A P A   F O R M A T T I N G :   G O O G L E   D O C S

Many instructors want you to format your papers according to APA guidelines, and it can be hard to remember how to do all of these things until you've done them multiple times. You can use this guide and the list below as a checklist to follow as you format your essays in Google Docs.

Your paper is in APA format if it:
- ☐ has 1 inch margins on all sides
- ☐ is typed in Times New Roman font, size 12
- ☐ is double-spaced throughout the entire document
- ☐ begins every paragraph with an indentation
- ☐ has a title page with information about you and your paper
- ☐ includes a running header with the paper title and page numbers
- ☐ has an abstract with a brief summary of your paper's argument/findings
- ☐ has a title centered at the beginning of the essay
- ☐ includes a References page at the end of the essay with alphabetized APA citations

You have two options available to you when it comes to writing an APA formatted paper in Google Docs. One is to format your paper yourself in a blank Google Doc, using the steps you will find on this handout. The other is to use a template provided by Google Docs which has all the correct APA formatting already set up for you. The template makes things very easy! But it's also good to learn how to do some of the formatting yourself.

To access the template from your Edmonds CC gmail account (@edmail.edcc.edu), you need to be logged in to your Edmail account. Go to Google Docs and instead of clicking to start a Blank document, look above to where it says **Template Gallery**. Click on **Template Gallery**, make sure that **General** is selected, and in the **Education** section, find the **APA Report template**. Click on that and a new Google Doc will open; the new Doc will have information already typed that you will then replace with your own text, keeping the same formatting.

When reading through the template, it is clear where you need to add your own information. As a student and not a professional researcher, you can skip the "Author Note" section on the title page unless your instructor has told you to include it. You may also want to ask your instructor if you need to include the Abstract page.

The template document has a lot of Latin text to show different formatting options for papers with sections and subsections. If your paper is meant to have sections, these will be useful. If not, ignore all of the formatting the template shows in the "body" of the paper after the first introductory paragraph. Skip down to the References and use that as a guide for your citations. **You will probably still want to refer to the Hanging Indents section of this handout to format your citations properly**.

Margins

Google Docs defaults to setting 1 inch margins on all sides of a document. Unless you've changed your default settings before, every Google Doc you begin should have the correct margins. But, you can check this by clicking on **File** in the menu bar, and then clicking on **Page setup** from the menu that pops up (it's near the bottom). This will open a dialog box with information about the file's margins. If you see anything other than **1** in any of the boxes under Margins, change them all to 1.

Font and Size

Google Docs sets the default font to Arial, but APA strongly encourages all papers be written in Times New Roman font, size 12. Always submit your papers in a font that is size 12, no larger and no smaller. Teachers can tell if you've enlarged your font size to meet page requirements! Change the font and size of your text from the formatting bar above the document itself.

Line Spacing

APA formatting requires the text of your paper (including title page, abstract, and references) to be double-spaced. The default when you begin typing is usually single-spacing. You can change the spacing before you begin typing, or you can change it after you have typed everything up by highlighting all of the text and *then* completing the steps listed here.

To change line spacing in Google Docs, you have two options:
1. In the bar above the document, find the **Line spacing** button: ↕≡
    Click the button and choose **Double** as your spacing.

2. Click **Format** on the menu bar, select **Line spacing**, and choose **Double**.

Indented Paragraphs

The first line of every paragraph of your essay should be indented. You should do this by hitting the **Tab** key on the keyboard (located on the left side) once at the beginning of the paragraph. Do not indent by hitting the space bar multiple times—that's what the Tab key is for!

Title Page

The first page of your APA formatted paper will not begin with the essay itself, but will instead be a title page which has information about you and the class you're writing the paper for, as well as the title of the paper.

To properly format the title page, you should first hit Enter about 7 times so that you will begin around a quarter of the way down the page. All of the text on the title page should be centered by clicking the **Center** button above the document: ≡

The first line of text should be the full title of your paper. After you've typed this, hit Enter and move to the next line. On this line, type your full name and then hit Enter. On the next line, you'll type the name of your school—in this case, Edmonds Community College.

The next section on the title page is the Author Note section. This is not usually included unless you are a professor, are working on a longer, funded research project, or are looking to publish your essay in an academic journal. Skip the Author Note unless your instructor has told you to include it.

Header and Page Numbers

In an APA formatted paper, the header is different on the first page of the document than it is on the following pages. In general, though, it contains only the title of your paper and the page number.

Begin on the first page of the document—the title page. To quickly open the header, simply click at the very top of the document and the header should open up. You can also open the header by clicking on **Insert** in the menu bar, choosing **Header & page number**, and then clicking on **Header**.

Now that the header box is open, before you type anything, **click the checkbox** on the right side that says **Different first page**.

Next, type the following: **Running head: TITLE OF YOUR PAPER IN ALL-CAPS**. This should be aligned to the left, which is the default alignment for Google Docs.

Next, you will insert the page number. Hit the Tab key until your cursor is now on the right side of the screen. Click on **Insert** on the menu bar, then select **Header & page number**, then **Page number**, and then choose the first option of the four presented, which shows sequential page numbers in the right corner of the paper. The page number will now appear and every new page added to the document will automatically update with the correct page number. (If you tabbed over too far to the right and the page number moves down to the next line, just place your cursor in front of the number and hit backspace until it is back up on the correct line.) Click outside of the header and your changes will be saved.

Because you clicked the "Different first page" checkbox earlier, what you have done up to this point is set the header for the first page of the document; you will need to adjust the following pages. In APA formatting, the first page has "Running head: TITLE OF YOUR PAPER IN ALL-CAPS." But all of the pages that follow the first page remove the "Running head:" so that in the left corner of the header, it is just TITLE OF YOUR PAPER IN ALL-CAPS. Go to the second page of the document, open up the header as you did before, and simply delete the "Running head:" text. Make sure the page number stays on the same line as the paper title.

Abstract

It's a good idea to double-check with your instructor about whether or not they want you to include the abstract: some instructors will, while others will not. The abstract follows the title page of your document, and it is a brief paragraph where you summarize the key ideas/arguments/findings in your paper. The abstract should be around 150-250 words. A

reader should be able to read your abstract and get a clear sense of the overall argument and key points of your paper.

On the first line of the new page after the title page, type and center the word Abstract. Hit Enter, and on the following line, begin your abstract paragraph with the text aligned to the left. The Abstract is the only paragraph in your paper that should *not* be indented using the Tab key—it should be totally aligned to the left. Change the text justification to the left by clicking the **Align Text Left** button above the document: ≡

Paper Title

Even though the title of your paper is found on the title page and in the header, you will also begin the essay with the title, centered above your opening paragraph.

Title your paper creatively and specifically! Your title should represent the topic(s) discussed in your essay. You should not just call your paper something like "Essay 1."

References

Your References page includes all of the sources you have summarized, paraphrased, and quoted from in your essay, listed in alphabetical order. This page needs to go at the end of the essay and begin a new page. When you have reached the end of your essay, hit Enter until you arrive on a new page. Then, type References and center the text. Your actual References entries should be left-aligned and double-spaced.

Hanging Indents

Your References entries need to have what is called a **Hanging Indent**, where the text starts out left-justified but the second line of the citation is indented. You can highlight and format each citation individually, or type them all up, highlight them all, and then change the indentation.

Once the citation you wish to indent is highlighted, click on **Format** in the menu bar, then put your cursor on **Align & indent**. When the list of choices pops up to the right of your cursor, choose **Indentation options** at the bottom of the list.

The Indentation options dialog box will now be open on your screen. Toward the bottom, notice where it says **Special indent**. There is a drop-down box that will say **None**—click on the box and select **Hanging**. Once Hanging has been selected, click the blue box that says **Apply**.

Now you should see that your citation has a hanging indent. Here's an example of what your citation should look like:

Author's Lastname, First Initial. (Year/Date of Publication). Title of article. *Title of Journal in*

   Italics, *volume number in italics*(issue number not in italics), pages. Retrieved from

   http://www.URLofArticle.com.

The Full Title of My Paper:

The Running Head is the Shortened Version

Student Name

Edmonds Community College