FORMATTING TITLES ON THE REFERENCE LIST
(PODCAST 07 TRANSCRIPT)

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- [(Click here for APA 6ᵗʰ Edition Reference Page Capitalization Rules Podcast)](#)

Greetings everyone. This is Kurtis Clements with another effective writing podcast. In this episode, I will discuss how to format titles on an APA Reference List.

Titles on the reference list must conform to APA formatting requirements that establish how titles are capitalized and how titles appear--that is, whether the title has any special formatting such as italics or quotation marks.

Let's start with the somewhat confusing capitalization rules of titles on the list of references.

The list of references, as you probably know, contains the complete bibliographic information required for the sources used in a paper--and thus lots and lots of formatting. Typically, an entry will include the author, year of publication, title, and other specific information depending on the type of source.

Regardless of the type of source--an article in a journal, a book, a podcast, or a webpage-- titles will need to be formatted per APA's rules. Are you ready for those rules?

The first thing to keep in mind is that some sources have one title (a book, for example, usually has only one title); and some sources will have two titles--an article in a newspaper, for example, will have the title of the article and the title of the newspaper. Some works stand alone and some works appear in larger sources. The kind of source you have will dictate how the words in the title are capitalized and whether the title has any special formatting or is left alone.

For titles of works that appear in a larger source or which stand alone, use sentence case and capitalize only the first letter of the first word. You should also capitalize proper nouns, proper adjectives, and the first letter of words that follow a mark of punctuation in the title (usually a colon). Got it?

For the title of a source in which other content appears, such as the title of a journal, use title case and capitalize the first letter of the first, last, and all important words. What's an

important word? Other than what I've already mentioned, important words include verbs, nouns, pronouns, adjectives, and adverbs.

How about an example? Let's say you have an article in a journal that needs to be included on the reference list. The title of the article is "The New Coffee Culture," and it appears in *Studies in Popular Culture*. The APA capitalization rule says to use sentence case for titles that appear in a larger work or which stand alone, so the article title "The New Coffee Culture" should only have a capital T.

The title of the journal, *Studies in Popular Culture*, would use title case and capitalize the S in Studies, the P in Popular, and the C in Culture. The "i" in "in" is not an important word, so it does not get capitalized.

Make sense so far?

While the capitalization rules for titles in the list of references can be a bit confusing, with the information presented in this podcast and/or consulting a stable text-based resource, you should be able to master capitalizing titles on the list of references.

Now let's discuss when titles should be italicized, put in quotation marks, or left alone.

For works that appear in a larger source such as a magazine article will appear in a magazine, do not italicize or put in quotation marks the title. So if you have a journal article titled "The Last of the Vikings," you would use sentence case (remember that capitalization rule?) but do nothing else to the title--so no quotation marks or italics.

For works that stand alone like a book or webpage, use sentence case and italicize the title. If you have a book titled *We Cast a Shadow*, italicize the entire title and capitalize only the W in "We" on the references list.

With the 7th edition of APA, distinctions are made to simplify how titles are formatted in reference entries, but at times the type of source one has--and hence how to format the title or titles--gets a little sticky. APA places sources in two broad categories: works that stand alone and works that are part of a greater whole. Works that stand alone follow a formatting pattern that puts the title of the work in italics and in sentence case. Works that are part of a greater whole follow a formatting pattern that puts the title of the source in italics and in title case.

Here's an example that I hope illustrates the difference. Let's say you read an article titled "Don't Panic" on the website for *The New York Times*. In this instance, you clearly have an article that appears in something else since a newspaper article appears in a newspaper (and

whether that newspaper is print or electronic is not that important). The reference entry for this source would put the title of the article in sentence case with no other formatting and the title of the newspaper in italics and title case.

If, however, you are on a news website like CNN, then you need to make the distinction that a news website is not the same as a newspaper, so the type of source you have is a website, and APA establishes that a website is a stand-alone source. In order to make the distinction of whether or not you have a newspaper or a news website, the APA Style blog says to "imagine whether or not the material could be delivered to your doorstep." A newspaper can be delivered to a doorstep, but a website cannot.

So if you have a news story on a news website, you would follow the formatting for a stand-alone source and place the title of the news story in italics and sentence case followed by the title of the news website in title case but no other formatting.

Well, everyone, that does it for this effective writing podcast. I hope you found the information helpful. Thanks for listening. Happy writing.

REFERENCE PAGE CAPITALIZATION RULES (APA 6th EDITION) (PODCAST 7 TRANSCRIPT)

Click link for Podcast 7, Reference Page Capitalization Rules (APA 6th Ed.): https://youtu.be/muaqOPTv1_0

Hi everyone. This is Kurtis with another effective writing podcast. In this episode, I will discuss the somewhat confusing capitalization rules of titles on the references page of an APA formatted research essay.

The references page, as you probably know, contains the complete bibliographic information required for the sources used in a paper—and thus lots of formatting requirements. Typically, an entry will include the author, year of publication, title and other specific information such as place of publication, publisher, and URL depending on the type of source.

Regardless of whether the source is a book or web page, titles need to be formatted following APA's capitalization rules.

One issue to recognize is that some sources have one title (a book, for example, usually has only one title); and some sources will have two titles—an article in a newspaper, for example, will have the title of the article and the title of the newspaper. Depending on whether the title is a first level title or a second level title will dictate how the words in the title are capitalized.

Let's start by talking about first level titles (the title of a book or the title of journal article).

The APA rule says to capitalize only the first letter of the first word in the first level titles except for proper nouns, proper adjectives, and the first letter of words that follow a mark of punctuation in the title (usually a colon).

The second level titles rule requires one to capitalize the first letter of the first, last, and all important words, something we might call standard capitalization or title case.

Let's look briefly at a couple of examples.

In this reference page citation, you can see that the source has only one title—a first level title—Writing in the online environment. The rule for first level titles says to capitalize only the first letter of the first word except for proper nouns, proper adjectives, and the first letter of words that follow a mark of punctuation in the title. This title has no proper nouns or proper adjectives, any punctuation within the title, so the only letter that needs to be capitalized is the first letter of the first word—the W in Writing.

In this second example, note the two titles: Understanding the Vikings: Journey into the past is the first level title; it's the title that appeared in the journal *Journal of Norwegian History*, which is the second level title.

Note in the first level title how the U is capitalized because it is the first letter of the first word; and note how the V in Vikings is capitalized because Vikings is a proper noun—it names a specific group of people. The J in Journey is capitalized because the word follows a colon. All other letters are lower case.

The second level title requires capitalization of the first letter of the first, last, and all important words, so in this case the J in Journal, the N in Norwegian, and the H in History should all be capitalized. The o in of stays lowercase.

You may be wondering how do you determine if a word is "important"—and this is an excellent question. Unless told otherwise, follow the rules for title case: Capitalize the first letter of the first and last words; capitalize the first letter of all verbs; capitalize the first letter of all other words except a, an, the, coordinating conjunctions, and prepositions of fewer than four letters.

The capitalization rules for titles on an APA references page can be a bit confusing, but with an understanding of or access to a simple set of rules, you should be able to master the formatting. Of course, this podcast did not speak to which titles are italicized and which ones are not, but this is a topic for another podcast.

Thanks everyone. Happy writing!