

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

**Title Page Differences**

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

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## 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.