

# Avoid Under- or Over-Citing in APA 7

## Paraphrase Citation Examples



As the 7th edition APA manual explains, “the works you cite provide key background information, support or dispute your thesis, or offer critical definitions and data” (p. 253).

### What to Cite (APA, 2020, p. 253)

- Direct quotations (include page number)
- Paraphrases (optional to include page number)
- All facts and figures
- A term or phrase coined by the researcher you’re citing
- Anything that’s not common knowledge

### Paraphrasing Guidelines (APA, 2020, p. 269)

APA 7 notes that “published authors paraphrase their sources most of the time, rather than directly quoting” (p. 269).

- For writing in psychology, students should use direct quotations only sparingly and instead mainly synthesize and paraphrase.
- When citing a paraphrase, you may include a page number, when it would help interested readers locate the relevant passage within a long or complex work. E.g.:
  - Webster-Stratton (2016) described a case example of a 4-year-old girl who showed an insecure attachment to her mother; the therapist focused on increasing the mother’s empathy for her child (pp. 152–153).

### Citing Secondary Sources (“as cited in”) (APA, 2020, p. 258)

- Cite primary sources when possible and use secondary sources (“as cited in”) sparingly.
  - For example, if you want to cite something from Allport’s diary which is quoted or paraphrased in Nicholson (2003):
    - Allport wrote that ... (as cited in Nicholson, 2003).
  - Only include the source you read in the references (i.e., Nicholson, not Allport).
- Use this sparingly: Whenever possible, try to access the original source yourself.

### Citing a Long Paraphrase (APA, 2020, p. 270)

If a long paraphrase continues for several sentences, cite the source on first mention. It is not necessary to repeat the citation ***as long as the context of the writing makes it clear*** that the same work continues to be paraphrased.

- Velez et al. (2018) found that for women of color, sexism and racism in the workplace were associated with poor work and mental health outcomes, including job-related burnout, turnover intentions, and psychological distress. However, self-esteem, person–organization fit, and perceived organizational support mediated these effects. Additionally, they found that stronger womanist attitudes – which acknowledge the unique challenges faced by women of color in a sexist and racist society – weakened the association of workplace discrimination with psychological distress.

# Avoid Under- or Over-Citing in APA 7

## Paraphrase Citation Examples



### Repeated Citations Necessary to Clarify Sources (APA, 2020, p. 271)

Here the authors have provided citations to representative sources *for each new idea* in the text. It is necessary to repeat citations here because different combinations of works support different ideas.

Common knowledge (here, the idea that working with children can be both rewarding and challenging) does not require a citation.

- Play therapy has been shown to have great benefits for children with autism (Bromfield, 1989; Josefi & Ryan, 2004). Working with young children can be rewarding but can also present some challenges. Play therapists can experience many symptoms of impaired wellness, including emotional exhaustion or reduced ability to empathize with others (Elwood et al., 2011; Figley, 2002), disruption in personal relationships (Elwood et al., 2011; Robinson-Keilig, 2014), decreased satisfaction with work (Elwood et al., 2011), avoidance of particular situations (Figley, 2002; O'Halloran & Linton, 2000), and feelings of helplessness (Elwood et al., 2011; Figley, 2002; O'Halloran & Linton, 2000).

### Repeated Narrative Citations with the year omitted (APA, 2020, p. 265)

The year can be omitted from a citation only when multiple narrative citations to a work appear within a single paragraph. (The year is always included in *parenthetical* citations.)

- Koehler (2016) experimentally examined how journalistic coverage influences public perception of the level of agreement among experts. Koehler provided participants with quotations from real reviews for movies that critics either loved or loathed. He found that participants better appreciated the level of expert consensus for highly rated movies when only positive reviews were provided rather than when both positive and negative reviews were provided, even when the proportion of positive to negative reviews was indicated. These findings, in combination with similar research, demonstrate that providing evidence for both sides when most experts agree may lead to a false sense of balance (Koehler, 2016; Reginald, 2015).

### Quotations that Contain Citations to Other Works (APA, 2020, p. 276)

Try to avoid quoting material that contains citations to other works if possible. Paraphrase instead, or quote shorter phrases that leave out the part with the citation. Or if necessary:

- When quoting material that contains embedded in-text citations, include the in-text citations that are inside the quote, but do not include those sources in the References.
- If citations appear *at the end* of material you want to quote, it is common practice to end the quotation before the citations and to cite only the work you read.

### Remember: You don't have to choose between quoting and paraphrasing

You can use a combination in one sentence. You can directly quote several short phrases (that are each, e.g., only 3 or 4 words long) and paraphrase around those.

Another great resource for FAQs about APA 7: The APA style blog <https://apastyle.apa.org/blog>