9.9: Style Rules

Style rules are guidelines to ensure uniform writing across authors and publications. You may be familiar with popular guides such as APA, MLA, Chicago, and Harvard referencing. Your assignment guidelines will usually specify which style guidelines to use; if not, check with your instructor. Whichever style guide is required you should consult the most current manual because guidelines are updated every few years.

Remember, this chapter is based on the 6th edition of the APA manual.

The American Psychological Association (APA) style guidelines are commonly used in many academic fields, including nursing. The APA manual is a required resource for many nursing courses, so you should purchase it early in your program and consult it throughout. You can pick it up at your university bookstore. Alternatively, there are many websites where you can purchase an online copy or rent it for one year; however, the price difference is negligible. Check out: Rent or buy APA manual.

All style guides specify how to write, format your paper, and cite your sources. You have already learned about some elements of writing, such as language and tone of voice. Other style rules may apply to elements such as manuscript structure (title page, abstract, layout of paper, and appendices), and citations and references. See Figure 9.1 for a sample title page as per APA (2010). Although some instructors may request that you include the date and your student number, these are not components of APA. Therefore, always check with your instructor whether these items should be included.

Other style rules are related to formatting (margins, line spacing, font size and style, page numbers, running head, and levels of heading). For example, the guidelines indicated with APA (2010) are: (a) One-inch margins on all four margins; (b) Double spaced text; (c) 12-inch Times New Roman font; (d) Page numbers in top right corner starting on the title page; and (e) A running head (shortened title – less than 50 characters) at the top of each page, flush left, as per Figure 9.1.
Student Tip

Making a Manual Work for You

You may find style manuals confusing. Start by looking at the Table of Contents and review the most relevant sections. You could create a summary sheet of key points or use stick-on tabs to mark important pages or highlight important sections. Manuals provide samples of title pages, abstracts, introductions, citations, and references, and you should model your work based on these samples.

Figure 9.1: Sample title page

Running head: BACCALAUREATE EDUCATION

The Effects of Baccalaureate Education on the Profession of Nursing

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