Writing Your Thesis (or Dissertation) in APA Style

Elements to Include

The “Bible” for completing your thesis is the Thesis Completion Procedures, compiled by the MAP faculty: http://intranet.prescott.edu/students/map/handbook/process/ThesisProcedures.html

The Thesis Completion Procedures do not specify a specific style manual, however. The 6th edition of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA) is one of the most popular styles for psychology, education and other social sciences. I recommend that you purchase a copy, or check one out from the Library. This handout attempts to reconcile the Thesis Completion Procedures and the Publication Manual.

Cover Page

- **Running Head**: The running head is an abbreviated title, max 50 characters. It should be flush left in all uppercase letters at the top of the title page and all subsequent pages. On the title page (but ONLY on the title page) it should be preceded by the words “Running Head:” (Publication Manual, 8.03).
- **Title**: “The recommended length for a title is no more than 12 words. The title should be typed in upper and lowercase letters, centered between the left and right margins, and positioned in the upper half of the page.” (Publication Manual, 2.01).
- See “Templates for Cover Page” for other information on formatting of thesis cover page (Thesis Completion).

Copyright

- ProQuest will insert a page with its branding after the title page. You will want to insert a copyright page of your own with the information recommended in “Including Copyright Information” (Thesis Completion).

Abstract

- “The abstract is a short passage that appears just before the introduction to the thesis and is required by ProQuest along with recommended keywords” (Thesis Completion).
- Abstracts for APA style typically range from 150-250 (Publication Manual, 2.04).

Keywords

- “Keywords are words that describe the topics covered in the thesis and make it easier for others to find the work through ProQuest’s database. Each student chooses keywords for categorization: one to five terms of one to three words is the range of common practice. Keywords can be listed directly before, or directly after, the abstract” (Thesis Completion).

Page Numbers

- “Identify each manuscript page with the running head along with the page number” (Publication Manual, 8.03)
Headings
Levels of headings in APA are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Heading</th>
<th>Format</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Centered, Boldface, Uppercase and Lowercase Heading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Flush Left, Boldface, Uppercase and Lowercase Heading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Indented, boldface, lowercase paragraph heading ending with a period.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Indented, boldface, italicized, lowercase paragraph heading ending with a period.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Indented, italicized, lowercase paragraph heading ending with a period.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Publication Manual, 3.03*

Tables and Images

- It’s a good idea to present data visually, in a table. For humanities theses, photographs and drawings are frequently included. ProQuest will publish color images.
- Above tables should be a brief but explanatory title and a number (Table X); an optional note may be inserted below (*Publication Manual*, 5.08). Refer to tables by their number in the text (*Publication Manual*, 5.10). See chapter 5 of the APA *Publication Manual* for more information and for examples.

Quotes

- When possible, paraphrase rather than quoting. Avoid very long quotes. Do not use quotation marks to enclose block quotations (quotes of 40 or more words). Rather, indent and single space the block quote (*Publication Manual*, 4.08).

Reference List

- Start your reference list on the page following the end of your paper. “References” should be centered at the top of the page. Entries should be arranged alphabetically by the author’s last name. For examples of references, see chapter 7 of the *Publication Manual*.

Other Resources

- Online APA resources: http://www.prescott.edu/library/resources/apa.html
- Find a thesis written by another Prescott College student in your field, and published in the Prescott College Theses database, accessible here: http://www.prescott.edu/library/article-databases/index.html

Contacts

- For Research and Citing help, contact the Library: library@prescott.edu
- For Writing help, contact the Writing Center: writingcenter@prescott.edu
- For ProQuest uploading questions, contact Academic Operations: academicoperations@prescott.edu