



W. L. Adams Center for Writing AMA Style Series

10 Distinguishing Features of AMA Style

1. AMA superscripts are raised numerals assigned to sources in the order they appear in the paper. Cite a source only by its assigned number. (AMA 3.2, 3.5 – 3.6)

PACP was first isolated from bovine hypothalamic extracts based on its ability to stimulate cyclic AMP production in anterior pituitary cells.¹ It is a highly conserved member of the IP/secretin/glucagon peptide family.²

2. AMA discourages using direct quotes (AMA 3.6), but if you must replicate the exact wording of a source, include the page number in the superscript:

According to Denier and Silverstein, “Good basic care demands identification of at-risk patients, awareness of common perioperative aggravating factors, simple prevention interventions, recognition of the disease states, and basic treatments.”^{22(p7)}

3. The reference list of numbered sources corresponds to and provides the “key” for superscripts in the paper. Article titles are somewhat similar to APA in the use of “sentence rules” for capitalization. Note the year of publication is positioned differently, and the volume numbers are not italicized. Use Library of Medicine abbreviations for journals. Double-space or single-space. (AMA 3.2, 13.10)

source number	References	abbreviated journal title
1.	Piercy KL, Troiano RP, Ballard RM, et al. <i>The Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans</i> . <i>JAMA</i> .2018;320(19):2020–2028. doi:10.1001/jama.2018.14854	
2.	Beltrame T, Villar R, Hughson RL. Sex differences in the oxygen delivery, extraction, and up- take during moderate-walking exercise transition. <i>Appl Physiol Nutr Metab</i> . 2017;42:994–1000.	
3.	Wang ML, Narcisse MR, McElfish PA. Higher walkability associated with increased physical activity and reduced obesity among United States adults. <i>Obesity</i> (Silver Spring). 2023;31: 553–564.	

4. A common type of source in AMA is the “agency as author” reference entry.

Government Agency Bulletin
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Sexually Transmitted Disease Surveillance, 2000*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, US Dept of Health and Human Services; 2001.

5. Use conventional 10-, 11-, or 12-point Courier or Times New Roman font for text, figure titles, and illustration titles.
6. Double-space the text. Do not indent paragraphs. Use one-inch margins; do not justify the right margin.
7. Always use numerals to express quantities, except in these cases: the beginning of a sentence (Fifty respondents), common fractions (two-thirds), ordinals (first, second).
8. Avoid using proprietary (brand) names of pharmaceuticals such as “Synthroid” to preclude any implication of bias or conflict of interest, and to distinguish your writing from advertisement. Use generic names, such as “levothyroxine.” (AMA 15.4.3, 10.3.5)
9. AMA style does not specify guidelines for title pages, so many students follow APA guidelines for title pages, per their professor’s approval.
10. AMA does not specify rules for levels of headings; some writers follow APA style for that.

