This handout contains instructions for formatting research papers in APA (American Psychological Association) style. In many classes, you will be required to follow this format. If your instructor does not specify a format, using APA is usually a good idea for Social Sciences classes. Your paper should include four sections: Title Page, Abstract, Main Body, and References that correspond to the four sections of this handout. The Title Page should look like the example above. The Abstract should look like this and summarize the content of your paper in 150-250 words.

The following is a detailed description of APA format if you are working in Microsoft Word. Remember: if your instructor asks for something different, always follow his or her directions.

The font should be Times New Roman, 12 point. You can either look under the “Font” section under the “Home” tab or you can right click on your mouse and set the font to “Times New Roman” and the size at “12.”

The margins should all be set at one inch. The default margins in Word are usually incorrect, so you may need to go to “Page Layout,” then “Margins,” and click on “Normal.” Again, the font should always be Times New Roman, 12 point.

Everything should be doubled spaced. In order to do that, go to “Home,” then the “Paragraph” section, and set “Line Spacing” at “Double.” Under “Page Layout,” “Spacing Before” and “Spacing After” should both be set at “0”.
Your paper should include four sections: Title Page, Abstract, Main Body, and References. To create the running head title in the upper left corner follow these directions: go to “Insert,” then “Header,” and click “Blank.” Type in the words “Running head:” then the running title, a shortened form of your title (up to 50 characters) to appear on each page of your paper and hit the space bar. Go to “Page Number” and click on “Current Position” and then “Plain Number.” Make sure your name and the page number are in Times New Roman, 12 point font. (See paragraph 2 for an explanation.) The header should be on every page (if you follow the above directions, it will happen automatically).

The title should: be centered (Ctrl+E), be normal font, have the first letter of the first word and all main words after it capitalized (e.g. The Detrimental Effects of Television), and be both specific to the assignment and unique to your paper. The title should not be: bolded, italicized, underlined, in quotation marks, in a different font, or in a larger font.

Every new paragraph should be indented half an inch. If you go under “Page Layout,” “Indent Left” and “Indent Right” should both be set at zero. If they are, simply hitting “Tab” should indent your paragraphs properly.

SHORTENED FORM OF PAPER TITLE

References Page Sample

References (Centered)

Your research paper should include a separate page titled References to include all of the sources of information you used to write your paper. Start the reference list on a new page.

Please see the CCBC Libraries separate publication titled Documenting Research Papers: APA Style for information about formatting this page.