Quick Guide to APA Parenthetical Documentation

All page numbers refer to the 6th edition of the APA Publication Manual

Use parenthetical references whenever you cite information from a source, whether you quote from the source directly, summarize or paraphrase it in your own words, or refer to an idea. All examples include correct punctuation and formatting, so be sure to match them in your own paper.

What Goes In the Parenthesis? (Main citation elements))
Author(s) and year source was published. If no author is listed, use the article title. See page 177 of the Publication Manual for a chart of examples. Include page numbers if citing a specific part of the source.

Where Does it Go in the Sentence? (Placement)
Place your citation as close as possible to the information you are citing. Only include information in the parenthesis that isn't already in the sentence.

Examples of 3 Options:
According to Jones (2009), the chicken made a choice to cross the street.

Or
A new study (Jones, 2009) determined that the chicken decided to cross the street.

Or
"The chicken crossed the road to get to the other side" (Jones, 2009, p. 174).

When to use page numbers?

When citing a specific part of a source (pages 170-172; 179)
If you quote directly from the source, include page number(s). When paraphrasing information or referring to an idea from your source, APA encourages you to give page or paragraph numbers (page 171). Abbreviate the word “page” – p if one page number and pp. if a page range (more than one page).

No page numbers? Use paragraph numbers and/or headings (abbreviate paragraph as para.) instead if given (pages 171-172). If source does not provide paragraph numbers, you can “count paragraphs down from the beginning of the document.”*

Example: Source with page numbers
Experts believe that the chicken crossed the road (Daniels, 2009, pp. 3-4).

Example: Online source, no page numbers but with paragraphs
Experts believe that the chicken wanted to cross the road (Douglas, 2007, para. 4).

No page or paragraph numbers? Use the section heading and paragraph number (counted down from the beginning of that section heading). If you cannot use a heading, use a shortened form of the section title in double quotation marks (”). Count paragraphs down from the beginning of that section.

Example: Online source with section (no page numbers given) with section labels
One source gives a different theory about the chicken (Davis, 2009, Conclusion section, para. 3).

Example: Online source, (no page numbers given), with section titles
One source gives a different theory about the chicken (Davis, 2009, “Overview of Chickens,” para. 5).

Note: The Original section title in this example was: “Overview of Chickens and the Roads They Cross.”
How Many Authors Does the Source Have?

Note: Remember to include page numbers when citing a specific part of your source (see other side).

One Author (APA, pages 175-176)

**Example: 1 author (2 options):**

Chickens have been known to cross roads (Jordan, 2013).

Or

Jordan (2001) discussed how chickens like to cross roads.

Two Authors (APA, pages 175-176)

If a source has two authors, use an ampersand (&) between the names in the parenthesis. Use “and” when referring to the authors in the text of your paper. Include both names every time you cite the source.

**Example: 2 authors (2 options):**

The chicken crossed the road (Smith & Jones, 2001).

Or

Smith and Jones (2001) also discovered that the chicken crossed the road.

Three to Five Authors (APA, pages 175-176)

When a source has three, four, or five authors, cite all authors for the first parenthetical reference. For the second and any subsequent citations, list the first author followed by et al. (Latin for “and others”).

**Example: 3-5 authors (different the first time):**

*Example 1st time source is referenced:*

The chicken was forced to cross the road (Adams, Smith, & Jones, 2009).

*Example for Subsequent citations (2 options):*

Adams et al. (2009) discovered who forced the chicken to cross the road.

Or

There are many reasons why the chicken was forced to cross the road (Adams et al., 2009).

Six or More Authors (APA, pages 175-177)

When a source has six or more authors, include just the first author’s last name, followed by et al.

**Example: 6 or more authors (2 options):**

The chicken had definitely crossed the road (Letterman et al., 2001).

Or

Letterman et al. (2001) had also discovered that the chicken crossed the road.

No Author (APA, pages 176)

If a source has no author and is listed on the reference page by its title, use the first few words of the title and the year. Put double quotation marks (“) around article or chapter titles and italicize periodical and book titles. Unlike the reference page, the main words of the title should be capitalized.

**Example: Book, no author given**

The chicken made a conscious decision to cross the road (*The Big Book of Chickens*, 2009).

**Example: Journal article, no author given**

The chicken did not want to cross the road (*The Case of the Chicken and the Road,* 2007).

*From APA’s official website (http://www.apastyle.org/learn/faqs/cite-website-material.aspx)*

This is a brief overview. For more information, please see the APA *Publication Manual*, 6th ed., pages 169-179.

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