**Grammar Tips for APA 7th Edition**

*The following writing and grammar tips cover the most common areas of concern:*

**Use Formal Voice:** Academic writing is more formal than casual conversations, emails, and instant

messages.

**Complete Sentences:** Write in complete sentences. Complete sentences contain both subjects and

verbs.

**Subject-Verb Agreement:** Be sure your subject and verb agree. For example, “we are” rather than “we

is,” or “they did” rather than “they done.”

**Verb Tense and Active Voice:** Limit shifts in verb tense, and use active voice rather than passive voice.

**Awkward Phrasing:** Use standard English phrasing. For example, “try to do” rather than “try and do,”

or“we went” rather than “us went.”

**Long Paragraphs Preferred:** Be sure your ideas are fully developed in each of your paragraphs. This

usually results in paragraphs of three to five sentences.

**Brainstorming**: Before beginning to write, take the time to put your ideas on paper. Mind-mapping and

list-making are two useful brainstorming techniques.

**Organizing:** Plan your paper or assignment. This may be as simple as a chronological list of your points

or as elaborate as a formal outline.

**Multiple Drafts:** Professional writers create multiple drafts of their writing. You should too.

**Extra Time:** Quality writing takes time –lots of time. Build in a cushion of extra time.

**Allow Time Between Drafts:** While a break of 24-hours or more is ideal, a 30-minutebreak will yield positive results.

**Help From Others:** Being mindful of plagiarism and academic honesty, request proofreading help.

**Full Wording Rather Than Contractions:** Convert contractions to their complete word-partner.

For example:

* it’s = it is
* won’t = will not
* haven’t = have not

**Homonyms:** Homonyms are words that sound alike but are

spelled differently and have different definitions. For example,

new and knew, your and you’re, and know and no or piece and peace, or versus and verses.

**Non-words:** Ensure that all your words are standard English words. For example, “alot” is not a word.

**Frequently Misspelled Words:** Be alert for commonly confused words. For example, possess and

posses, a lot and allot, definitely and defiantly, and their and there.

**etc.:** Avoid using etc. at the end of a list unless it is part of a quotation.

**Use 3rdperson point of view** (unless opinion paper): Avoid pronouns such as *I, we, my, our*(1stperson)

and *you, yours, your, us, we*(2ndperson). Deal with facts, thus, providing citations within paper and reference page. Focus on subject; not feelings about the subject. The use of 3rdperson retains a formal tone: Academic writing is more formal than casual conversation.

**Parenthesis:** Parentheses are most often used in citations. Before using them in other applications,

consult the APA handbook for guidance.

**Commas and Introductory Phrases:** Usually commas are placed between an introductory phrase and

the main sentence; however, commas are rarely used to separate a concluding phrase.

**Colon:** Colons should only be used when the introductory phrase is a complete sentence.

**Semicolon:** Semicolons are used to either connect two complete sentences, or to connect a list that

contains commas.

**Slashes:** Use dashes rather than slashes.

**Punctuation when ending a Quote:** If quotation is at the end of a sentence, close quote with quotation

marks, cite the source in parentheses, and end with a period or other punctuation outside the final parenthesis.

**Mid-sentence quote:** If quote is in mid-sentence, close quote with quotation marks, cite the source

immediately after the quotation marks, and continue the sentence.

**Question Marks and Quotation Marks:** Place question marks outside the quotation mark unless the

question mark is part of the quotation.

**Single Quotation Marks:** The onlytime you use single quotation marks is inside of double quotation

marks.

**Exclamation Points:** Exclamation points should not be used unless the exclamation point is part of a

quotation.

**Titles of Books and Magazines:** *Italicize* the title of books and magazines.