Citations, Links and References in a Blog Post

By Nicholas de Leeuw

Writing a post for Psychology in the News requires careful attention to giving proper credit to your sources. The basic approach on the web site is to use the APA style for citations and references. This is spelled out in excruciating (yet readable) detail in the fifth edition of The APA Manual (American Psychological Association, 2001). This document gives a very brief introduction to APA style, using a few typical examples. Because traditional APA style is intended for paper submissions to printed journals, this document also spells out how “blog-style” is a little different.

Proper attribution on the blog consists of citations, links, and references. A citation is contained within the text of a paper. It lists only the authors' last names, and the year of publication. This is an example (Varga, 2000). On the blog, we use citations for references to print sources, and to sources not available electronically to the general public. Links provide an alternate means of citing your sources, for sources that are available to our readers on the web. Links are not a part of traditional APA style. In your submissions, links should be written out in parentheses following the text you would like to show the link, as in this example (http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/) A reference is found at the end of a paper, in the reference section. It lists all of the additional information a reader might find useful about the source of information, such as the author's initials, the title of the article or book being cited, the name of the periodical or book that it appears in, the publisher, and so on. Every work that is cited or linked in the text must have a corresponding reference, and the reference section should contain only works that are cited or linked in the text.
In the blog, every post has a reference section at the end, that lists all the sources used in the article, in alphabetical order. The basic idea in a reference is to give the reader all the information they would need to track down the source on their own. Differences between different types of references are most easily learned by example, but the basic form is as follows:

**Author (year or date of publication). Title of article or web page. Title of Book, Journal, or Web Site.** Specific information like issue number, publisher or web address, that differs by the type of source.

On the blog, the most common references are for web-based sources. References to web-based articles should include the URL (web address). If there is any reason to think the article has been revised or may be revised (which is always true of on-line news sources), you should also include the date the article was retrieved. The reference to the OWL site (http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/) is an example.

Another very common type of reference is an article in a periodical, more commonly called a journal article. Varga (2000) is an example. Another very common sort of reference is to a chapter in an edited volume, such as this example (Brewer, 1987).

When you use an electronic database, you may be able to retrieve “full text” articles from a link. This is a huge time savings. If the article is an electronic reprint of an article from a journal or book (such as an article retrieved from JSTOR), the reference is just as if you had the actual paper volume in your hand, except that you add "[Electronic version]" following the article title. The reference to Varga (2000) is an example.

Note that in both references, the article title is given with only the first letter of the first word capitalized. But the title of the journal, book, or web site gets capital letters for all the
"important" words, and is in italics. You should look at the reference section of this paper to see the differences.

Occasionally you may need to cite an article you read about in another source. The original article is the primary source, and what you read is the secondary source. You use this type of reference when you want to refer to something very specific to the primary source, such as a specific result or a particular method. For example, "Certain neurons fired at 10 millisecond intervals (Jin, Fujii & Graybiel, 2009, cited in Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2009)." If you were just referring to the general conclusions given in the secondary source, you would just cite that source.

This is a lot of information and detail for something as boring as references. But proper attribution, using links, citations and references is what makes Psychology in the News read like an academic site, instead of just so much web junk. Learning these boring details is also a nice skill for a college student to develop, for all those more traditional papers you will be writing in your college career.

References


Journal of Research in Childhood Education, 14, 142-151.

Comment: This is an electronic version of a journal article. You do not need URL or date information for this type of source, because it is just a replica of the printed version.