How to Set Up Microsoft Word 2010 for Writing an APA Research Paper

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This “how to” document provides guidance and step-by-step instructions describing how to set up (1) an APA style header, (2) double spacing, (3) ½” first line indents for paragraphs, (4) proper spacing between paragraphs, (5) proper technique for numbering pages in Microsoft Word, (6) setting up a References page at the end of your document.

This tutorial applies to both Microsoft Office 2010 and Office 2007. This tutorial does not apply directly to other version, but the procedure still applies.

NOTE: This “how to” document is in no way intended to serve as a formal requirements document describing how to format a research paper in any scholarly format (MLA, APA, etc.). Also, your instructor may give you specific formatting instructions to use in addition or instead of MLA/APA format... always follow the instructions you are provided.

Let’s get started! Open up Microsoft Word on your computer.

Here’s an example of an APA title page:

To get started, make sure your cursor is on the left side of the screen to start typing your header.
• Type the title of your paper, the example on the front is called This is a Sample Title Page: . Hit the Enter key to start a new line.
• Type the subtitle of your paper. Hit the Enter key.
• Type your first and last names. Hit the Enter key.
• Type the name of the college. Hit the Enter key.
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Highlight the text you just typed. It needs to be Times New Roman, 12 point, centered and double spaced.

- To change the font, click on the arrow to the right of the box that says Calibri (Body). Scroll down until you find the font Times New Roman. Click on it.
- To change the size, click on the arrow to the right of the box that says 11. Scroll down until the font size 12. Click on it.
- To center text, make sure you are on the Home tab. In the Paragraph group of the Home ribbon, click on the button for Align Center (see below).
- To double space text, click on the button for Line Spacing and when the menu pops up, change the spacing to 2.0.

Now you’re ready to add the page number. Go to the Insert tab. In the Header & Footer group of the Home ribbon, click on Page Number.

From the menu that pops up, you will need to choose Top of Page, and then select Plain Number 1.
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While in the page number field, you need to add your running head. Type the words Running head:, then a 4-5 word version of your paper’s main title in ALL CAPITAL LETTERS. Your screen should look like this.

![Running head: TITLE GOES HERE](image)

Then tab over the page number (1) until it lines up with right-hand print margin or the page (6.5 inch mark). Your screen should look like this:

![Running head: TITLE GOES HERE](image)

Now, use the red X to Close Header and Footer box. Use your mouse to click in front of your title and hit the return key 6 times to drop your title on the page.

Now you’re ready to set up the body of your paper.
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The body of your paper will look like this.

Start with adding your title.
- Type your title across the top of the page. Hit Enter
- Highlight the title. Center the text across the top of the page.

Now you’re ready to update your Page Header.
- Quickly click twice on the words Running head. This will open the Page Header field. Your screen should look like this:

  ![Page Header Field](image)

- Check the box next to the words: Different Front Page.
- Make your header exactly like the one used for the front page, except eliminate the words Running head. Don’t forget to add the page number.
- Close the box by clicking the red X that says “Close Header and Footer.”
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Now you’re ready to type the body of your paper. To get the formatting correct, we’re going to type one sentence to start. My first sentence can be seen below:

Now we’ll set up double-spacing, first line indents, and proper spacing between paragraphs.

- First, highlight the text of your first sentence.
- Now click on the Home tab. In the Paragraph group of the Home ribbon, click on the Dialog Launch Button in the lower-right hand corner of the Paragraph group.

This will display the Paragraph dialog box, as shown below...

- In the Indentation group, click the Special: drop-down list and choose “First Line”. Set the By: field to 0.5” for ½ inch indent.
- In the Spacing group set both Spacing Before: and Spacing After: to “0pt”, set Line Spacing: to “Double”.
- Click OK to apply the settings.
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Now, it’s time for your References page. This contains citations for all of the sources you used in your paper. Sometimes they are called bibliographies or Works Cited pages.

References pages always begin on a separate page from their paper. The easiest way to do this is to add a Page Break. To do this:

- Go to the Insert tab.
- Click on the Page Break icon. It’s on the far left-hand side of the ribbon.
- You should be at the top of a blank page.

The next step is to add a title.

- Type in your title, References.
- Highlight the text, References, and go to the Home tab. Apply the Align Center button to text.
- Place the cursor at end of line and hit the Enter key.

Now you’re ready to start typing your citations.

- First, apply the Align Left button to the text.
- Type in or paste in your first citation. When you’re finished typing, highlight the text.
- Click on the Home tab. In the Paragraph group of the Home ribbon, click on the Dialog Launch Button in the lower-right hand corner of the Paragraph group.

This will display the Paragraph dialog box, as shown below...

- In the Indentation group, click the Special: drop-down list and choose “Hanging”. Set the By: field to 0.5” for ½ inch indent.
- In the Spacing group set both Spacing Before: and Spacing After: to “0pt”, set Line Spacing: to “Double”.
- Click OK to apply the settings.

The next page has an example of a correctly formatted References page.
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When you have finished typing in each of your citations, it should look like this:

![Image of APA formatted citation in Microsoft Word]

**Last steps:**

- Alphabetize your citations by the first word of the first entry – whether that’s the last name of the author of the first significant word of the article.
  - What is meant by significant word? Well, skip the words “A” or “An” or “The” at the beginning of the article or book and go with the next word. For example, if the name of an article that *doesn’t have an author* is “The Endurance of Frankenstein,” organize it under E.

- Spellcheck. Click on the **Review** tab and **Spelling and Grammar** is the first option at left.

- Proofread your entire paper.
- Save and print! Or if planning to attach it to an email, close your document.

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