Formatting an APA Paper in MS Word

These instructions and screen shots are based on Word 2013. If you have a different version of Word, your screen may look different but the same functions and settings are available.

Step 1 – Familiarize yourself with Word
- If you are not already familiar with Word and its different menu options, you can view a Quick Start Guide on the IT portal page. College portal – College Services & Resources – IT Service Desk – MSO Reference Guides.

Step 2 – Familiarize yourself with the parts of an APA paper
- Make sure you know what parts an APA paper should have. Also, make sure you check your assignment requirements. Some assignments do not require an abstract.
  - Parts of a paper (in order):
    - Title page (page 1)
    - Abstract (page 2)
    - First page of manuscript body (page 3) – if an abstract is not required, then your manuscript begins on page 2.
    - References (page #) – use a hanging indent
    - Appendices (if needed)
  - Other items to be included in a paper/to keep in mind
    - Running head on all pages. Only first page contains the words “Running head.”
    - Times New Roman 12 pt font
    - Double spaced (no additional spaces between paragraphs)
    - 1 inch margins all around
    - Level headings may be required
    - Your title (which you must include centered, at the top of page 3 where your manuscript begins) does not count as a level one heading, so it is NOT in bold.

Step 3 – Setting up your margins
- Open a new Word document
- Immediately save the file with an appropriate name, and then save your work frequently as you go along
- On the “Page Layout” tab, click the arrow below “margins” to make sure that “normal” (all margins are 1”) is selected.
Step 4 – Setting up your spacing

- Go to the “Home” tab and look at the “paragraph” section.

- The icon with two arrows and multiple lines is where you click to see your options for line spacing.

- Click 2.0 for double spacing, and click “remove space after paragraph” to stop Word from inserting an additional space each time you press “enter.”

Step 5 – Setting up your running head

- On the “insert tab,” click the option for “header.”

- Select “blank.”
Before typing anything, select “different first page” from the “design” tab that now appears at the top of your screen.

Then click inside of your header and type the running head that must appear on your first page. Here is an example.

**Running head: SAMPLE PAPER**

Next, tab over to the right side of the header (you typically only need to press the tab button twice).

In the “design” tab, click “page number.”

Choose “current position,” then “plain number.” Your page number will appear in the header.

If your header and page number are not in Times New Roman 12 pt font, change their font to this.
• Click the “Close header and footer” icon in the “design” tab.

  ![Design Tab]

  **First Page**
  - Header from Top: 0.5"  
  **Odd & Even Pages**
  - Footer from Bottom: 0.5"

• Click “ctl” and “enter” at the same time (this is faster than clicking “enter” multiple times) to go to a second page and set up your running head for page 2 and all consecutive pages.

• Double click on “type here” at the top of your second page.

  [Type here]

• When the “design tab” opens up again, make sure you have [type here] highlighted in gray so you begin typing there.

• Notice that the design tab still has “different first page” checked, so the running head you are typing on page 2 can be different from page 1 without impacting the running head on page 1 and without restarting the page numbers.

• Type your running head (without the words “running head”), tab over, and insert a page number as you did for the first page. Your header will look like this:

  ![Sample Paper]

  "SAMPLE PAPER"

  ![Page 2]

• Again, change your font to Times New Roman 12 pt font if you must.

• Click “close header and footer,” and go back to page 1 to set up your title page.

**Step 6/7 – Type your paper/Set up reference page**

• Type your paper following all APA guidelines. Remember to properly cite inside of your text.

• It may be helpful to add to your reference page as you add an in-text citation; thus you may want to press “ctrl” and “enter” at the same time and add a reference page before you actually type your paper. Then you can add your references as you go along rather than waiting until the end to add your references. You can also just wait until the end of your paper to type all of your references.

• Your reference page should be in alphabetical order according to the first word in the citation (do not count “the,” “a,” “an” as the first word, though).

• The word “references” is centered, but the list is not centered, so don’t forget to change to left justification as you did for the rest of your manuscript.
Before typing your references, set up a hanging indent by doing the following steps:
  o On the “home” tab, go to “paragraph” and click the arrow to expand the menu.
  o In the paragraph menu, click the drop down menu under “indentation” and “special.”
Choose “hanging indent.”
Click “ok” to exit the menu.
Type your references, and only hit “enter” when you want to start a new reference. Once you hit “enter,” the paragraph indentation goes back out to the left side of the screen. This is what your references should look like with a hanging indent:

SAMPLE PAPER

References
