We’re here to get you started writing that health, sociology, psychology, or education paper—or really, any other subject that requires APA. APA may seem impossible with its complicated formatting and different form of citation. But you’re in luck. This outline will break it down, so you’ll be writing in no time. The first tutorial will show you the basics of formatting an APA paper, and the second tutorial will give you the specifics you’ll need to start citing in APA.
Using APA might seem like a waste of time, but it’s not. A lot of people enter classes where they are expected to have already had experience with APA citation. It’s not really anyone’s fault—many people didn’t learn it in high school, and some people haven’t been required to use citation often in their academic life.

But don’t get cocky. Don’t think that just because you know APA you don’t need this tutorial and the web links it will show you. Teachers, scholars, and writing tutors (like ourselves) live off the websites we’ll show you. We all have to keep up with the details of APA citation, especially since they change year to year. So really, this tutorial is heaven-sent; we’re giving you the up-to-date, crammed-in-ten-pages summary of the twisting maze called APA.
This tutorial allows you (the student) to learn the details of APA formatting without your teacher having to spend a monotonous day showing you bland power points about it. We want you to succeed, and success comes, at least in part, through organization and professionalism. Handing in an essay that is clean and formatted will give you the edge you need to dominate. Let APA formatting help you write better papers, and as a consequence, earn better grades. Your ability to format will influence, and could even determine, your future both academically and professionally.

This tutorial is for you.

The reason for papers in the social science fields is to spread knowledge. You take what you’ve learned and tell others about it, which is why you need precise language and a clear voice. Because of the focus on science, logic, and data, you should adapt your writing in a similar fashion. Avoid using flowery writing and imagery; instead, be concise and straight to the point. State your purpose clearly, and show your claims and evidence in a sophisticated, organized fashion. You should, when presenting your evidence, use the most recent scientific research models and empirical evidence as sources.

APA BREAKDOWN:

- **You may** use “I” or “We” if there’s more than one author. Just be careful to stay unbiased with your writing.
- Use the **active voice**—“I interviewed...” rather than “I have interviewed...”
- Help the reading understand easily by using **simple, accurate wording** to explain complex ideas.
- Be careful with your **word choice**. For example, use the term “participants” rather than “subjects.” And be descriptive in who you are referring to, for example, “community members” or young children.”
- Also, be aware that there is nothing definite in science and health; therefore, avoid using words that suggest certainty.
Capitalization: When typing title of a work, capitalize words four or more letters long.

Before beginning your essay, you should start with some important elements.

- Running head
- Page numbers
- Title page
- Abstract

Implement these in your paper before you start so you’re ready to focus on the writing.

Running Head: At the top of every page, place a header on the left-hand side (called a running head). This running head will simply be a shortened version of your title, in all caps. On the title page it’s a bit different—include the words “Running head,” followed by a colon, and then your shortened title.

Page numbers: The running head should be on the left side of the header, and your page number on the right.

Note! Your page number will include only the number, not your name.

Title Page: The title page should consist of the title, the subtitle, the author (your name), and the school name (SUNY Potsdam).

Abstract: If your teacher requires it, an abstract should follow the title page. The abstract is basically a summarized introduction to your issue. It should be concise and short, no more than half a page.

Note! Remember, only include an abstract if your instructor requires it.
Italicizing Titles: Italicize the titles of long works, such as, books. For short works, like articles, they require quotation marks, not italicizing.

Visuals: Keep visuals as simple as possible. They should be very easy to understand. That way your visual can help the reader understand your point.

Section Headings: With APA, because it is used in the social sciences, organization, rather than creativity, is emphasized. Thus, to introduce, and to increase organization, section headings are used.
Now before you get to the exercise, check out [this video from Purdue Owl](#), which gives the specifics on APA formatting. Also, you can look up [a sample APA paper](#).
Optional Exercise:
Create an APA document, adding all of the necessary elements.

✓ Title Page
✓ Headers
✓ Abstract
✓ Title
✓ Text
✓ Headings

If assigned, turn this assignment in to your professor. You could also bring it to the writing center and look over it with a tutor.