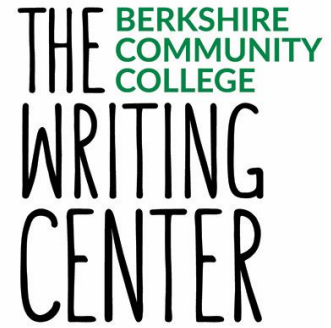# APA Style
BEFORE You Write Your Paper:
Research & Credibility

What is APA Style?

The American Psychological Association (APA) refers to the style guidelines and expectations for how you write, organize, and research academic work, especially within the social sciences.

VERY IMPORTANT: Ask your professors what aspects of APA they prioritize. Not all professors have the same requirements! Especially when you do research, make sure you understand what sources may or may not be appropriate for your specific assignment and what the expectations are for how you integrate and reflect on that research.

Evaluating Outside Research

- ***Searching the Databases:*** Try an 'Advanced Search' to make sure you can access full-text articles and/or to include more focused key terms.

- ***Credibility & the Writer(s)***: Who is the writer or writers? What do you know about them from the article? Is there an author's note?

- ***Credibility & the Publication***: Scholarly books & articles are written by and for experts within a particular field and are rigorously peer reviewed. Publishing scholarship is how academics share research, engage in dialogue and criticism, and broaden shared knowledge.

- ***Credibility & the Publication:*** Non-scholarly or popular sources, intended for a general audience, may or may not be appropriate for your research. Check with your professor. Know that there is a range of different kinds of publications, both highly credible and less so.

- ***Timeliness or Urgency***: Does your professor require that your sources be published within a specific time frame, such as within the last ten years? If you are using older research, you'll want to introduce and contextualize it as such.

- ***Relevance***: Published APA articles will include an abstract that will help you decide if this specific article is relevant to your own main idea or investigation.

Integrating Different Kinds of Sources:

For all summaries, paraphrase, and direct quotes: Use APA in-text citations and make sure these correspond to the full publication information in the References page.

Are Any Sources Are Off Limits?

Ask Your Professor! Generally, websites like Wikipedia are inappropriate for academic research. However, site such as Wikipedia can be a useful starting point.