APA REFERENCE LIST CHECKLIST
(PODCAST 37 TRANSCRIPT)

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Greetings everyone. This is Kurtis Clements with another Effective Writing podcast. In this episode, I am going to discuss the APA reference list and what specifically you will not want to forget to check for correctness, and you can do so by using my APA no-excuse reference list checklist.

First things first, just in case you were wondering, the reference list is a page at the end of a research-based academic paper titled References that includes all of the important bibliographic information someone would need to locate a source such as the author, date of publication, title of article, title of the journal and related information like the issue and volume number, URL, and/or the digital object identifier, often called the DOI.

Please keep in mind the following: There are two types of citation—some that appear within the body of the paper called in-text citations and some that appear at the end called reference list entries, or references. In-text citations use a type of shorthand that signals readers and lets them know that the information they just read or are about to read is borrowed from another source. Reference list entries contain more specific information about the source. One key point to keep in mind is that citations and references work in pairs and need to match, so if Smith is cited in the body, Smith also appears as a reference entry.

What's required for a reference will vary depending on the type of source used (webpage or book, for example), but APA has tried to organize sources into basic groups, categories, and types to help simplify formatting reference entries. In addition, since most works exist online, reference entries for content found in print or online have few differences. Now, despite the relative consistency of sources, let's face it: Constructing a list of references can be a nightmare. It contains oodles of formatting requirements—how to set up the page, how to organize entries, how to capitalize titles, how to punctate, and so on. Although the reference list can be a nightmare, not all nightmares end badly. In fact, this "APA Reference List Checklist" podcast should provide you with the information that you need to do a bang-up job on your reference list.

Just for a bit more context, the reference list goes by other names depending on the documentation style used. A paper that uses MLA style calls the reference list Works Cited.

The header: Purdue University Global logo, Academic Success Center Writing Center.

The *Chicago Style* calls its list of sources page the Bibliography. In APA the reference list is called, as you know, References

Make sense so far? Now let's turn our attention to what you need to check on your reference list.

First, you will want to make sure the page number appears in the upper right-hand corner on the reference list as it does on all previous pages. Second, the word References should be centered directly on the paper, bolded, and capitalized with only the R in upper case. Do not place a colon after the word References.

Good so far? You might want to jot down the items to check, so that by the time we're done with the podcast, you have a checklist that you can use for any APA reference list. However, I will repeat in brief the checklist at the end of the podcast.

The next item to check is an easy one: Make sure the entire list is double spaced. The reference citation entries should not be single spaced with double spacing between entries. Everything on the reference list—in fact, this is true for the entire APA formatted paper— should be double spaced. So, centered on the page and in bold should be the word References with only the R capitalized and two lines down should be the first reference entry. Why? Because the entire reference list is double spaced.

Moving on.

Please remember that in-text citations correspond with the reference list entries. Make sure that the first piece of information for a work on the reference list—and that first piece of information could be the author's last name, an organization's name, or the title of the article—matches how that source is cited within the text.

Here's the next item to check: Make sure the reference citation entries use hanging indentation. What's hanging indentation, you ask? Hanging indentation is when the first line of a reference entry (presuming the entry is more than one line) hangs out, and the second line is indented inward five spaces or a half an inch.

The entries on the reference list should be alphabetized A - Z. Usually, an entry will begin with the author's last name, but if the work has no listed author, alphabetize by the title but ignore the articles "a," "an," or "the" if such a word begins the title. So, if you have an unsigned newspaper article titled "The Lowdown on APA Reference List Entries," you would defer to the "L" in "Lowdown" when alphabetizing. Easy enough, right?

Something else that's easy: Do not bullet or number the entries. Got it? Good.

Now let's talk about something that's a bit tricky. Yes, things were going along much too easy, right? Reference entries vary in format and in the information they provide depending on the

type of work. For instance, reference entries for books are different from entries for journal articles or webpages. Why is that? Well, like teachers, citation gurus stay up all night wondering how to make your life miserable. Not really, but I know that's what you're thinking. There really is a valid reason why reference entries vary depending on the source type. The reason is that the information provided in a reference entry is for the purpose of retrieval. If readers want to look up a source in your papers themselves, then they turn to the references to get that information, and if that information is incorrect or incomplete, finding the work becomes more difficult. So, here's what you need to keep in mind when formatting each reference entry: In order to include exactly what's needed for any given entry, you need to consult a stable resource to ensure that the entry is formatted as correctly as possible. APA does try to help by organizing sources, no matter what kind of source, by four key elements-- author, title, date, and source. In APA, "source" refers to a number of specific components such as the title of the publication, volume and issue numbers, or URL that would help someone locate the work. To construct a reference entry, you basically need to ask these questions:

- Who is responsible for the work?
- When was this work published?
- What is this work called?
- Where can I retrieve this work?

By finding the information that answers those questions, you will have what you need to cite an entry,

I know what you're thinking now. You're thinking that you will use technology to help you assemble reference entries. Indeed, a number of citation generator websites exist, word processing software often has built-in APA citation help, and even online libraries provide already-constructed reference entries. However, and it's a big however, just because you use technology to help you with reference list entries does not mean those entries will be correct. In some instances, the correctness of an entry is directly proportional to the information inputted, which means if you put in incorrect information, the reference entry will be incorrect. Word of advice: Be careful when using such technology and keep this checklist handy.

Here's another tricky APA matter to check, and it's one that is often overlooked, but you won't forget because you have this podcast.

Be sure to check how your titles are capitalized. And by title, I mean the first and sometimes only title of a work. In APA lingo, "title" refers to the title of the work being cited, so that title may be the title of an article, or it may be the title of a book. Some works appear in larger works such as an article may appear in a magazine or journal, and some works standalone such as a book or a film.

Depending on the source, a work may actually have multiple titles that need formatting. Books, for example, will have a single title, but journals will have two—the title of the article and the title of the journal.

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).

For the title of the source, such as the title for the name of a journal, use title case and capitalize the first letter of the first, last, and all-important words.

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 and the quotation marks around the title should be dropped.

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. FYI: Verbs are important words.

Clear enough?

Here's an easy item to check: Include a period at the end of reference entries except when the last item of the entry is a URL or DOI.

What's a DOI? DOI stands for Digital Object Identifier, and it is a string of numbers and letters specific to a work that provides a persistent link to content found online so that you can locate that material no matter what online library is used, as the DOI does not change.

DOIs and URLs should appear as hyperlinks that begin with http:// or https://. You are probably asking: Should those hyperlinks be clickable and work? What color font should the links be? Great questions! Here's the skinny: According to APA, the links should function when clicked if the paper is meant to be read online. The hyperlink can be presented using the default setting of the word processing program which typically underlines the link and puts it in blue, or the link may be in plain text--black font and not underlined. Regardless, the hyperlink needs to be live.

You are probably thinking: Wait a minute! URLs and DOIs can sometimes be quite long and often create big chunks of unsightly white space. Is that ok? I'm glad you asked. The visual design is important, and nobody wants a reference list to be visually unappealing, so APA allows for shortened versions of URLs and DOIs when necessary. APA does want shortened DOIs to be constructed using the International DOI Foundation at http://shortdoi.org.

Because links for DOIs and URLs are live and take readers directly to the content whenever possible, no wording prior to the hyperlink is needed--so no "Retrieved from" or "Accessed from" or the word "DOI." Nothing at all.

Here's a related matter to check: Make sure entries do not include retrieval dates. Of course, nothing can be so clear-cut in APA, so there is, predictably enough, an exception, but it's a rare exception, so I am going to keep things simple—and I hope clear—and not discuss the exception. So, no retrieval dates.

Next item to check: Always use a DOI when available. Period. If a work has a DOI and a URL, use just the DOI. If you use a print book and discover it has a DOI, use the DOI.

As I am sure you all know, nowadays much research is done online and typically using academic research databases via a library accessed remotely. Many wonder if the name of the research database should be included. When using an academic research database, if a source does not have a DOI, do not include the name of the database or the URL. In this regard, the reference entry will look just like the entry for the print version of the source.

Keep in mind that the purpose of a reference entry for a research database is not to replicate the path one person took to find the work, but, rather, to provide enough information that the content can be found regardless of the path taken. Put more simply: The same content can exist in multiple databases just like the same song can be found in a variety of streaming services, so the name of the database is usually not important. And the reason the URL is not included is often the URL takes someone to an online database that requires login credentials. If someone doesn't have those credentials, then the URL is useless. Hence, the URL is not needed.

Often a work from a research database will have a DOI, and if that is the case, we can defer to what I said earlier, which is if a source includes a DOI use the DOI. If the source has a DOI and a URL, use just the DOI. And do not include the name of the database.

The one sticky area in research database reference entry protocol concerns databases that hold content that is only housed in that particular database as is often the case with limited circulation content and proprietary content. In these instances, include the name of the database as you would the title of a journal or other periodical.

Are you ready for the last item to check on your APA no-excuse reference checklist? Ok, here goes. [Drum roll plays.]

Check your reference list and make sure that entries are not just hyperlinks—that is, make sure the entire entry is not just a URL or DOI. I cannot tell you how many times I've seen a references list with a bunch of links (or maybe just one) listed as the complete entry for a source. This is not correct, and it is something to definitely check.

How about a recap?
Reference List Checklist in Brief

- ☐ The page number appears in the upper right-hand corner.
- ☐ The word References should be centered directly on the paper, bolded, and capitalized as you see--only the R is upper case.
- ☐ A colon is not used after the word References.
- ☐ The entire page is double spaced--no extra spaces between entries.
- ☐ Hanging indentation is used when applicable so that the first line of an entry hangs out and subsequent lines are indented inward.
- ☐ Entries are alphabetized A - Z by author's last name (or title if no author is listed).
- ☐ The words "A," "An," or "The" are excluded when alphabetizing an entry.
- ☐ Entries are not numbered or bulleted.
- ☐ Reference entries constructed using technology are not always accurate.
- ☐ Titles of articles that appear in a larger work or which stand alone should be in sentence case.
- ☐ A period should appear at the end of each entry except those that end with a URL or DOI.
- ☐ Hyperlinks should be live.
- ☐ A shortened version of a URL or DOI can be used.
- ☐ The words "Retrieved from" should not precede a URL or DOI.
- ☐ Retrieval dates are generally not needed.
- ☐ The name of a research database is rarely needed.
- ☐ A reference entry will never be just a hyperlink.

I hope you find this "APA Reference List Checklist" podcast helpful when working on your next APA formatted paper.

Thanks for listening, everyone. Happy writing.

APA 6ᵗʰ Edition Reference Page Checklist Podcast Transcript

https://kuportal-a.akamaihd.net/ascmedia/wc/podcasts/37referencechecklist.mp3

Greetings everyone. This is Kurtis Clements with another Effective Writing podcast. In this episode, I am going to discuss the elements of an APA references page that you will not want to forget to check for correctness.

First things first just in case you were wondering: The references page is a list of the sources used (and sometimes consulted) in an APA formatted paper. The references page comes at the end of a research-based academic essay and includes all of the important bibliographic information someone would need to be able to locate the sources such as the author, date of publication, title of article, journal name, issue and volume number, access link or digital object identifier. These

entries are called full citations.

Please keep in mind the following: There are two types of citation—some that appear within the body of the paper and some that appear at the end on the References page. *In-text citations* are a type of shorthand that signals readers and lets them know that the information they just read or are about to read is borrowed from another source. Full citations are, well, fuller than in-text citations because they contain more specific information about the source.

What's required for a full citation will vary depending on the kind of source you use (web page or book, for example), and let's face it: This page can be a nightmare. It contains oodles of formatting requirements—how to set up the page, how to organize entries, how to capitalize titles, how to punctate, and so on. Although the page can be a nightmare, not all nightmares end badly. In fact, this APA References Page Checklist podcast should provide you with the information that you need to do a bang-up job on your References page.

The "references" page goes by other names depending on the documentation style used. A paper that uses MLA style calls the "references" page Works Cited. The Chicago style calls its list of sources page the Bibliography. In APA this page is called, as you know, References.

Make sense so far? Now let's turn our attention to what you need to check on your references page.

First, you will want to make sure the running head and the page number appear on this page as it does on the previous pages. In the upper left-hand corner, you should see your title in ALL CAPITAL LETTERS and in the right-hand corner you should see the page number. If this checks out, make sure the word References with a capital R and the rest lower case letters is centered on the page. The word References is typed directly onto the page—in other words, it's not inserted as the header and page number were inserted. The word References should not be in bold, underlined, italics, quotation marks, or any other special formatting feature.

Good so far? You might want to jot down the items to check so that by the time we're done the podcast, you have a checklist that you can use for any APA references page. However, I'll repeat in brief the checklist at the end of the podcast.

The next item to check is an easy one: Make sure the entire page is double spaced. The full citation entries should not be single spaced with double spacing between entries. Everything on the references page—in fact, this is true for the entire APA formatted paper—should be double spaced. So, centered on the page should be the word References and two lines down should be the first entry. Why? Because the entire References page is double spaced.

Moving on.

Please understand that in-text citations (with one exception) match up to the *full citations* on the references page. So, if you cite author X within the body of the paper, readers should find a full citation on the references page for author X. Make sure that the first piece of information for a source in an in-text citation—and that first piece of information could be the author's last name, an organization's name, or the title of the article—is also the first piece of information listed on the References page for that source, as in-text citations corresponding exactly with full citations on the References page.

Here's the next item to check: Make sure the full citation entries use hanging indentation. What's hanging indentation, you ask? Hanging indentation is when the first line of an entry (presuming the entry is more than one line) hangs out and the second line is indented inward five spaces or a half an inch.

You will want to make sure that the entries on the References page are alphabetized A - Z. Usually, you will cite by the author's last name, but if that is not the case and you have to alphabetize by the title, you will ignore the articles a, an, the if such a word is the first word of a title. So, if you have an unsigned newspaper article entitled "The Lowdown on APA References Page Full Citations," you would defer to the "L" in "Lowdown" when alphabetizing. Easy enough, right?

Let's talk about something that's a bit tricky. Yes, things were going along much too easy, right? Full citations vary in format and in the information they provide depending on the *source type*. For instance, full citations for books are different than full citations for journal articles or full citations for Web pages. Why is that? Well, like teachers, citation gurus stay up all night wondering how to make your life miserable. Not really, but I know that's what you're thinking. There really is a valid reason why full citations have to vary so much depending on the source type. The reason is that the information provided in a full citation is for the purpose of retrieval. If readers want to look up the sources in your paper themselves, then they turn to the References page to get that information, and the way you look up sources in a library or online vary depends on the source type. So here's what you need to check on your References page: In order to include exactly what's needed for any given entry, you need to consult one or more sources to ensure that the entry is formatted as correctly as possible.

I know what you're thinking now. You're thinking that you will use technology to help you with the full citation formatting. There are a number of citation generator web sites, word processing software often has built-in APA citation help, and even online libraries provide full reference page citations. However, and it's a big however, just because you use technology to help you with reference page citations does not mean those full citations will be correct. In some instances, the correctness of a full citation is directly proportional to the information inputted, which means if you put in incorrect information, the citation will be incorrect. Word of advice: Be careful when using such technology.

Here's another tricky APA matter to check and it's one that is often overlooked, but you won't forget because you have this podcast.

Be sure to check how your first-level titles are capitalized. What's a first-level title? Depending on the type of source used, an entry may have multiple titles that need formatting. Books, for example, will have a single title, but journals will have two—the title of the article and the title of the journal. For some reason that I won't pretend to understand, APA has a seemingly arbitrary capitalization rule used only on the references page (but ironically not elsewhere in the paper!).

Here's the arbitrary first level title rule: Capitalize only the first letter of the first word in 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).

Second level titles rule: Capitalize the first letter of the first, last, and all important words (what we might call standard capitalization or title case).

How about an example? Let's say you have an article in a journal that needs to be cited on the References page. The title of the article is "The New Coffee Culture," and it appears in *Studies in Popular Culture.* The first-level title—that is, the first title—is "The New Coffee Culture" and the rule says to capitalize the first letter of the first word, so all that would get capitalized is the T in The.

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 in this case it does not get capitalized.

Here's an easy item to check: Include a period at the end of Reference page entries except when the last item of the entry is a DOI or URL.

What's a DOI? DOI stands for digital object identifier, and it is a string of numbers and letters specific that provide a persistent link to a given source found online so that you can locate that content no matter what online library is used, as the DOI does not change. Always include the DOI even for print sources, as this string helps locate the content relatively easily.

Make sure your entries do not include retrieval dates. Retrieved from info is included (unless there is a DOI) but not retrieval dates. In case you're saying, "Huh," let me explain further. Let's say you found a scholarly article online, you would need to set up the full citation so that it includes all of the information needed for a journal article. Let's also presume, the source does not have a DOI. The last piece of information a journal article found online needs is the "Retrieved from" information that simply says "Retrieved from" and is followed by the URL. The date you accessed the online content is not needed according to the most recent edition of the APA Publication Manual. Of course, nothing can be so clear-cut in APA. so there is, predictably enough, an exception, but it's a rare exception, so I am going to keep things simple—and I hope clear—and not discuss the exception.

So, no retrieval dates. But do include Retrieved from followed by the URL when using online content.

Check URLs. That is, if a URL is included in your full citation on the References page, it needs to take readers to the content. If not, update the URL.

Are you ready for the last item to check on your APA References page? If I had a drum roll, I'd use it, so just imagine one.

Check your references page and make sure that entries are not URLs—and by "not URLs," I mean the entire full citation is not just a web URL; other information would be required. I cannot tell you how many times I've seen a References page with a bunch of URLs (or maybe just one) listed as the full citation for a source. This is not correct, and it is something to definitely check.

How about a recap?
Reference Page Checklist in Brief

1. The running head and the page number appear.
2. The word References has a capital R and the rest of the letters are lowercase.
3. The word References is centered and typed directly onto the page—in other words, it's not inserted as the header and page number were inserted.
4. The word References should not be in bold, underlined, italics, quotation marks, or any other special formatting feature.
5. The entire References page is double spaced.
6. In-text citations match up with full citations on the References page.
7. Full citation entries use hanging indentation when applicable.
8. Alphabetize entries A - Z.
9. Consult a source for specifics on formatting different types of sources.
10. Be wary of citation generators and the like.
11. Check for arbitrary APA first-level title capitalization rule on References page.
12. Include a period at the end of Reference page entries except when the last item of the entry is a doi or url.
13. Make sure your entries do not include retrieval dates.
14. Ensure URLs work.
15. Full citation entries will never be just a URL.

I hope you find this APA References page checklist and podcast helpful when working on your next APA formatted paper. Thanks for listening, everyone. Happy writing.