The APA System (page 1 of 4)
By Dr. Karen Petit

Writers in Social Science courses use the APA system, from the American Psychological Association, to document (describe) their source(s) of information. By correctly using the APA system, a writer can give credit to the person, organization, or website that first created an idea, word(s), visual, or sound. If readers of a paper will not know which words or ideas were written by which author, then the writer should revise the paper for correct, clear use of the APA system, as well as for any other problems, such as grammatical errors.

Parts of the APA System

The APA documentation system requires the use of in-text citations in the body of a paper; each of these citations must connect to the first word of a Reference page entry at the end of the paper. **The three elements that often are included in the body of a paper are described here, followed by examples of parenthetical citations, a listing of helpful websites, information about Reference pages, and an example of a Reference page** with entries that connect to the in-text citations on pages 1-3 of this handout.

1. A **lead-in phrase** lets the reader of a paper know that the upcoming ideas or words were first expressed by someone other than the writer of the paper. A lead-in phrase can show agreement, disagreement, or some other logical method of moving smoothly between two different authors' ideas. Past tense or present perfect tense verbs should be used in the APA system when signaling another author's research.
2. **A quotation, a paraphrase, or a summary** states the ideas or words that have been borrowed.
3. **An in-text parenthetical citation** "cites" the original author's last name, the publication date, and the page number(s). If the lead-in phrase already states the source's name and the date, the parenthetical citation that follows the quote, paraphrase, or summary only needs to include the page number(s).

Examples of In-text Parenthetical Citations

A Quotation with Parentheses Enclosing an Author's Name, Publication Year, and a Page Number
In the following example, quotation marks enclose the words that were borrowed from a poem by Frost. The slash indicates where a line break occurs in the original poem. At the end of the quotation is a citation:
"I took the one less traveled by, / And that has made all the difference" (Frost, 2006, p. 836).

A Quotation Compared to a Paraphrase or a Summary with Source Information in the Lead-in Phrase
When a source's ideas are rephrased (a paraphrase) or rephrased and condensed (a summary), an in-text citation and a Reference page entry both are required, as this quotation from the APA website indicates:
According to the American Psychological Association's *Basics of APA Style Tutorial* (2009), you should "[c]ite the work of those individuals whose ideas, theories, or findings have directly influenced your work, even if you are paraphrasing or describing someone else's idea" (slide 13).
A paraphrase or a summary has no quotation marks because only the information or ideas—not the words—are borrowed. Even though page number(s), when available, often are not included for very short summaries/paraphrases, the author's name and the year still need to be stated, as this summary illustrates:
The American Psychological Association (2009) has stated that sources should be identified, even when ideas are rephrased.

A Quotation from a One-Page Source with the Author's Name and the Date in the Lead-in Phrase
If a citation comes from a one-page source, the page number only needs to be listed on the Reference page. Since the author's name and the date are in the lead-in phrase, no parentheses are needed:
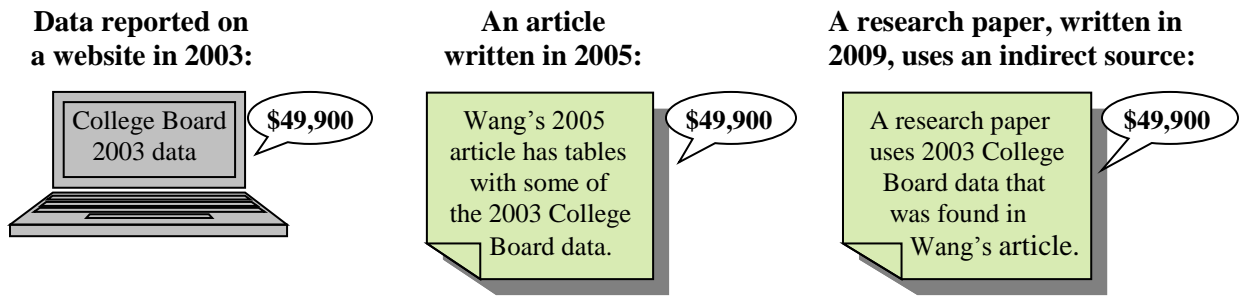In "Four Myths About College Costs," Wang (2005) said, "Over a working lifetime, the typical college graduate earns about 75% more than a high school grad does."

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An Indirect Quote from a Database
Occasionally, the writer of a paper might use an "indirect source," which quotes, summarizes, or paraphrases information from someone else's quote, summary, or paraphrase:

Data reported on a website in 2003:	An article written in 2005:	A research paper, written in 2009, uses an indirect source:
College Board 2003 data — $49,900	Wang's 2005 article has tables with some of the 2003 College Board data. — $49,900	A research paper uses 2003 College Board data that was found in Wang's article. — $49,900

When an indirect source is used, the Reference page only includes data from the direct source, as page four of this handout illustrates. The in-text citation, on the other hand, includes information about both sources: the lead-in phrase often has indirect-source information (the author's name), and the parenthesis after the quote/summary/paraphrase usually will include direct source information after the phrase "as cited in":

> According to the College Board (2003), "median annual earnings" were $49,900 for college graduates with a Bachelor's degree and $30,800 for high school graduates (as cited in Wang, 2005).

A Unified, Coherent Paragraph with Three Multiple-Author Sources and an Organization as a Source
Every paragraph that contains quotations, paraphrases, and/or summaries should be coherently written. The following example of a paragraph illustrates how ideas from four sources can be logically connected to the paragraph writer's own ideas with a topic sentence, organization of supporting details, and the use of transitions. The paragraph also illustrates the use of citations for sources with multiple authors, as well as an organization as an author. When a source has up to five authors, all are cited. For six or more authors, the first author's name will be stated, followed by the abbreviation "et al."

> Writing is an important skill necessary for success both in college and at work. In college courses, writing can help participants to learn a course's content, as well as to communicate effectively and to prepare for a career position. In health profession courses, for example, "a core skill required of health professionals [. . .] is the ability to write about scientific content concisely and accurately for their colleagues" (Rawson, Quinlan, Cooper, Fewtrell, & Matlow, 2005, p. 234). Effective writing is also needed in other courses; one article explained the importance of writing skills in different kinds of community college courses: "Writing essays and papers that meet academic standards translates into receiving passing or acceptable grades in all types of community-college courses" (Hennessy & Evens, 2005, p. 263). Not only is writing important in college courses, but it is also important at work. Writing has been "deemed essential for success in the workplace" (Baker, Gersten, & Graham, 2003, p. 109). More than an effective resume is needed because, once an appropriate career position has been located, a job applicant will have to not only attain but also hold onto the position. The National Commission on Writing (2004) surveyed 120 large American companies "employing nearly 8 million people"; the survey data showed: "Writing is a 'threshold skill' for both employment and promotion, particularly for salaried employees" (p. 3). Thus, to prepare for, to acquire, and to be promoted in a career position all require effective writing skills.

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A Paraphrase or a Summary with an Unknown Author and No Page or Paragraph Numbers
If the author's name is not known, an organization's name or a short version of the title is used, along with the publication year. No page or paragraph numbers were stated on the original webpage, so none are listed here:

> 93.1% of 2,834 CCRI freshmen who responded to a 2006 survey were Rhode Island residents (Office of Institutional Research and Planning, 2006).

An Online Reference Source with a Paragraph or a Section Number
When no page number is available, a paragraph or a section number can be included in the parentheses if the original source has numbered its paragraphs or sections:

> *Dictionary.com* (2009) stated "plagiarism" is "the unauthorized use or close imitation of the language and thoughts of another author and the representation of them as one's own original work" (para. 1).

Changes within Quotations: Deletions, Additions, and Letters
When a writer changes an original source's words, an ellipsis (. . .) should be used to indicate deleted words; square brackets indicate additions or show a change in a letter's capitalization. Square brackets often are used with an ellipsis to clarify that the writer of a paper, rather than an original author, added the ellipsis:

> "[T]he unauthorized use [. . .] of the language and thoughts of another author and the representation of them [words or ideas] as one's own original work" is "plagiarism" *(Dictionary.com,* 2009, para. 1).

Helpful Websites
The website for the Community College of Rhode Island's Writing Center has many helpful resources for research, writing, and other tasks: www.ccri.edu/writingcenter/resources/index.shtml.
The American Psychological Association's website (www.apa.org) has information about APA Style (http://www.apastyle.org), as well as sample papers and a 26-slide tutorial (http://www.apastyle.org/learn/tutorials/basics-tutorial.aspx).
 Diana Hacker's *Research and Documentation Online* has information and sample papers for the MLA, APA, Chicago, and CSE systems; included on this site are many examples of citations and Reference list entries: http://www.bedfordstmartins.com/hacker/resdoc/humanities/english.htm.
Calvin College's *KnightCite* can help to format a bibliography page: http://www.calvin.edu/library/knightcite.

Reference Pages
A Reference page alphabetically lists information about all of the sources that have been "referenced" or cited in the body of a paper. (Exception: While personal interviews are referenced in the body of a paper, they cannot be retrieved by other people and hence do not have to be listed on a Reference page.) Each of a Reference page's entries should include: the author's name (or authors' names), the publication date (When no date is available, the abbreviation "n.d." is used.), a partial work's title (articles, stories, poems, essays, songs, or webpages), a whole work's title in an italic font (books, websites, databases, films, paintings, or performances), printed source data, electronic source data, an access date, a digital object identifier (DOI), and a web address. Words such as "In," "retrieved," and "from" are included. A web address does not have to be listed if a DOI has been stated. When no DOI is available, the name of an article's database with any identifying numbers should be listed immediately before the web address. If a source has more than seven authors, the first six authors' names should be stated, followed by an ellipsis and the last author's name.

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