

Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology  
APA Checklist for Authors: Substantive and Stylistic Requirements

This checklist is based on guidelines outlined in the APA publication manual (American Psychological Association, 2001). Refer to the publication manual for more detailed descriptions and examples. See APA Publications and Communications Board Working Group on Journal Article Reporting (2008) for additional suggestions on content of each section.

Substantive Requirements

These are described based on typical sections included in empirical studies, sections are listed in the order in which they should appear:

*Title page*

- Title is concise (10-12 words) and identifies key variables, including relations between variables.
- Contains full title of article, and author(s) full names (first name, middle initial, and last name) and institutional affiliation (centered in middle of the page, horizontally and vertically)
- Includes a running-head, which is an abbreviated title printed at the top of the page (flush left, 50 characters or less). For example:

Running head: ALL CAPS ABBREVIATED TITLE

*Abstract*

- The abstract is a concise but comprehensive summary of article; should not exceed 150 words.
- Should include: problem investigated, relevant information about participants, methodology (e.g., sample size, measures, procedures, and design), key findings, conclusions, and applications.

*Introduction*

- Introduces why the problem is important, defines major constructs, states the purpose of the study, and reviews relevant literature.
- Research questions and/or hypotheses are delineated.

*Methods*

- The methods section involves a detailed description of how the study was conducted.
- Subsections include: participants, procedure, measures or apparatus, and design.
- Participant section should include:
  1. Description of demographic information (including gender, race/ethnicity, and SES).
  2. Eligibility and exclusion criteria; recruitment.
  3. Sample size.
- Procedure section should include:
  1. Participant selection procedure (i.e., sampling methodology).
  2. Data collection process, including when, where, and how.
  3. Description of any incentives or payments made to participants.
- Measures section should include:
  1. Definitions of all measures used to assess the study's constructs.
  2. For independent and dependent variables, provide Cronbach's  $\alpha$  for the measure in this sample and other relevant indicators of psychometric properties.
- Design section should include:
  1. Description of type of research design (e.g., quasi-experimental or randomized experiment).
  2. Description of how the research design explicitly tests hypotheses or addresses research questions.

## Results

- Description of findings, including data distributions, missing data, exploratory or preliminary analyses, and primary analyses.
- Reporting of statistics conforms to APA standards, including:
  1. Reporting the value of the test statistic (including direction of effect), degrees of freedom, and the probability of obtaining a result at least as extreme as the one that was obtained (a  $p$ -value).
  2. Use standard  $p$ -values (i.e., .05, .01) or exact  $p$ -values, but not both.
  3. Italicize non-Greek letters (note that most sample statistics are non-Greek letters:  $N$ ,  $M$ ,  $df$ ,  $SS$ ,  $t$ ). Greek letters, subscripts, and superscripts are not italicized (e.g.,  $\alpha$ ,  $\beta$ ,  $\gamma$ ).
  4. Statistics reported will vary depending upon statistical procedures. A few examples:
    - Chi-square:  $\chi^2(5, N = 75) = 8.60, p = .006$
    - T-tests: Girls ( $M = 10.00, SD = 2.00$ ) scored higher than boys ( $M = 8.00, SD = 3.00$ ),  $t(50) = 1.85, p = .04$  (one-tailed)
    - Analysis of variance:  $F(1, 349) = 8.00, p < .05$
    - Regression:  $\beta = .80, p < .01$
- Must report effect sizes when appropriate. Effect sizes indicate the strength of the relations between variables, and include (but are not limited to): Cohen's  $d$ ,  $R^2$ , and  $\eta^2$ . Refer to McCartney, Burchinal, and Bub (2006) for additional examples and a discussion of effect sizes.

## Discussion

- Summarize, evaluate, and interpret results, including the extent of convergence with prior research, limitations that may bias results, and generalizability.
- State whether hypotheses were supported.
- Include implications (e.g., theoretical and methodological) with a focus on the application of findings to policy or practice (e.g., training, program design)
- Provide suggestions for further research.

## References

- Reference list is ordered alphabetically by authors' surnames.
- References have hanging indent.
- Journal titles are spelled out fully and italicized.
- All cited work is referenced and all references are cited in the text.
- Citations in text include author(s) surname(s) and year of publication. Quotes include author(s) surname(s) and year of publication, and page number.
- Examples of correct references are given at the end of this document.

## Appendices

### Author Note

- Includes: author(s) departmental affiliation, funding sources, use of data in previous work (e.g., a dissertation or conference paper), acknowledgements, and contact person for additional information.

### Footnotes

- Footnotes should be short supplementary notes; detailed material should be added to the text.

### Tables

- All tables are mentioned in the text and numbered in the order they are mentioned.
- All columns have headings.
- Only horizontal table rules.

## *Figure captions*

### *Figures*

- All figures are mentioned in the text, numbered in the order mentioned, and in black and white.

## Stylistic Requirements

- Page numbers and headers are used. The header should be a 3-5 word abbreviation of the title, and appears directly before the page number.
- Entire manuscript is double-spaced (including references, footnotes, and figure and table captions).
- Entire manuscript is left-aligned (flush with left margin), not justified.
- Margins are 1 in. (top, bottom, and sides).
- New paragraphs indented 12 spaces (default tab).
- Separate pages for the: title page, abstract, references, appendices, footnotes, tables, figure captions, and figures.
- Use italics for emphasis, but use minimally. No word emphasis utilizing bold, underlined, or capital letters.
- Headings and subheadings conform to APA style. Headings should be used to convey the article's sequence and to reveal the organization. Up to five levels of headings may be used, but most articles will use three headings, illustrated here:

### Method

### *Measures*

#### *Dependent variable.*

The first heading (Method) is Centered, Uppercase and Lowercase - all words start with an uppercase letter.

The second heading (Measures) is Flush Left, Italicized, Uppercase and Lowercase - all words start with an uppercase letter.

The third heading (Dependent variable) is Indented, italicized, lowercase, ends with a period, and starts the paragraph - only the first word starts with an uppercase letter.

### **References used in checklist:**

APA (2001). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (5th ed.). Washington DC: APA.

APA Publications and Communications Board Working Group on Journal Article Reporting Standards (2008). Reporting standards for research in psychology: Why do we need them? What might they be? *American Psychologist*, 63(9), 839-851.

McCartney, K., Burchinal, M. R., & Bub, K. L. (2006). Best practices in quantitative methods for developmentalists. *Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development*, 71(3, Serial No. 285).