APA stands for American Psychology Association; it publishes a style guide entitled *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association 6th edition* which was last updated in 2010. APA documentation style is often used in psychology, education and many other social sciences. Although there are many different style guides such as the Modern Languages Association (MLA) and the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE), they all have the same goal: to set a standard for good writing and provide a consistent method to format your papers and document your sources. Make sure to confirm which style your professor expects.

**WHAT DOES A STYLE GUIDE DO?**
A style guide helps you prepare academic texts like research papers. It explains how to format your paper and document (or cite) your sources. For example, it shows:

- What to include in a list of works cited or in a bibliography
- How to document a work with multiple authors
- How to identify editors or translators
- How to format your paper including font size, cover page, and page numbering

**WHY SHOULD I DOCUMENT MY SOURCES?**
- To allow readers to locate your sources if they wish to read them for themselves
- To acknowledge the work done by others
- To provide support for the position you take on a controversial issue
- To establish links with the experts in your field of study
- To add credibility to your work

**WHERE DO I PROVIDE DOCUMENTATION FOR A SOURCE?**
You document a source in two places:

- Within your paper when you introduce a quotation, paraphrase information or summarize a passage (in-text documentation)
- At the end of your paper when you provide complete information that allows your readers to locate your sources (References)

It is important to note that properly documenting your sources takes quite some time, especially if it is your first time or you are using a new style guide.
IN-TEXT DOCUMENTATION

QUOTATIONS
Although the use of direct quotations should be kept to a minimum, in academic writing we sometimes find them essential. We use direct quotations when the original author's writing is famous, beautiful, poignant, or, for some other reason, important to keep intact.

SHORT QUOTATIONS (FEWER THAN 40 WORDS)
Author's name  Year of publication  Comma, open quotation marks, capital letter

As Northey (2007) says, “The purpose of documentation is not only to avoid charges of plagiarism, but also to show the body of knowledge that your work is building on” (p.67).

LONG QUOTATIONS (MORE THAN 40 WORDS)
Your professor may expect you to include a specific number of quotes in your research papers, but when you choose those quotes, keep this advice in mind:

Judicious use of quotations can add authority to your writing as well as help you avoid charges of plagiarism, but you must use quotations with care. Never quote a passage just because it sounds impressive; be sure that it really adds to your discussion, either by expressing an idea with special force or cogency or by giving substance to a debatable point. (Northey, 2007, p. 67)
PARAPHRASING

When you are writing for academic purposes, you usually do not use direct quotations. In fact, the academic writer PARAPHRASES the information into their OWN words more often than not. Remember, the words are yours, but the ideas belong to another writer and therefore, you MUST give the reader the original source.

HOW DO I PARAPHRASE ANOTHER WRITER'S WORDS?

Read the passage and ask yourself What is this all about? or What point is the author trying to make? Close the book, and in your own words, jot down what you think the author is saying. Read the original passage again to make sure you captured the author’s meaning. Ask yourself Is the author positive, negative or neutral about the topic? This question refers to the author’s tone and message; when paraphrasing, you must not change the tone of the original source to suit your tone. If necessary, revise your paraphrase so that it matches the author’s ideas and tone. Note the documentation details so you won’t have to look them up again.

The following is the original direct quote:

“Judicious use of quotations can add authority to your writing, but you must use quotations with care. Never quote a passage just because it sounds impressive; be sure that it really adds to your discussion, either by expressing an idea with special force or cogency or by giving substance to a debatable point.”

The following is a paraphrased version with documentation:

According to Northey, adding impact to your academic writing can be done with a careful selection of direct quotes. Some academic writers use direct quotes in order to make their writing seem more notable; the author strongly suggests avoiding this tactic. The point of adding quotes to support your argument (2007, p. 67). APA encourages you to include the page number.
At the end of your research paper, you must include a reference list. This means that you cite all of the sources you used to write your paper. You should include every source you mentioned in your paper. Do not add sources in your reference list unless they are mentioned in your writing. Sources should be alphabetized, double spaced and each should have a “reverse indent” of 5 to 7 spaces.

**References**


If you need further help you can consult the MLA website [https://style.mla.org/](https://style.mla.org/). Concordia’s libraries are an excellent resource and you can ask a librarian for help anytime. The On-line Writing Lab (OWL) at Purdue University is also very helpful [https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/02/](https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/02/)