

Dissertator's Checklist

UPDATED FOR
APA 7TH EDITION

Before you submit

Follow this checklist of reminders
before you submit your dissertation
proposal or manuscript

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Revised 2022

for APA 7th edition

In this updated guide, you will find a comprehensive checklist of actions to take before you submit to make sure your paper is as close to perfect as possible in three critical areas:

- The ***format*** of your document must comply with your institution's template. Learn how to take advantage of Word's time-saving features to create an accurate table of contents and lists of tables/figures.
- The ***style*** of your document must comply with the requirements of the style manual you use. For social scientists, that style guide is usually the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (APA; 7th edition).
- The ***content*** of your document must comply with standards for dissertation structure and alignment.

Before you submit your document to your reviewers, review this checklist to make sure you have covered everything.

Note. This guide is written especially for dissertators enrolled in social science fields (e.g., business, education, psychology, sociology, and so on).

Updated for APA 7th edition.

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INTRODUCTION

Few things are more dreaded than submitting your dissertation proposal or manuscript and receiving a notice to revise and resubmit. We work hard on our papers. We are sure they are perfect. So what is the problem?

Assuming your topic and approach are suitable, institutional reviewers reject your dissertations for three main reasons:

- You messed up the format.
- You didn't follow the style guide.
- Your content is out of alignment or unclear.

Any of these can lead to rejection of your paper. In this guide, I will describe each one, offer some examples of what can go wrong, and give you a checklist and some tips on how to revise so you have the best chance of earning approval.

In general, the reminders in this guide are the things I look for when I'm editing a dissertation proposal or manuscript. When I edit, I apply a three-stage process:

1. First, page by page, I fix formatting problems. I set Word styles, add table and figure numbers, fix pagination, adjust line spacing, and generate the table of contents and lists of tables and figures.
2. Next, I edit the paper line by line, fixing grammar, punctuation, APA style problems, citation issues, and formatting problems that I missed on the first pass.
3. Finally, I switch to Full Screen Reading mode and read the paper for logic, content, transitions, and alignment among the elements (problem, purpose, research questions, and methods).

FORMAT

- University template and style guide
- Margins
- Font style and size
- Line spacing and exceptions
- Number of spaces between sentences
- Pagination
- Nonbreaking spaces
- Table of contents
- Lists of tables and figures
- Tables
- Figures
- Landscape orientation
- References

University template and style guide

Your university style takes precedence over any other style. Always follow the template first. Don't get creative. It's easy for your reviewers to reject your paper, even before they read it, simply by comparing it to your institution's template. Make sure all your headings match the template, no more, no less, according to requirements.

Margins

Follow your university's template to set your margins. APA prefers at least one inch margins all around. (See APA 7th ed., section 2.22.)

Font style and size

Follow your university's template for font style and size. APA prefers Times New Roman 12 point. (See APA 7th ed., section 2.19.)

Line spacing and exceptions

Follow your university's template for line spacing. Some institutions will allow single-spaced indented quotes and reference lists. APA prefers double-spaced throughout (including indented quotes and references. Exceptions: Content in tables and figures may be single-spaced. (See APA 7th ed., section 2.21.)

Number of spaces between sentences

Follow your university's template. APA prefers one space after punctuation marks (that means, between sentences; see APA 7th ed., section 6.1). Do a Find & Replace search on two spaces.

Pagination

Follow your university's template for pagination. APA style was designed for journal articles, not for dissertations. For journal articles, APA requires a running head (See APA 7th ed., section 2.8.) Most dissertations don't show a running head.

In dissertations, the page number usually appears either bottom centered or in the upper right corner. The front matter (preliminary pages) usually shows lowercase Roman numerals. The body of the paper to the end of the appendices shows Arabic numerals. The title page is counted as page 1 of the front matter, but a page number should not appear on the title page or the copyright page, if you have one. Page 1 starts on the first page of Chapter 1.

Landscape-oriented pages should show the page number in the same location as it appears on the portrait-oriented pages. Follow these steps for landscape-oriented page numbers:

1. Insert NEXT PAGE page breaks *before and after* the page that will be landscape. This creates a *section*.
2. Change the orientation of the section to landscape.
3. *Unlink the headers and footers* from the previous and subsequent sections. This is important!
4. Remove any text in the headers and footers for just the landscape section. Scroll up to check that you didn't just inadvertently remove page numbers from previous sections.
5. Insert a page number relative to the page margin.
6. Rotate the page number text to align with other page numbers and move the text box to the right spot.
7. Check that the page number is formatted correctly (size, font, borderless).
8. Set the page number to be continuously numbered from previous section.
9. Check your pagination to make sure it is continuous.

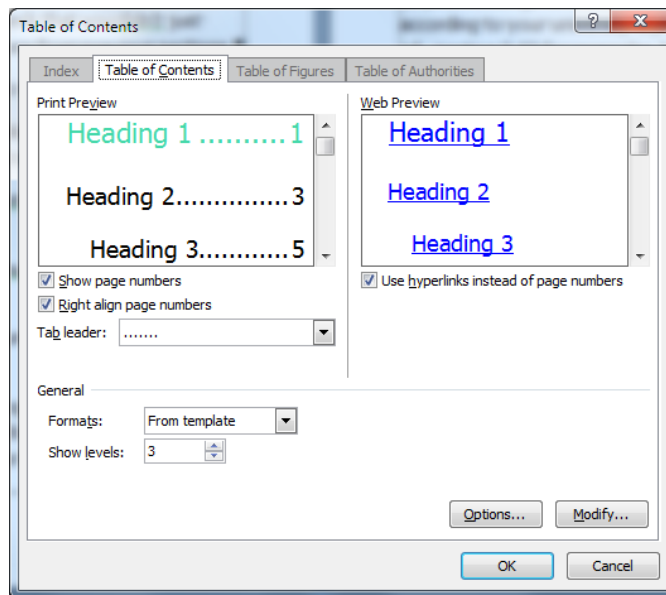
Nonbreaking spaces

Nonbreaking spaces keep bits of text together. For example, use nonbreaking space to keep a page number with the word *page*, so they don't get separated at the end of a line. To insert a nonbreaking space, press CONTROL + SHIFT + SPACEBAR at the same time. In the reference list, do NOT use nonbreaking spaces. If any appear from your source management software, strip them out using the Find & Replace function. Replace them with regular spaces.

Want to know how to tell a nonbreaking space from a regular space? Turn on the SHOW/HIDE button on the Home Ribbon to show the nonprinting characters. The nonbreaking spaces look like little circles. Regular spaces look like dots. I use nonbreaking spaces to write (p. x) in a page number citation to keep the *p.* with the *x*. With SHOW/HIDE on, it looks like this: (p.°x).

Table of contents

Follow your university's template. (Get a sample if you can.) Word can generate an accurate table of contents very quickly as long as you apply Word styles to all your headings and subheadings. Format the heading styles according to your university style or follow APA style (See APA 7th ed., section 2.27 for examples.) For best results, use the INSERT TABLE OF CONTENTS command (under the REFERENCES Ribbon/ TABLE OF CONTENTS) rather than one of Word's preformatted built-in tables.



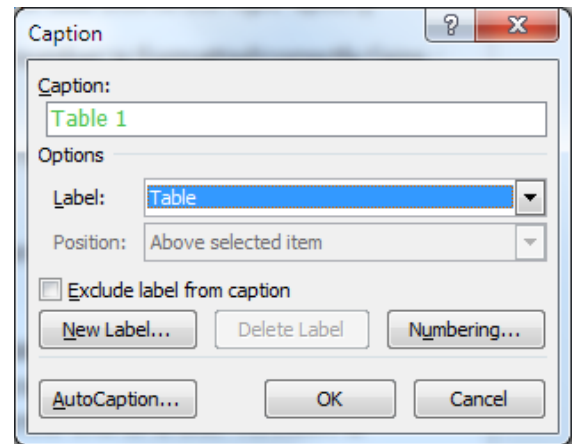
Lists of tables and figures

Follow your university's guidelines for lists of tables and figures.

Dissertators usually show a list of tables and a list of figures after the table of contents. Word can generate accurate lists quickly if you use the INSERT CAPTION command on the REFERENCES Ribbon to mark each table or figure in the text. Choose either figure or table caption and insert above the table/figure. The table or figure number is a field that Word counts to generate the lists.

Follow these steps:

1. Put your cursor where you want your table title to appear (above). Choose INSERT CAPTION/ Table from the REFERENCES Ribbon. Word will insert the table title where your cursor is blinking. If your computer is set to mark fields with gray, it will look like this: Table 1.



2. After the numeral, insert a soft line break (SHIFT + ENTER) and type your table title on the next line. In APA, the table title is double-spaced. The title itself is italicized (See example).
3. In APA, a table number should not show a period after the number. However, we often need to show a period after the table numbers in our list of tables. What a dilemma. Here's my workaround: I add a period after the table number and change the font color of the period to white. The dot will appear in the list of tables but be invisible after the table number in the text of the paper. Crazy, I know. Don't tell anyone.

Here's an example of a table. I introduce the table before it appears, like this: Table 1 shows an example of a table in a borderless cell, showing the nonprinting line break after the table number.

Table 1 ↵

Title of Table Goes Here¶

Column Heading 1	Column Heading 2
Text	100.5
Text	12.5

The text of the paper continues here. Now I discuss the table. I use a decimal tab to align values on the decimal. Leave the numbers left-aligned. When you apply a decimal tab (use the tab ruler), you'll see the values line up in the middle of the cells. No tabs required.

Tables

Follow your university's formatting guidelines for tables. APA has some strict guidelines about table format (see APA 7th ed., Chapter 7). You will be safe if you follow these rules:

- Add no vertical borders; use horizontal lines only, above and below the column heading row and below the last row of the table.
- Use no bold or italics in the table itself. The table title is italicized and title case. "Table #" is bold.
- Use no colors in tables. Use asterisks and daggers to identify key data.

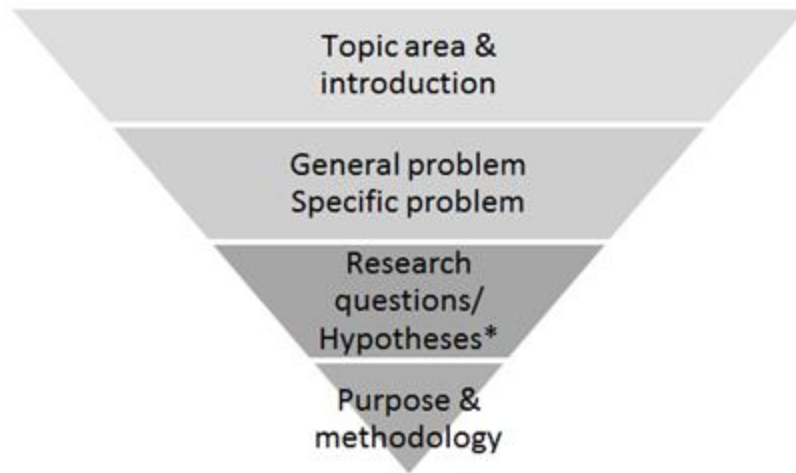
- Use fonts no smaller than 10 point; use the same font style as the text of paper.
- Set the line spacing to single and the paragraph spacing before and after to 6 points. If you need to tighten up the table to get it to fit to the space, decrease the paragraph spacing before and after, but no less than 3 points.

Figures

Follow your university's guidelines for figure formats. Figures are everything except tables. If your figure looks like a table, redo it as a table. In APA 7th ed., figure captions appear above the image (see figure 1).

Figure 1 ↵

Title of Figure Goes Here



Source: Aligning the elements (Desperate Dissertator Series, Vol. 2), by C. Booton, 2019, Crossline Press, p. 8.

1. Figures in Word sometimes jump around and don't stay put. To remedy this problem, I sometimes create a two-cell borderless Word table. I put the figure in the top cell and the caption in the bottom cell. It's easier to keep the caption with the image (see figure). I set the width of the table to AUTOFIT and set the percentage width to 97% so the table stays within the margins.

2. Use the INSERT CAPTION command on the REFERENCES ribbon and choose *Figure*. Put the cursor above your figure and choose INSERT CAPTION/Figure. Word will insert the figure caption above the figure. If your computer is set to mark fields with gray, it will look like this: Figure 1.
3. Next, modify the Word caption style to Times New Roman 12 point, single-spaced, with 6 points paragraph spacing above the caption.
4. Don't put a title in the figure itself.
5. Follow APA format for the source information. It is not the same format as the entry in your reference list. See examples in APA 7th ed., Chapter 7.
6. Make sure you have permission from the author to use figures you "borrowed" from other sources.

Landscape orientation

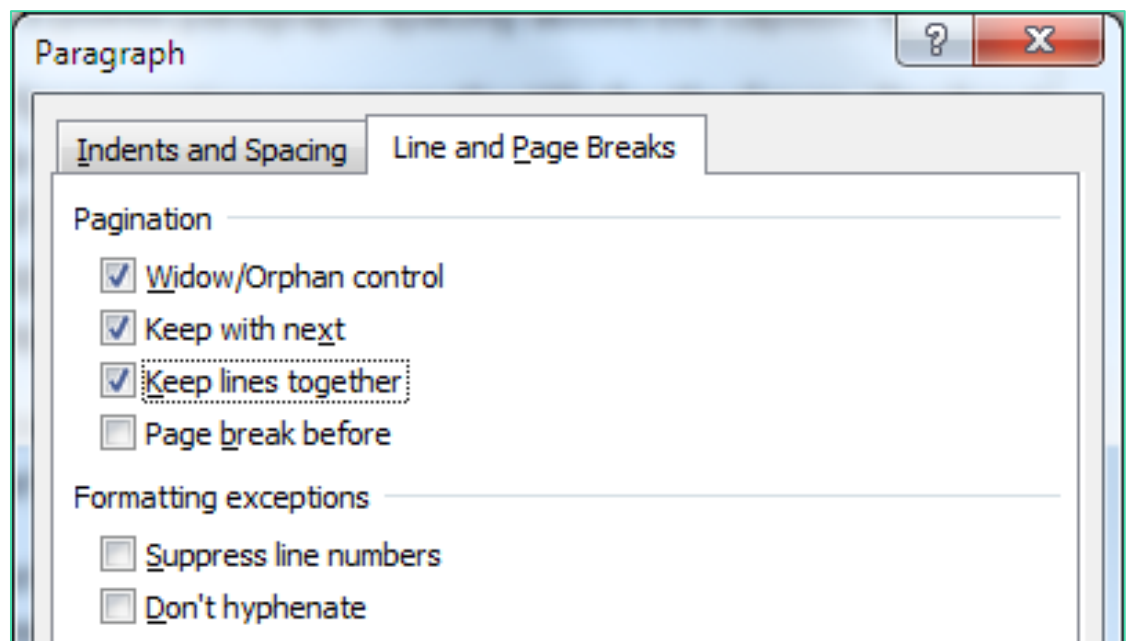
To add a landscape-oriented page, see instructions for pagination.

References

Follow your university's requirements. References lists can be tricky if you don't have the SHOW/HIDE button on. You need to see all the spaces, tabs, and line breaks to manage the format of your references.

1. Whether you use source management software or type the list yourself, set a Word style that you can apply to the entire list.
2. In APA, references are double-spaced. Your institution's format may be single-spaced with a blank line between entries. If that is the case, set the line spacing to single and the paragraph spacing after to 12 points.

3. All APA reference lists use a half-inch (0.5") hanging indent. Set the line/page break options to show widow/orphan control, keep with next, and keep lines together. This will ensure your entries are not split across pages (see figure).
4. Do not use nonbreaking spaces in the references.
5. Do not press ENTER or TAB or SPACEBAR a billion times in the middle of an entry to get it to align. Set the Word style and apply it to all the entries at once. Delete any extra ENTERs, TABs, and spaces. You should have ONE hard line break—at the end of each entry. No TABs allowed.



STYLE (APA)

- Citations
- Use of et al.
- Anthropomorphism
- Passive voice/active voice
- First person
- Hyphenation
- Numbers
- Verb tense
- Bias
- Reference list
- Heading levels
- Em dashes and endashes
- Quotation marks

Citations

See APA, 7th ed., Chapter 8 for examples of citations. Here are some examples showing citations in running text and at the end of the sentence.

Running text: Booton (2019) said the moon is made of green cheese. Hangry (2013) claimed the moon is actually made of a hard yellow substance similar to cheddar.

At end of sentence: Other authors have disagreed with Hangry's assertion (Smart, 2018; Wise, 2015). The moon is too far away to retrieve an accurate sample to taste (Booton, 2019).

Use of *et al.*

Et al. is Latin for "and all the rest of those guys." Well, sort of. We use it in APA style when we cite three or more authors even, for the first mention.

The moon could be made of some other substance but few researchers have studied the moon in terms of cheese (Booton, 2019; Click et al., 2017). Click et al. referred to the moon as a "large, round object" (p. 24).

Et al. is NOT italicized. There is NO period after *et*. The period follows the *al*. If the citation is inside a set of parentheses, the *al* is followed by a comma, like this: (Booton et al., 2019).

Before you submit, do a search for *space et period* to catch instances of et followed by a period. Do a search for *et al space* to catch instances of a missing period.

Anthropomorphism

APA 7th edition has greatly eased up on the rules for anthropomorphism. It's common to see phrases like "the study defined...", "the study examines...", "the study found...", or "the conclusions suggest..." Those phrases are examples of anthropomorphism—giving living qualities to inanimate objects, in

this case, the study. Studies can't do any of those things. Only people can. In APA 6th edition, we couldn't use any of those constructs. In APA 7th edition, we can. See APA, 7th ed., section 4.11.

Passive voice/active voice

Passive voice is a style of arranging the subject and verb in your writing so that the action is not active. Here are some examples:

Passive voice: The data were collected with a survey.

Passive voice: A survey was used to collect the data.

Active voice: I collected the data with a survey.

Active voice: I used a survey to collect the data.

Active voice: A survey collected the data.

You can set your Word options to flag instances of passive voice. Some reviewers will reject your paper if you have even one. APA prefers we use first person, although some reviewers won't allow that either. Argh. Whatever you do, follow your reviewers' preferences first. See APA 7th ed., section 4.13.

First person

APA prefers first person (*I reviewed the literature*) to third person (*the researcher reviewed the literature*), and certainly, to passive voice (*the literature was reviewed*). The main reason for using first person rather than third person or passive voice is to achieve clarity in our writing (see APA 7th ed., sections 4.13 and 4.16). Follow your reviewers' preferences. See figure 2 for a view of the hierarchy.

Hyphenation

Hyphens in APA style seem to be a big deal (see APA 7th ed., section 6.12, table 6.2). Dissertators' hyphenation styles are typically all over the map, even within one document. Even if we get it wrong, we should be consistently wrong throughout!

Commonly hyphenated prefixes that APA does NOT want us to hyphenate: after, anti, bi, co, extra, inter, meta, mid, mini, multi, non, over, post, pre, quasi, re, semi, socio, super, ultra, un, under.

For example: Pretest, posttest, semistructured, socioeconomic, midlevel, multidimensional, coworker, overdeveloped, preexisting underdeveloped, antisocial, aftertaste, reevaluate.

Exceptions: non-Hispanic, meta-analysis, post-1980, self-esteem, anti-intellectual, co-occur, *t*-test results (*but t* test)

Do not hyphenate adverbs ending in *ly* (e.g., widely accepted theory, randomly assigned participants); compounds including a comparative or superlative adjective (better written paper, higher scoring students); or common fractions used as nouns (two thirds).

Do not hyphenate African American, *t* test.

Some other examples: Day-to-day basis, role-playing technique (*but* role playing; decision-making process, *but* decision making), middle-class families (*but* middle class), two-thirds majority (*but* two thirds of the children).

Word's spell check doesn't always like the word that results when we remove the hyphen, but you can add the word to Word's dictionary if you don't like seeing the red wavy line.

Numbers

APA style is somewhat different from other style guides (see APA, 7th ed., sections 6.32-6.35).

In general, use numerals for 10 and above. Below 10, spell out the number (one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine).

Use numerals to express statistical or math functions, fractional or decimal quantities, percentages, ratios, percentiles, and quartiles.

Multiplied by 5, 3 times as many, 7 out of 10 people, the 5th percentile, a ratio of 1:2, $N = 1,278$, $n = 8$ (*but* eight people were selected for the sample).

Use numerals to represent time, dates, ages, scores, points on a scale, and exact sums of money.

1 hour 34 minutes
2-year-olds
Scored 1 on a 10-point scale
\$40 million
about four years old
52%

Spell out numbers if they begin a sentence, if they are common fractions, or universally accepted as written. Combine words and numbers.

Forty-eight percent of the class...
One fifth of the class...
First two items, ten 7-point scales

Verb tense

We have three options for verb tense in academic writing (see APA 7th ed., section 4.13). Try to be consistent within paragraphs, but aim for clarity. Read it aloud to check how it sounds. Your ear can hear errors your eyes will miss.

Future tense. I will use a mixed-methods methodology to explore the problem of high school students' dropout rates.

Much of your proposal will be written in future tense—mostly in Chapter 1 (Introduction) and Chapter 3 (Methodology). You haven't implemented your study yet, so future tense is appropriate.

Past tense. Smith (2013) found that 55% of the high school students in the school district graduated.

Most of your Chapter 2 (Literature Review) will be written in past tense. The research you cite is over, it's completed, it's done. Some of the researchers you cite are dead and will remain dead, so writing about them in first person is simply silly (e.g., Freud believes...). Even your own study, once you implement it, will become "previous research." In your discussion chapter, before you submit your dissertation manuscript, you'll have to go back through your paper and change virtually all the instances of future tense (I will study) to past tense (I studied).

Present perfect tense. Researchers have found that many students drop out of school because of cultural factors (Armer & Bell, 2013; Dill et al., 2015; Pace, Fig, & Regner, 2014).

Present perfect tense is useful when you are writing about research findings that still have an effect on current conditions. The research is not totally complete or finished; it's more like the research is ongoing. In this example, students are still dropping out of school and researchers are still trying to figure out why. Some of your Chapter 2 will employ the present perfect tense. Read the sentences you write aloud—often, your ear will tell you the correct verb tense.

Bias

The main bias to watch for in our writing is subconscious gender bias. APA style supports gender neutrality in academic writing (see APA 7th ed., Chapter 5). This is why we use initials and last names only when we cite researchers and make the list of references. When we are discussing seminal researchers, sometimes we might need to use first names. I try to keep the use of gender-specific pronouns to a minimum ("he" or "she") because readers have been conditioned to respond differently to a female researcher's conclusions compared to a male researcher's.

When describing research findings, I use plural third person (they, them, their), rather than a gender-specific pronoun (he, she, her, him.)

Our focus should be on the research, not on the researcher. I recommend whenever possible putting the researcher's name in parentheses after the statement he or she inspired. In other words, lead with the idea, not the person.

However, here's some news. It is now acceptable, according to APA 7th edition, to use "they" to refer to a singular person. See APA 7th ed., section 5.5.

Reference list

The list of references is the long list of sources you place at the end of your proposal or manuscript. See APA 7th ed., chapter 10.

Make a new Word style (call it *References*) or set the format as follows: Line spacing: single-spaced with 12 points paragraph spacing after, or double-space all (depending on your institution's guidelines), depending on your institutional guidelines. Alignment: left. Indent: Hanging indent 0.5" (a half inch). Line and page breaks: Widow/orphan, Keep with next, Keep lines together (to prevent any of your items from breaking in the middle of an entry).

- Journal article: Author, A. B., Author, B. B., & Author C. C. (2010). Title of article: Subheading of article title. *Title of Periodical*, 1(2), 23–25.
<https://doi.org/10.xxxxxxxx>
- Book: Author, A. A. (2010). *Title of work*. Publisher Name.
- Article in book: Author, A. A., & Author, B. B. (2010). Title of chapter or article. In A. Editor, B. Editor, & C. Editor (Eds.), *Title of book* (3rd ed., pp. xx–xx). Publisher Name.
- Dissertation: Author, A. A. (2010). *Title of dissertation* (Publication No. xxxxxx) [Doctoral dissertation, University of Green Cheese]. ProQuest Dissertation and Theses Database.

Heading levels

APA has five heading levels (see APA 7th ed., section 2.27).
(UC/LC = upper case/lowercase)

Level 1: Centered, bold, UC/LC

Level 2: Flush left, bold, UC/LC

Level 3: Flush left, bold, italic, UC/LC

Level 4: Paragraph indented bold, UC/LC, ending with a period. Text goes here, on and on and on...

Level 5: Paragraph indented, bold, italic, UC/LC, ending with a period. Text goes here...

Many institutions add a Level 0 to account for chapter level headings. APA was designed for journal articles, not for long papers such as dissertations. That means the first APA heading level would be Level 1. Check your institution's guidelines before you format your paper with a Level 0 heading style.

Emdashes and endashes

The dash is an extended hyphen. APA uses the emdash (so called because it takes up the space of a lowercase letter *m* (looks like this: —; see APA 7th ed., section 6.6). The emdash is used to set off two ideas, much as we use a colon or semicolon, but with more emphasis; for example,

Many researchers have studied the moon's composition—
however, few have actually been there.

The keyboard shortcut to insert an emdash is ALT + 0151 on the number keypad.

You may have seen the endash, which is the width of a lower case *n* (looks like this: –). You may see the endash used to separate two numbers, signifying a range, like page numbers (e.g., pp. 23–25). The endash is used between words of equal weight in

a compound adjective: student–teacher ratio, theory–practice debate, Chicago–London flight.

Note: The minus sign is not the endash, nor is it a hyphen. There is no simple keyboard shortcut for the true minus sign. Instead, do this: To insert a minus sign, use the INSERT SYMBOL on the INSERT ribbon. The minus sign is Symbol 45.

Quotation marks

The closing quotation mark goes at the end of the quoted material, so that all the quoted content is sandwiched between two quotation marks. Make sure they appear “curly” in your version of Word.

In American English punctuation, type the terminal punctuation (period, comma, question mark, exclamation mark) inside the closing quotation mark (see APA 7th ed., section 6.7).

“The moon is made of green cheese.”

Booton (2019) claimed, “The moon is a massive hunk of stinky green cheese” (p. 2).

Booton (2019) claimed the moon is made of green cheese.

Some researchers have said the moon is made of “stinky green cheese” (Booton, 2019, p. 2).

Note: If you are following UK English punctuation rules, the quotation mark precedes the terminal punctuation.

For an indented (long) quote (40 or more words), APA uses NO quotation marks at all (see APA 7th ed., section 8.27).

CONTENT

- Alignment between elements
- Plagiarism
- Clarity

I can't tell you *what* to write. As an editor, that is not my job. Writing content is your job; you are the dissertator. You are the expert on your topic. When I use the word *content*, I'm talking about structure and organization, lack of academic integrity (plagiarism), and clarity.

Aligning the elements

Lack of alignment between successive dissertation elements is possibly the most common reason a dissertation proposal fails to receive approval.

The term *alignment* refers to the logical progression of ideas in the structural elements of the dissertation. When our Chair and committee members talk about achieving alignment, they are referring to the logical progression from the introduction, to the problem statement, to the purpose statement, to the research questions and hypotheses (if we have a quantitative study), and finally to the methodology.

I was so confounded by the alignment problem that later I wrote an entire book about it to help dissertators align their dissertation elements. Here are some suggestions:

- Use terms and language consistently among the elements of your dissertation. Make a list of key terms and use them—and only them.
- Create a matrix of the elements in your dissertation so you can see how they relate and flow logically from one to the next.
- Academic writing is not creative writing. Make life easy for your readers and reviewers. Don't worry about being "boring." Be clear and explicit. Keep it simple.
- Use introductory phrases such as "the problem addressed in this study is/was..." and "the purpose of this study is/was..." so if you need to revise your problem or purpose, you can do a find-and-replace throughout your document.
- Derive your research questions and survey/interview questions from the components of the theories you plan to use as your framework so theory is embedded in the bones of your project.

Your best approach to avoid misalignment among your elements is to read a lot of dissertations to find out what others have done to succeed. You will get a sense of the rhythm and relationships from one element to the next. You'll see how the purpose statement flows from the problem statement, how the methodology flows from and supports the research questions.

In addition, you will be amazed at the amount of ambiguity you can get away with, especially if you attend a traditional nonprofit university. For an idea of how much wiggle room you really have, read my book *Aligning the Elements*. I studied a small sample of dissertations and was astounded at the lack of alignment—in a few cases, critical elements such as the problem statement were missing completely. I know!

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is when we “borrow” someone else’s words, thoughts, ideas, and concepts without giving them credit. You can call it *borrowing*, but essentially, plagiarism is stealing. Whatever you *borrowed*, if you don’t say clearly who you borrowed it from and provide a usable link or reference back to the original source, you run the risk of being accused of plagiarism, which can get you expelled from your program. See APA 7th ed., section 8.2.

When I am editing a paper and I see a claim of some kind, I expect to see a citation to support the claim. If I don’t see a citation, I wonder, is the dissertator an expert in the field? Is she stating her opinion? Or has she borrowed other researchers’ thoughts without giving them credit? If I question it, your reviewers will question it.

Claims need support. In your Literature Review, just about every sentence you write will need support—hey, it’s a literature *review*! If you write a bunch of statements and don’t cite some literature for support, you are missing the point of a literature review. Save your opinions for your closing chapter (based on your findings, of course).

Clarity

Writing clear content means avoiding unnecessary words, jargon, and vague pronouns (it, they, this, that, these, those; see APA 7th ed., sections 4.4, 4.5, and 4.9). To help readers navigate your content, you should use transitions.

Table 1. Avoid these imprecise or wordy words and phrases.

Instead of this...	Use this...
a majority of	most
a number of	some, many, several, few
comprises	forms, includes
deem	believe, consider, think
due to, due to the fact that	because of
employ	use
evidenced/exhibited/exemplified	showed
evident	clear
for a period of	for
furthermore	further
has the ability to	can
in order that	to
in regard to/regarding	about, concerning
individual	person
it is	<i>omit</i>
it is believed that	<i>omit</i>
it is necessary that	must, should
it is often the case that	often
since	because
there are	<i>omit</i>
this and/or that	this, that, or both
through the use of/via	by, with, through, using
utilize	use
while	although, and, but
with the exception of	except for

Table 2. Use transition words and phrases.

then	Next,	after
while	Thus,	Therefore,
Consequently,	As a result,	In addition,
Moreover,	Further	Similarly,
In sum,	Nevertheless,	in fact,
However,	Although	in contrast,
More important,	Most interesting,	Finally,

Table 3. Acceptable and unacceptable adverbs.

Instead of this	Use this
Hopefully	I hope (or omit)
Interestingly,	omit
Most interestingly,	Most interesting,
Importantly,	omit
More importantly,	More important,
Firstly, secondly, lastly	First, second, finally

These are okay anytime

Fortunately,	Consequently,
Similarly,	Conversely,

SUMMARY

- University template
- Margins
- Font style and font size
- Line spacing
- Number of spaces between sentences
- Pagination
- Nonbreaking spaces
- Table of contents
- Lists of tables and figures
- Tables
- Figures
- Landscape orientation
- References
- Citations
- Use of et al.
- Anthropomorphism
- Passive voice/active voice
- First person
- Hyphenation
- Numbers
- Verb tense
- Bias
- Reference list
- Heading levels
- Em dash and endash
- Quotation marks
- Alignment between elements
- Plagiarism
- Clarity

FINAL CHECKLIST

- Did you follow your institution's template?
- Are your margins correct?
- Do all text, tables, and figures appear within the margins?
- Are you using an acceptable font style and size?
- Is your line spacing double-spaced, except for the exceptions allowed by your institution?
- Do you have a consistent number of spaces between sentences?
- Did you apply Word styles to all your headings and subheadings, following APA style?
- Did you auto-number your tables and figures?
- Did you avoid any big gaps (white space) around your tables and figures?
- Are your page numbers in the right place, showing lowercase Roman numerals in the front matter and Arabic in the paper itself?
- Did you refer to all your appendices in the text? Are they arranged in the appendices in the order you mention them?
- Did you update your table of contents?
- Did you update your lists of tables and figures?
- Did you review your paper for grammar, style, and punctuation errors, letting Word help you?
- Did you spell check the paper?
- Do the major elements in the paper align?
- Did you cite *all* the ideas you "borrowed" from others?
- Did you avoid wordy and ambiguous phrases?
- Did you save your paper with the file naming format required by your institution?

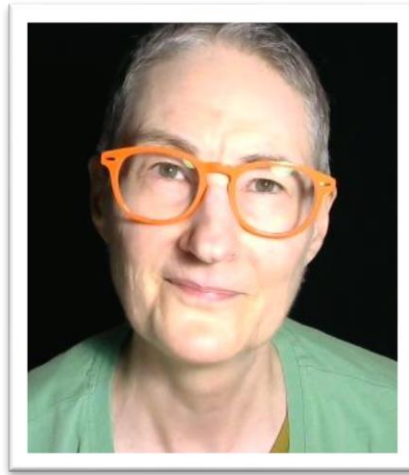
If you checked everything off this list, you can feel satisfied that you have addressed the main problems that could motivate your reviewers to reject your paper. Well done!

Submit your paper and take a break! You've earned it.

REFERENCES

American Psychological Association (APA). (2020). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.). Author.

Booton, C. (2019). *Aligning the elements*. Crossline Press.



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