

ASA vs APA Citation Style Comparison Chart

Quick Overview

Feature	ASA (Sociology)	APA (Psychology/Social Sciences)
Full Name	American Sociological Association	American Psychological Association
Primary Field	Sociology	Psychology, Education, Social Sciences
Edition	6th Edition	7th Edition
Citation System	Author-Date	Author-Date

In-Text Citations

Element	ASA	APA
One author	(Smith 2020)	(Smith, 2020)
Two authors	(Smith and Jones 2020)	(Smith & Jones, 2020)
Three+ authors	(Smith et al. 2020)	(Smith et al., 2020)
Direct quote	(Smith 2020:45)	(Smith, 2020, p. 45)
Page range	(Smith 2020:45-47)	(Smith, 2020, pp. 45-47)
Multiple works	(Brown 2021; Smith 2020)	(Brown, 2021; Smith, 2020)
Secondary source	(Brown 2015, cited in Smith 2020)	(Brown, 2015, as cited in Smith, 2020)

Key Differences:

- **ASA:** No commas between author and year; use colon for pages
- **APA:** Commas between elements; use “p.” or “pp.” for pages
- **ASA:** Spells out “and” between authors
- **APA:** Uses ampersand “&” in parentheses

Reference List Formatting

Books

Style	Format
ASA	Author Last, First. Year. <i>Book Title</i> . City: Publisher.
APA	Author Last, First Initial. (Year). <i>Book title</i> . Publisher.

ASA Example:

Weber, Max. 1978. *Economy and Society*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

APA Example:
Weber, M. (1978). *Economy and society*. University of California Press.

Journal Articles

Style	Format
ASA	Author. Year. "Article Title." <i>Journal Name</i> Vol(Issue):Pages.
APA	Author. (Year). Article title. <i>Journal Name</i> , Vol(Issue), pages.

ASA Example:
Smith, Dorothy E. 1987. "Women's Perspective as a Radical Critique of Sociology." *Sociological Inquiry* 44(1):1-13.

APA Example:
Smith, D. E. (1987). Women's perspective as a radical critique of sociology. *Sociological Inquiry*, 44(1), 1-13.

Online Sources

Style	Format
ASA	Author. Year. "Title." <i>Website</i> . Retrieved Date (URL).
APA	Author. (Year). Title. <i>Website</i> . URL

ASA Example:
Brown, John. 2023. "Article Title." *Website Name*. Retrieved November 27, 2025 (<https://www.example.com>).

APA Example:
Brown, J. (2023). Article title. *Website Name*. <https://www.example.com>

Major Formatting Differences

Element	ASA	APA
Title capitalization	Standard title case	Sentence case
Article/chapter titles	"In quotation marks"	No quotation marks
Author names (refs)	Full first name	First initial only
Year placement	After author, no parentheses	After author, in parentheses
Publisher location	Required (City: Publisher)	Not required (Publisher only)
Retrieval date	Always required for websites	Only for changing content
DOI format	doi:10.xxxx	https://doi.org/10.xxxx
"et al." in references	List all authors	Use for 21+ authors
Page abbreviation	Pp. (multiple), P. (single)	pp. (multiple), p. (single)

Title Page Differences

Element	ASA	APA
Running head	Full title, all caps	Shortened title, not all caps
Title format	Centered, bold	Centered, bold
Author info	Name, institution, course, instructor, date	Name, institution, author note
Word count	Required	Optional
Abstract	150-200 words	150-250 words
Keywords	Listed after abstract	Listed after abstract

Heading Levels

ASA Headings:

1. **FIRST LEVEL:** CENTERED, BOLD, UPPERCASE
2. **Second Level:** Centered, Bold, Title Case
3. **Third Level:** Flush Left, Bold, Title Case
4. Fourth level: Indented, bold, sentence case.
5. *Fifth level:* Indented, italic, sentence case.

APA Headings:

1. **Centered, Bold, Title Case**
2. **Flush Left, Bold, Title Case**
3. **Flush Left, Bold Italic, Title Case**
4. **Indented, Bold, Title Case, Ending With Period.**
5. **Indented, Bold Italic, Title Case, Ending With Period.**

When to Use Each Style

Use ASA when:

- ✓ Writing for sociology courses
- ✓ Submitting to sociology journals
- ✓ Conducting sociological research
- ✓ Professor specifically requires ASA

Use APA when:

- ✓ Writing for psychology courses
- ✓ Writing for education, nursing, business courses
- ✓ Submitting to social science journals (non-sociology)
- ✓ Most behavioral and social sciences

Quick Comparison Examples

In-Text Citation:

- **ASA:** Smith (2020) argues that sociology requires critical analysis.
- **APA:** Smith (2020) argues that psychology requires critical analysis.

With Quote:

- **ASA:** The author states, “quotation here” (Smith 2020:45).
- **APA:** The author states, “quotation here” (Smith, 2020, p. 45).

Reference Entry (Book):

- **ASA:** Marx, Karl. 1867. *Capital: Volume One*. London: Penguin Books.
- **APA:** Marx, K. (1867). *Capital: Volume one*. Penguin Books.

Reference Entry (Journal):

- **ASA:** Weber, Max. 1905. “The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism.” *American Journal of Sociology* 11(1):1-30.
 - **APA:** Weber, M. (1905). The Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism. *American Journal of Sociology*, 11(1), 1-30.
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Key Similarities

Both ASA and APA: - ✓ Use author-date citation system - ✓ Require double-spacing throughout - ✓ Use 12-point Times New Roman font - ✓ Need 1-inch margins on all sides - ✓ Require hanging indents for references - ✓ Alphabetize reference lists - ✓ Include page numbers in headers - ✓ Require title pages

Most Common Student Mistakes

Mixing ASA and APA: - ☐ Using commas in ASA citations - ☐ Using “&” in ASA citations - ☐ Forgetting publisher location in ASA - ☐ Including retrieval dates for all APA sources - ☐ Using quotation marks for articles in APA - ☐ Capitalizing article titles fully in APA

Remember: Check your assignment requirements! Professors specify which style to use.

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Quick Tip: When in doubt, check your course syllabus or ask your professor which style is required.