Formatting an APA Paper in MS Word: Using Templates

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 – Choosing your template
- Go to file – new and select APA style report. You may need to scroll down and look around for it. If you use it frequently, it may appear close to the top of your options.
Step 4 – Initial Set Up

- Note that all items where you should enter text have brackets around them. Remove the brackets when you type.
- Look at the instructions provided in each section – it explains the sections.
- If you know you will not be using anything that appears directly after the Reference page, you can delete that now.

Step 5 – Editing Your Header

- To edit your header, click the “insert” tab on your ribbon.
- Click “header”
- Choose the “edit header” option from the menu.
- Place your running head in the area on page one and two that says [shortened title up to 50 characters]. On the first page, do not remove the words Running head. Also, make sure the running head you enter is in all CAPS.
- Click “close header and footer.”

Step 6 – Fixing your spacing

- Your document is automatically set for double spacing, but the default in Word is always to add a space between paragraphs. Usually that space is added after paragraphs, however in this template the extra space is added before the paragraphs. You must remove this.
- At the same time, click the following keys to select all of your text in the document: “CTRL” and “A”
• On the “home” tab, click on the arrow in the spacing icon in the “paragraph” section.

• Choose the “remove space before paragraph” option from the menu.
• You will need to vertically center the title page information if it gets moved up after you remove the extra space.

Step 7 – Type your paper
• Type your paper. Note that there are examples of how to do the different level headings as well as footnotes. When you type your level headings, make sure you remove any footnote references provided in the example.
• Remove anything you don’t need. For example, you will most likely not need an “author note” on the title page unless specifically instructed to include this.
• Remove anything in the template after the “references” page that you do not use.

Step 8 – References – this section of the template can be tricky to work with
• Use the library’s APA guide for information about how to accurately do a reference page: http://pacollege.libguides.com/APA
• Follow the steps below to type your references in this section without the hanging indent getting messed up and removed.
• In order to properly type your references, you must first click in the area where the references are listed in the template. A box appears around your references area.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SHORTENED TITLE UP TO 50 CHARACTERS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

References

Last Name, F. M. (Year). Article Title. Journal Title, Pages From - To.

Last Name, F. M. (Year). Book Title. City Name: Publisher Name.

• Click on the first sample reference entry and drag your cursor to select both entries. Note that the entries will turn gray when you click on the first one, but you must still drag your cursor all of the way to the end of the second entry.
• Click the “delete” key on your keyboard to get rid of the sample entries.
• On the “home” tab, click on the pop out arrow icon in the “paragraph” section.

• Make sure your indentation is set to “hanging.”

• Click “ok.”

• Type your references. A hanging indent means that your reference will automatically indent as you keep typing. Do NOT hit “enter” to go to a new line while you are typing a reference. It will automatically wrap and indent for you.

• Hit “enter” when you are ready to type a new reference. When you hit “enter,” the cursor automatically comes back out and starts a new hanging indent.
Notes for using other templates:

- Office 365 (which you have access to via OneDrive) has a Word program online that also has an APA template page. You can type on this in the cloud or download it.
- Google Docs also has an APA paper template.
- In all cases, you must make sure you are using the correct parts of the template and removing what you don’t need and that you are also checking the spacing.