Selected Guidelines for Formatting Papers per AMA
The AMA Manual of Style was designed for use by biomedical professionals. However, the
guidelines for formatting, appearance, and documenting sources can be easily applied to an
academic setting.

Most of the examples and explanations included in this document are based on the American
NY: Oxford University Press, 2007. Unfortunately, the AMA Manual of Style is not explicit in its
discussion of format. In areas in which the manual was not explicit, the author guidelines for
Physical Therapy were used since this is the official journal of the American Physical Therapy
Association. If you are not sure of the formatting after consulting this document and the
document written by Dr. Scribe, check the guidelines for Physical Therapy provided at the
website.

OVERALL STYLE

Academic papers need not be dull or lack style.

• Use active voice throughout
• Be specific and concise
• Avoid flowery or figurative language
• Vary sentence length and complexity to add interest

OVERALL APPEARANCE

Academic papers are treated as “copy manuscripts”.

Font:

• A serif type font, such as Times New Roman or Courier, is generally recommended for
  the body of the document
• A sans serif type font, such as Arial or Tahoma, is generally recommended for table and
  figures (Note some journals require same font for all sections of the manuscript.)
• Font size 12 point for all sections of the paper

Format:

• Margins: Use one inch margins on all pages
• Line spacing: Double-space the entire document (Note this is opposed to guidelines
  provided by Dr. Scribe and other AMA guidelines documents.)
• Left-justify paragraphs
• First line indented 0.5”
• Page numbering: each page, beginning with the title page, should be numbered
  consecutively. Page numbers are usually place in the upper, right corner in header (flush
  right)

Created by Elizabeth S. Moore, PhD on March 31, 2015.
• A short title header goes at the top of the page, aligned with the page number and left margin (flush left)
• Sections, in order of appearance: (1) Title page, (2) Abstract, (3) Body of article, (4) Acknowledgments, (5) References, (6) Tables, (7) Figure legends, (8) Figures, (9) Video legends, (10) Appendixes

Title Page:
• This is the first page of the manuscript
• Center the title
  o Titles should not be vague and should reflect measured variables.
  o Titles should be no longer than 150 characters (including punctuation and spaces).
• Your name and highest level of degree attained
• E-mail address
• Author’s affiliation
• Word count (not including abstract and reference list)
• Make your title page its own page
• Do not use abbreviations or acronyms in the manuscript title

Abstract:
This is the second page of the manuscript even though several sources report that AMA style has the title page and abstract combined. When possible, avoid using abbreviations or acronyms in the abstract.

A structured abstract is required for reports of original data, systematic reviews, or clinical reviews. Per Physical Therapy, the word limit is 275 words, but this varies from journal to journal and usually ranges from 150 to 275. The sections of the abstract are dependent on the type of research conducted (e.g., clinical trial, qualitative study, quality improvement study, etc.) The basic sections include:

• Introduction (Context): question or issue addressed
• Method: includes design, setting and participants
• Results: major findings
• Discussion (Conclusions): answers to the question and clinical application

An unstructured (or conventional) abstract is required for all other major manuscripts. It should follow the title page of the document. It should be no more than 150 words.
Headings:
Headings should be used to divide and subdivide the paper into logical and sometimes sequential sections.
- Level 1 headings are single-spaced if more than one line is required, bold font, and heading capitalization.
- Level 2 headings are flush left, bold, and heading capitalization.
- Level 3 headings are to be paragraph indented, bold, and sentence capitalization.
- Level 4 headings are to be paragraph indented, italicized, and sentence capitalization.

Numbers:
AMA uses numeral for numbers except:
- Ordinals first through ninth
- Numbers used as pronouns
- Fractions
- Numbers that begin a sentences, title, subtitle, or heading
- Numbers spelled out in direct quotations

Abbreviations:
Use specific nomenclature. AMA tends not to use punctuation following abbreviations. Chapter 14 of the AMA Manual contains extensive list of approved abbreviations.

Quotations:
- Enclose a direct quote of no more than four typewritten lines in double quotation marks.
- For quotes longer than four lines, use a block format in reduced type without quotation marks.
- A superscript number is added at the end of the quotation and the citation is listed with the other references.

FIRST TEXT PAGE
This is the third page of the manuscript. The title is repeated on the page, serving as a Level 1 heading. It is centered, in bold and heading capitalization. You do not use the heading “Introduction”, since all papers begin with an introduction.

IN-TEXT CITATIONS
Each reference should be cited in the text, tables, or figures in consecutive numerical order by means of superscript Arabic numerals, e.g., it has been reported. Number the citations in order as they appear in the text. Each superscript much match one reference in the References.
list. When citing a previously used source, reuse the same superscript number. A sentence can contain more than one citation. Multiple superscripts are acceptable, separating each with a comma (no space in front), e.g., it has been reported.\cite{25,34,68}

The superscript numbers should be placed outside periods and commas, and inside colons and semicolons.

- Example: As reported in a previous study,\cite{2}
- Example: The results of the study support my thesis\cite{7}; however, further studies should be done to replicate the results.

If more than two references are cited in a row, use a hyphen to join the first and last numbers of a closed series. Use commas without a space between numbers.

- Example: The derived data were as follows,\cite{1,3-8,19}

Page numbers are required for direct quotations; they are enclosed in parentheses.

- Example, it has been reported.\cite{25,34,68,84(p42),102(pp7-9)}

If a citation has more than 23 characters, including spaces and punctuation, use an asterisk (*) in the text and put the citation in a footnote at the bottom of the page.

- Example: As reported previously,*

*References 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 21, 24-29, 31.

REFERENCES

A reference page lists all of the works that you use in your paper. The reference page goes at the end of the document. The title “References” is centered at the top of separate page. List references numerically in the order by when they were cited in the text. The first reference cited in text should be listed first. The entire references section should be double-spaced like the rest of the paper. To create a References page, use the following examples to put your references in the proper format. If a reference extends to the next line, DO NOT indent the line. Do not include personal communications in the text. Include the digital object identifier (DOI), if available, for electronic journals in place of the URL.

Entries are preceded by their number and are given in numerical order.

Author format:

- Use the author’s surname followed by initials without periods, e.g., Garcia EF, Zahihi GH.
- Multiple authors (up to six) are separated by commas.
- Do not use “and” between multiple authors.
- For more than six authors, first three listed followed by “et al.”
Title format:
Titles retain the spelling, abbreviations, and style for numbers used in the original.

Books: capitalize the first letter of each major word.

Journal articles: Capitalize the first letter of the first word, proper names, and abbreviations that are normally capitalized.

BOOKS²
Capitalize the first letter of every major word in a title and subtitle and italicize the entire title.

Book with One Author:

Book with Two to Six Authors: Separate the authors’ names using a comma.

Book with Seven or More Authors: List the first three authors, and then put “et al.”

Book with an Editor:

Book by an Organization:

Book of Second or Later Edition:

Book Chapter:

Electronic Book:

JOURNALS

- Abbreviate the title according to NLM Guidelines
- Italicize journal titles
- Full text journal articles obtained via the web, but available in hard copy are not cited as online serials, but as a regular journal article.

Created by Elizabeth S. Moore, PhD on March 31, 2015.
• Capitalize only the first letter of the first word of the article title and subtitles begin with a lowercase letter

Journal article (1-6 authors):

Journal article with more than six authors:

Journal article with no named author or group name:

Electronic Journal article:
If you have a doi (preferred):

If you do not have a doi:

WEB SITES
Cite the author (if given), title of item cited (if none given, use the organization name), name of the Web site, URL, published date (if given), updated date (if given) and accessed date.

ONLINE NEWSPAPERS (For a print newspaper article, follow same as below, but omit the URL.)

ONLINE GOVERNMENT/ORGANIZATION REPORTS

ONLINE CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS/PRESENTATIONS

Created by Elizabeth S. Moore, PhD on March 31, 2015.
References

