+9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maple Academy</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>+77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pine College</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>+13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oak Institute</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Graduate</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cedar University</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>+4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elm College</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maple Academy</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pine College</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>+5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oak Institute</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>998</td>
<td>908</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: + = more students enrolled than graduated; - = more students graduated than enrolled. From “Quick Tables,” by Microsoft Word, 2007. Copyright 2007 by Microsoft Word.

The following guidelines apply to tables in APA style.

- Tables with fewer than two rows or columns are not needed. The information or data should be presented in the text only with appropriate in-text and reference citations.
- Refer to each table in the text and describe its contents: “Table 1 shows these results” or “As illustrated in Table 2, . . .”
- Number tables consecutively in the order they appear in the text.
- Create a title that offers a brief explanation of the table.
- Capitalize only the first word of the title and words normally capitalized in sentences.
- Provide a heading for each row and column, even the first column.
- Separate rows with horizontal lines, but do not use vertical lines to separate columns.
- Place notes directly below the table.
- Double space tables; however, to fit on the page or make a table easier to read, single or one-and-a-half line spacing is acceptable (APA, 2016b).
- Use Times New Roman, 12-point font.
- There can be up to three notes, ordered by type: general information about the table, specific information about individual columns or rows, and probability explanations, which explain any asterisks or symbols used in data from statistical testing. Refer to the Probability Notes section for more details.
Probability Notes

**Probability notes** are used in statistical hypothesis testing that rules out something occurring due to chance alone. In statistical testing, researchers use a **probability level** between 0 to 1 to describe the chance of an event occurring, with 0 meaning the event will never occur and 1 meaning the event will always occur.

In a table or figure, **probability levels** are assigned asterisks to indicate a range in probability such as \( *p < .05 \) and \( **p < .01 \), and \( ***p < .001 \) (APA, 2010). The fewest number of asterisks indicates the largest probability and the most asterisks indicate the smallest probability level.

Plus (+) and minus (-) signs are also used in probability notes to show **confidence intervals**. For example, the results of an opinion poll may show 56% of the respondents prefer candidate A. If the confidence interval is +/-3, then 53%-59% of the population agrees with those sampled.

Probability notes may also provide **confidence levels** to indicate how certain the researcher is that the general population will agree with the poll respondents. For example, if the confidence level is 95%, then there is a 95% certainty that 53% to 59% of the population agrees with those polled. Researchers typically use a 95% confidence level.

**Example of a probability note:**

*Note.* The poll revealed that respondents prefer . . . \( YA = \) ages 18-30. \( A=\)ages 31-43. Adapted from “Title of Article,” by A. Author, Year, Copyright Year by Copyright Holder.

Data are for all genders.

\(*p < .05. **p < .01.\)

In this example, the first note provides general information about the content in the table such as definitions and the copyright information; the second note, on a separate line, provides more specific information about the data in the rows or columns; and the final note, on another new line, provides the probability \( (p) \) levels.

**Table Checklist**

- Is the table necessary?
- Is the table referred to in the text?
- Is the table inserted as close to where it is mentioned in the text as possible?
- Is the title brief but explanatory?
- Does every column have a heading?
- Are all abbreviations, symbols, and special uses of dashes, italics, or boldface explained?
- Are the notes in the following order: general note, specific note, probability note?
- Are all vertical lines eliminated?
- If the table is for statistical testing, are **probability levels** identified? If more than one table is used, are probability level asterisks consistent from table to table? With statistical testing data, are confidence intervals reported and consistent for all tables in the paper?
- If all or part of a copyrighted table is reproduced or adapted, do the table notes give full credit to the copyright owner?
FIGURES

All visuals that are not tables are figures. Figures include charts, as shown in Figure 2, graphs, pictures, maps, and more. Below are some APA 6th edition (2010) guidelines specific to figures:

- Number figures consecutively (Figure 1; Figure 2, Figure 3 . . . ).
- Always refer to the figure within the text (Figure 1 illustrates . . . ; Figure 2 demonstrates . . . ).
- Figure titles and a caption providing a short explanation go below the figure.
- Captions should be descriptive and specific.
- In the caption, capitalize the first word and and words normally capitalized in sentences.

Figure Checklist

- Is the figure necessary?
- Is the figure inserted as close to where it is mentioned in the text as possible?
- Does the figure title describe the figure content?
- Are all elements of the figure clearly labeled?
- Are all figures numbered consecutively?
- Is the figure mentioned in the text?
- Is proper credit given to the source of the figure in the figure caption?
- If copied and pasted into the text, is the resolution clear enough to be understood?

Does the text explain how the figure is relevant to the discussion in the paper without repeating all the information from the figure in the text?

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CREATING VISUALS

Microsoft Word and Microsoft PowerPoint allow writers like the student hard at work in Figure 3 to create tables and charts and insert them directly into their documents and presentations. The types of charts and graphs available include column, bar, pie, scatter, line, area, bubble, radar, stock, surface, and doughnut. With so many types of visuals to choose from, writers should carefully consider which type will best present the information. For example,
• a column chart displays categories of variables;
• a bar chart demonstrates comparisons between single items;
• a pie chart shows percentages;
• a scatter plot illustrates correlations; and
• a line graph demonstrates relationships.

The Microsoft Office Support webpage provides examples of these types of charts and more. Some of those examples are pasted below in Figures 4-8 with example APA style captions for graphics or images from a website.


*Figure 5.* Bar chart in 3-D. From “Available Chart Types,” by Microsoft Office Support, 2016 (http://bit.ly/2aaEx6p). Copyright 2016 by Microsoft. Used with permission from Microsoft.

Figure 7. XY (scatter) chart. From “Available Chart Types,” by Microsoft Office Support, 2016 (http://bit.ly/29N8R2h). Copyright 2016 by Microsoft. Used with permission from Microsoft.

CREATING VISUALS WITH COMPILED DATA

If you are creating an original figure or table from data you have compiled from a source as shown in Figure 9, in addition to a caption under the visual that credits the source, you need to cite the source in-text where you refer to the visual and in corresponding reference list citation.

![Pie Chart]

- Extremely Important
- Very Important
- Moderately Important
- Not Important


The caption for Figure 9 provides the copyright statement for a source that is a webpage. Use the following template for the copyright note if the compiled data came from a journal or book:

Journal: Adapted from “Title of Article” by A. A. Author, year, Journal Title, Volume, p. xx. Copyright year by Copyright Holder. Reprinted [or Adapted] with permission.

Book: Adapted from Title of Book (p. xxx), by A. A. Author, year, Place of Publication: Publisher. Copyright year by Copyright Holder. Reprinted [or Adapted] with permission.

Sample in-text citations for the source of data compiled into a table or figure:

The pie chart in Figure 9 illustrates that . . . (CNN Opinion Research Corporation 11, 2010).

The results from the CNN Opinion Research Corporation 11 (2010) poll in Figure 9 show . . . .

Sample reference citation for the information in Figure 9 that came from a webpage:


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CITING PHOTOGRAPHS

If you use your own photography in your paper or you own the copyright license as Purdue Global owns the copyright licenses for the photographs in Figures 1, 2, and 3, you will not need to cite the photographs or provide a copyright notice. However, borrowed images, such as those in Figures 10-12, must be cited in a caption with a copyright statement and in a corresponding reference citation (APA, 2016a). In APA style, photographs are figures, so the copyright statement follows a figure number. The APA Style Blog provides citation examples for image from various sources such as books, journals, or webpages here: http://blog.apastyle.org/apastyle/2016/01/navigating-copyright-part-4.html. The following examples show how to cite photos from some commonly used image sources according to APA style guidelines.

Example 1. Unpublished photo used with permission of the photographer.

- **Template for Caption Under Image: Figure #. From [or adapted from (if it’s only part of an image)] “Title of Image,” by Name of Photographer, year. Copyright [year] by Name of Copyright Holder. Reprinted with permission.**

  ![Figure 10](image1.png)

  Figure 10. From “Water Lily” by S. Carlson, 2009. Copyright 2009 by S. Carlson. Reprinted with permission.

- **Sample reference citation for an unpublished photograph from a photographer:**


Example 2. Photograph with Creative Commons License permitting reproduction and use:

- **Template for Caption Under Image: Figure #. From [or adapted from (if it’s only part of an image)] “Title of Image,” by Name of Photographer, year. Create commons license abbreviation.**

  ![Figure 11](image2.png)

  Figure 11. From “Lilies After Rain” by C. Cairns, 2015. CC BY 2.0

- **Sample reference citation for photograph published online with a creative commons license.**

Example 3. Photograph in the Public Domain (may be reproduced and used without permission)

- **Template for Caption Under Image:** *Figure #*. From [or adapted from (if it’s only part of an image)] “Title of Image,” by Name of Photographer, year. In the public domain.

![Figure 12](image_url)

**Public Domain**

Figure 12 is artwork, digitally reproduced online and found in the “public domain.” An image in the public domain with an expired copyright, such as an image created before 1923, will still need a credit to the source in the caption below the image, and it will also need a reference citation to indicate where the photo can be retrieved; however, an image from the public domain will not need a copyright notice. Instead, write “In the public domain” as shown in Figure 12.

*Figure 12.* Study for the cellist. From “Olga’s Gallery,” by A. Modigliani, 1909 (http://www.abcgallery.com/M/modigliani/modigliani12.htm). In the public domain.

- **Sample reference citation for a photograph in the public domain on the web:**


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