ASA Paper Formatting Checklist

Basic Document Setup

Margins and Spacing

- ☐ 1-inch margins on all sides (top, bottom, left, right)
- ☐ Double-spacing throughout entire document (no exceptions)
- ☐ No extra spacing between paragraphs or sections
- ☐ Left-aligned text (not justified)

Font and Text

- ☐ 12-point Times New Roman font
- ☐ Black text throughout
- ☐ First line of each paragraph indented 0.5 inches
- ☐ No extra indentation for block quotes

Page Setup

- ☐ Page numbers in top right corner
- ☐ Page numbers on every page (including title page)
- ☐ Running head on every page in header
- ☐ Pages in correct order: Title page → Abstract → Main text → References

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Title Page (Page 1)

- ☐ Running head in header (abbreviated title, 50 characters max, uppercase)
- ☐ Full title centered and bolded
- ☐ Your name below title
- ☐ Institution/university name
- ☐ Course name and number
- ☐ Instructor's name
- ☐ Date of submission
- ☐ Word count at bottom (if required)
- ☐ All elements centered on page

Example Layout:

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Running Head: SOCIAL INEQUALITY AND EDUCATION

[Center and bold]
Social Inequality and Educational Outcomes in Urban Schools

Your Name
University Name
SOC 301: Introduction to Sociology
Professor Smith
November 27, 2025

Word Count: 3,250
```

Abstract Page (Page 2)

- ☐ Running head continues in header
- ☐ "Abstract" centered and bold at top of page
- ☐ Single paragraph, 150-200 words
- ☐ No paragraph indentation for abstract
- ☐ Keywords listed below abstract (3-5 keywords)
- ☐ Format: "Keywords: keyword1, keyword2, keyword3"

Main Text (Starts Page 3)

Title and Introduction

- ☐ Full title repeated at top (centered, bold)
- ☐ Introduction begins immediately after title
- ☐ First paragraph indented
- ☐ No "Introduction" heading needed

Headings

- ☐ First-level headings: CENTERED, BOLD, UPPERCASE
- ☐ Second-level headings: Centered, Bold, Title Case
- ☐ Third-level headings: Flush Left, Bold, Title Case
- ☐ Fourth-level headings: Indented, bold, sentence case.
- ☐ Fifth-level headings: *Indented, italic, sentence case.*
- ☐ Consistent heading levels throughout

Body Text

- ☐ All paragraphs indented except after headings
- ☐ Consistent paragraph spacing
- ☐ Past tense for completed research
- ☐ Present tense for general statements
- ☐ Active voice preferred over passive

Citations

In-Text Citations

- ☐ Author-date format used: (Smith 2020)
- ☐ No comma between author and year
- ☐ "and" used between authors (not "&")
- ☐ "et al." for three or more authors
- ☐ Page numbers with colon: (Smith 2020:45)
- ☐ Multiple citations separated by semicolon: (Brown 2021; Smith 2020)

Citation Accuracy

- ☐ Every in-text citation has matching reference entry
- ☐ Every reference entry is cited in text
- ☐ Author names spelled correctly and consistently
- ☐ Years match between in-text and reference list
- ☐ No citations in abstract

Tables and Figures

Tables

- ☐ Numbered consecutively (Table 1, Table 2, etc.)
- ☐ Title above table (Table 1. Descriptive Title)
- ☐ Simple, clear formatting
- ☐ Notes below table if needed
- ☐ Referenced in text before they appear
- ☐ Double-spaced

Figures

- ☐ Numbered consecutively (Figure 1, Figure 2, etc.)
- ☐ Title below figure (Figure 1. Descriptive Title)
- ☐ Clear and readable
- ☐ Referenced in text before they appear
- ☐ High quality images/graphs

References Page

Basic Setup

- ☐ Starts on new page after main text
- ☐ "REFERENCES" centered, bold, uppercase at top
- ☐ All entries alphabetized by author's last name
- ☐ Hanging indent (0.5 inches) for all entries
- ☐ Double-spaced with no extra spacing between entries
- ☐ Continues running head in header

Entry Formatting

- ☐ Full author names (first and last)
- ☐ Year after author (no parentheses)
- ☐ Book titles italicized
- ☐ Journal names italicized
- ☐ Article titles in quotation marks
- ☐ Publisher location included for books
- ☐ Retrieval date for all websites
- ☐ DOI or URL for online sources
- ☐ Page numbers use "Pp." or "P."

Common Elements

- ☐ Format: Author Last, First. Year. *Title*. Location: Publisher.
- ☐ Journal format: Author. Year. "Title." *Journal* Volume(Issue):Pages.
- ☐ Website format: Author. Year. "Title." *Site*. Retrieved Date (URL).

Numbers and Statistics

- ☐ Numbers one through nine spelled out
- ☐ Numbers 10 and above as numerals
- ☐ Exceptions: Always use numerals for ages, dates, percentages, statistics
- ☐ Percentages: use "percent" in text, "%" in tables

☐ Statistical symbols italicized (p, n, M, SD)

Quotations

Short Quotes (fewer than 40 words)

☐ Integrated into text with quotation marks
☐ Citation includes page number: (Smith 2020:45)
☐ Punctuation after citation

Long Quotes (40+ words)

☐ Block format: new line, indented 0.5 inches
☐ No quotation marks for block quotes
☐ Double-spaced
☐ Citation after final punctuation

Common Errors to Check

Formatting Errors

☐ No single spacing anywhere
☐ No use of bold for emphasis in text
☐ No underlining (use italics instead)
☐ No extra spaces between sections
☐ Consistent font throughout

Citation Errors

☐ No missing in-text citations
☐ No missing reference entries
☐ No "&" between authors (use "and")
☐ No commas in citations: (Smith 2020) not (Smith, 2020)
☐ No "p." or "pp." in citations (use colon): (Smith 2020:45)

Reference Errors

☐ No incomplete entries
☐ No incorrect alphabetization
☐ No missing publisher locations
☐ No missing retrieval dates for websites
☐ No URLs without dates

Before Submission Checklist

Final Review

☐ Spell check completed
☐ Grammar check completed
☐ All names and dates verified
☐ All citations checked against sources
☐ Running head correct on all pages

☐ Page numbers on all pages
☐ File saved in correct format (.doc, .docx, or .pdf)
☐ File named correctly per assignment requirements

Content Review

☐ Thesis statement clear and present
☐ Arguments supported with evidence
☐ Transitions between paragraphs smooth
☐ Conclusion summarizes main points
☐ No plagiarism (all sources cited)
☐ Meets minimum/maximum word count

Assignment-Specific

☐ Follows specific professor requirements
☐ Addresses all parts of assignment prompt
☐ Includes required sections
☐ Submitted by deadline
☐ Submitted to correct platform

Quick ASA Format Summary

Basic Rules: - 1-inch margins, 12pt Times New Roman, double-spaced - Author-date citations: (Smith 2020) - No commas in citations, use "and" not "&" - Hanging indents in references - Full author names in references - Italicize book/journal titles - Quote article/chapter titles - Include publisher location - Retrieval dates for websites

Page Order: 1. Title page (with running head, title, author info) 2. Abstract (150-200 words + keywords) 3. Main text (title repeated, then introduction) 4. References (new page, alphabetized) 5. Tables/Figures (if separate from text)

Last Updated: November 2024
Print this checklist and check off items as you review your paper!