APA FORMATTING ERRORS
COMMONLY FOUND IN DISSERTATIONS

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Section	
	APA6 style
2.13	"If your manuscript has only one appendix, label it *Appendix;* if your manuscript has more than one appendix, label each one with a capital letter (*Appendix A, Appendix B,* etc.) in the order in which it is mentioned in the main text" APA6 2.13.
3.03	Use headings as described in the GSE handbook and APA6 3.03 and Table 3.1.
3.04	"The introduction to a manuscript [or chapter] does not carry a heading that labels it as the introduction. (The first part of a manuscript is assumed to be an introduction.)" APA6 3.04
3.04	Seriation (the use of enumerated lists and their form) is described in APA6 3.04.
3.14	"Racial and ethnic groups are designated by proper nouns and are capitalized. Therefore, use *Black* and *White* instead of *black* and *white* (the use of colors to refer to other human groups currently is considered pejorative and should not be used)."
3.14	APA6 3.14 says, regarding multiword racial and ethnic groups, when used as "modifiers, do not use hyphens in multiword names, even if the names act as unit modifiers (e.g., *Asian American* participants)."
3.22	See APA6 3.22 for a brief introduction to restrictive and nonrestrictive clauses.
4.01	APA6 4.01 "insert only one space after commas, colons, and semicolons; periods that separate parts of a reference citation; periods of the initials in personal names."
4.01	Use a space after the periods of the initials in personal names (APA6 4.01).
4.03	Use serial commas. "Use a comma between elements (including before *and* and *or*) in a series of three or more items" APA6 4.03.
4.05	"Use a colon between a grammatically complete introductory clause (one that could stand on its own as a sentence) and a final phrase or clause that illustrates, extends, or amplifies the preceding thought" (APA6 4.05).
4.07	"Use double quotation marks to set off the title of an article or chapter in a periodical or book when the title is mentioned in text" (APA6 4.07).
4.07	Use double quotation marks to "introduce a word or phrase used as an ironic comment, as slang, or as an invented or coined expression. Use quotation marks the first time a word or phrase is used; thereafter, do not use quotation marks" (APA6 4.07).
4.08	Use double quotation marks to enclose quotations in text. Use single quotation marks within double quotation marks to set off material that in the original source was enclosed in double quotation marks. ln block quotations (any quotations of 40 or more words). Do not use quotation marks to enclose block quotations. Do use double quotation marks to enclose any quoted material within a block quotation. APA6 4.08.
4.09	Don't use parentheses back-to-back (See APA6 4.09.).

4.09   Use a comma before statistics that include parentheses to avoid nested parentheses. See APA6 4.09 (p. 93) for examples.

Do not use brackets to set off statistics that already include parentheses.

Correct:
was statistically significant, $F(1, 32) = 4.37$, $p = .045$.
Incorrect:
was statistically significant ($F[1, 32] = 4.37$, $p = .045$).
Incorrect:
was statistically significant [$F(1, 32) = 4.37$, $p = .045$].
APA6 4.10

4.12   Preferred spelling should conform to *Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary,* 11th ed. (referred to as web11 in comments in your dissertation; APA6 4.12).

4.13   The phrase *six-year-old* is hyphenated as noun and adjective. To describe those Age 5 and 6 the phrase would become *five- and six-year-old children.* However, *six years old* takes no hyphens. Similarly, *first- and second-grade children, middle- and upper-income families.* When used as a modifier *fourth-grade* (e.g., *fourth-grade student*) has a hyphen, but as a noun (e.g., *He was in the fourth grade.*), no hyphen is required. Also *t* test (n.); *t*-test (adj.); *follow up* (v.), *follow-up* (n., adj.). Common issues of hyphenation are treated in APA6 4.13.

I have tried to point out places where hyphens are required. Some prefixes, such as *self-* almost always use hyphens. Other constructions use hyphens in the context of compound adjectives (e.g., *first-year students*), but not as noun phrases (e.g., *they had been there from the first year*). Many of the intricacies of hyphenation are presented in APA6 4.13, and often, but not always, questions of hyphenation may be resolved by consulting the latest edition of *Merriam Webster Collegiate Dictionary.*

4.15   "Capitalize major words in titles of books and articles within the body of the paper. Conjunctions, articles, and short prepositions are not considered major words; however, capitalize all words of four letters or more" (APA6 4.15, which see for examples and details.).

4.16   "Do not capitalize the names of laws, theories, models, or hypotheses" (APA5 3.14). *Statistical procedures* is added to the list in APA6 4.16 p. 102.

4.17   Capitalize nouns followed by numerals or letters that denote a specific place in a numbered series (Grade 5, Stage 4, Research Question 3, Age 5, Day 1, Experiment 4, etc.; see APA6 4.17, 4.31f).

4.18   Titles of tests are capitalized using a headline style of capitalization and are not italicized; neither are the abbreviations established for the names of tests italic. See APA6 4.18 for presentation of titles of tests.

4.21   Use italics for "introduction of a new, technical, or key term or label (after a term has been used once, do not italicize it)" APA6 4.21.

4.21   Use italics for "genera, species, and varieties" (APA6 4.21 e.g., *Macaca mulatta*)

4.21   Use italic for words-as-words and letters as letters, "letter, word, or phrase cited as a linguistic example"(APA5 3.19; APA6 4.21, p. 105).

4.21   "Use italics for titles of books, periodicals, films, videos, and microfilm publications" (APA6 4.21).

4.21   Use italic for anchors of scale, see APA6 4.21 for examples of the usual presentation of this information.

4.21   The titles of books when mentioned in text appear in italics, the titles of articles in quotation marks (APA6 4.21, 4.07)

4.21   Consistently use italic for terms as they are introduced. Use italic for words-as-words and letters as letters, "letter, word, or phrase cited as a linguistic example"(APA5 3.19; APA6 4.21, p. 105). Pairs of single quotes are used only for quotations within in-sentence quotations. Use double quotation marks to (a) present quotations APA6 4.08 (b) introduce a word or phrase used as an ironic comment, as slang, or as an invented or coined expression (APA5 3.06; APA6 4.07, p. 91). If you wish to *emphasize* a word or phrase; or introduce new, technical, or key term; or cite a letter, word, phrase, or sentence as a linguistic example or word-as-word, use italics (APA6 4.21), not single or double quotes. Placing terms within double quotes suggests that the term is being used ironically, often called *scare quotes,* and this undermines the force of your argument. Titles of books, if they are mentioned within the prose of your dissertation, are rendered in italic.

4.22   Establish an abbreviation (for terms, scales, corporate authors, etc.) once and use it consistently thereafter. Before using an abbreviation, carefully consider the guidelines in the section in APA6 called "Deciding whether to abbreviate." Stated clearly in APA5 & 6: "In all circumstances other than in the reference list and in the abstract, you must decide whether (a) to spell out a given expression every time it is used in an article or (b) to spell it out initially and abbreviate it thereafter" (APA6 4.22). Guidelines to help in making your decision are explained in APA6 4.22. Although not specified in APA6, I would rather not see abbreviations in headings or introduced in headings.

4.22   "To maximize clarity, use abbreviations sparingly" (APA6 4.22).

4.22   "Abbreviations introduced on first mention of a term and used fewer than three times thereafter, particularly in a long paper, may be difficult for a reader to remember, and you probably serve the reader best if you write them out each time" (APA6 4.22).

4.22   "In general, use an abbreviation only (a) if it is conventional and if the reader is more familiar with the abbreviation than with the complete form or (b) if considerable space can be saved and cumbersome repetition avoided. In short, use only those abbreviations that will help you communicate with your readers. Remember, they have not had the same experience with your abbreviations as you have" (APA6 4.22).

4.31 & 4.34	Don't use superscripts for ordinal numbers (e.g. 20th century, 5th ed., 75th percentile).

4.31d   Use figures to represent percentages, unless at the beginning of a sentence. *Twenty percent participated, 80% were absent.* See APA5 3.42d and APA6 4.31d. regarding percentages. Ranges of percentages may be presented using the percent sign only once (*10–20%, 20 to 30%*).

4.31   Use figures to express "all numbers below 10 that are grouped for comparison with numbers 10 and above (and that appear in the same paragraph)" (APA5 3.42b). Not in APA6, but should be.

4.31   In general numbers 10 and above are presented as numerals; see APA6 4.31 (and beyond for exceptions). In sentences and paragraphs where numbers less than 10 are compared to numbers greater than 10, use figures to compare like entities: *6 of the 12 eggs were fresh.*

4.35   "Use a zero before the decimal point when numbers are less than 1. Do not use a zero before a decimal fraction when the number cannot be greater than 1 (e.g., correlations, proportions, and levels of statistical significance)" (APA5 3.46; APA6 4.35).

4.35   Use minus signs for negative values. The minus sign is the same width and height as the crossbar of the plus sign ($-.46$; $1 + 1 = 2$). See APA6 Table 5.6, or sections 4.09, 4.10, 4.35, or 4.44 for an example.

4.35   Guidelines for precision of decimal fractions are found in APA 4.35.

4.37   APA6 4.37 **Commas in Numbers** Use commas between groups of three digits in most figures of 1,000 or more. Exceptions: page numbers, binary digits, serial numbers, degrees of temperature, acoustic frequency designations, degrees of freedom.

4.38   APA6 4.38 **Plurals of Numbers.** To form the plurals of numbers, whether expressed as figures or as words, add *s* or *es* alone, without an apostrophe. (fours and sixes; 1950s; 10s and 20s)

4.41   **Selecting Effective Presentation.** If you need to present three or fewer numbers, first try using a sentence; if you need to present 4 to 20, first consider using a well-prepared table; if you have more than 20 numbers, a graph is often more useful than a table (APA6 4.41).

4.42   **References for Statistics.** Do not give a reference for a statistic in common use (APA6 4.42).

4.43   **Formulas.** Do not give a formula for a statistic in common use (APA6 4.42).

4.45   See APA6 4.45 regarding the use of *n* and *N* for numbers of subjects.

4.45   Use an uppercase, italicized *N* to designate the number of members in the total sample (e.g., $N = 135$) and a lowercase, italicized *n* to designate the number of members in a limited portion of the total sample (e.g., $n = 30$). See APA6 4.45.

4.45   Use the symbol for percent only when it is preceded by a numeral. Use the word percentage when a number is not given. *Exception.* In table headings and figure legends, use the symbol % to conserve space.

4.46   Use italic for statistical abbreviations and symbols that are italicized in APA6 4.46, Table 4.5.

5.03   **Graphical Versus Textual Presentation.** Information that used to be routinely presented in tables (e.g. analysis of variance [ANOVA] tables) is now routinely presented in text.

5.06   **Permission to Reproduce Data Displays.** If you reproduced or adapted a table, figure, questionnaire, or test item from a copyrighted source, you must obtain written permission for print and electronic reuse from the copyright holder and give credit in the table or figure caption to the original author and copyright holder.

5.07   APA6 5.07 & ff. give much valuable information regarding standard practice of creating and organizing tables, including eliminating redundant information and the treatment of empty cells.

5.10   "In the text, refer to every table and tell the reader what to look for. Discuss only the table's highlights. If you find yourself discussing every item in the table, the table is unnecessary" (APA6 5.10)

5.14   "**Decimal values.** The table body contains the data. Express numerical values to the number of decimal places that the precision of measurement justifies (see section 4.35), and if possible, carry all comparable values to the same number of decimal places" (APA6 5.14).

5.14   By convention an em dash is used on the main diagonal of a correlation matrix. See APA6 5.14 and Table 5.6.

5.14   "**Empty cells.** If the point of intersection between a row and a column (called a *cell*) cannot be filled because data are not applicable, leave the cell blank. If a cell cannot be filled because the data were not obtained or are not reported, insert a dash [em dash] in that cell and explain the use of the dash in the general note to the table" (APA6 5.14).

5.16   See APA6 5.16 for an explanation of the three kinds of table notes. The changes that I have suggested for your Table 6 correspond to Table 17.2 (the "play it safe" version of the standard multiple regression analysis) in Nicol A. A. M., & Pexman, P. M. (2010) *Presenting your findings: A practical guide for creating tables.* Washington, DC: APA.

5.16   A probability note to a table is not preceded by *Note.* See APA6 5.16 for the form of probability notes.

5.17   "Limit the use of *rules* (i.e. lines) in a table to those that are necessary for clarity. Appropriately positioned white space can be an effective substitute for rules; for example, long, uninterrupted columns of numbers or words are more readable if a horizontal line of space is inserted after every fourth or fifth entry. In the manuscript, use spacing between columns and rows and strict alignment to clarify relationships within a table" (APA6 5.17).

6.01   **Plagiarism.** "Authors do not present the work of another as if it were their own work."

6.03   See APA6 6.03 for proper placement of page number in citation.

6.03   See APA6 6.03 regarding the correct use of block quotes versus in-text quotations.

6.05   APA6 6.05 provides guidance for the direct **Quotations of Online Material Without Pagination.**

6.06   **Accuracy of Quotations.** Direct quotations must be accurate.

6.07   **Changes From the Source Requiring No Explanation.** The first letter of the first word in a quotation may be changed to an uppercase or a lowercase letter. The punctuation mark at the end of a sentence may be changed to fit the syntax. Single quotation marks may be changed to double quotation marks and vice versa. Any other changes (e.g., italicizing words for emphasis or omitting words; see section 6.08) must be explicitly indicated.

6.08   Material that has been omitted between sentences in quotations is represented by four points of ellipsis. . . . The first point is a period, the sentence following begins with a capital (APA6 6.08).

6.08   **Omitting material. "**Use three spaced ellipsis points (. . .) within a sentence to indicate that you have omitted material from the original source. Use four points to indicate any omission between two sentences. The first point indicates the period at the end of the first sentence quoted, and the three spaced ellipsis points follow. Do not use ellipsis points at the beginning or end of any quotation unless, to prevent misinterpretation, you need to emphasize that the quotation begins or ends in midsentence" (APA6 6.08).

6.08   APA6 6.08 **Changes From the Source Requiring Explanation—Inserting Material "**Use brackets, not parentheses, to enclose material such as an addition or explanation inserted into a quotation by some person other than the original author (see also the second example in section 4.10)."

6.09   Citations within Quotations. "Do not omit citations embedded within the original material you are quoting. The works cited need not be included in the list of references (unless you happen to cite them as primary sources elsewhere in your paper" (APA6 6.09).

6.09   APA6 6.09 "Do not omit citations embedded within the original material you are quoting. The works cited need not be included in the list of references (unless you happen to cite them as primary sources elsewhere in your paper)."

6.11 Every reference entry should have a citation and every citation a reference entry. I have placed the page number at which a reference is first cited in comments in your references. If a reference entry has no page number, I have not found a citation for it. The comment "not in refs" means that no reference has been found for that citation. See APA6 p. 174 (preceding 6.11): "Each reference cited in the text must appear in the reference list, and each entry in the reference list must be cited in the text. Make certain that each source referenced appears in both places and that the text citation and reference list entry are identical in spelling of author names and year."

6.11 Author's names should be spelled consistently and correctly in references and citations (APA6, p. 174).

6.11 Form for citations may be found in APA6 6.11 & ff. and Table 6.1.

Table 6.1 Use a comma after the penultimate name in citations with 3 to 5 authors as in the examples in APA6 Table 6.1.

6.12 APA6 6.12 explains how to cite works with 6 or more authors and how to differentiate when the *Author et al.* form is not sufficiently precise. APA6 6.27 and APA6 7.01 Example 2 offer rules for reference entries with 8 or more authors. The form for first and subsequent citations of works with multiple authors is described in APA6 6.12.

6.12 For citation of references with six or more authors, use *et al.* the first time the reference is cited. See APA5 3.95 or APA6 6.12 (p. 175).

6.12 First citations of works with 6 or more authors differ from those with 3 to 5 authors. "When a work has six or more authors, cite only the surname of the first authors followed by *et al.* (not italicized and with a period after *al*) and the year for the first and subsequent citations" APA6 6.12.

6.12 The names of corporate authors in text or citation, such as the National Center for Educational Statistics, are not italicized. See APA6 6.12 and its associated table for examples.

6.14 APA6 6.14 "If a reference list includes publications by two or more primary authors with the same surname, include the first author's initial in all text citations, even if the year of publication differs."

6.15 **Works With No Identified Author.** APA6 6.15 explains the citation of works with no identified author or with and anonymous author.

6.16 **Two or More Works Within the Same Parentheses.** Order multiple citations within parentheses in the same order that they appear in the references (APA6 6.16); references are ordered as described in APA6 6.25.

6.17   **Secondary Sources.** To cite a work discussed or quoted in a secondary source "give the secondary source [the work where you found the quote or reference] in the reference list; in text, name the original work, and give a citation for the secondary source. For example, if Seidenberg and McClelland's work is cited in Coltheart et al. and you did not read the work cited, list the Coltheart et al. reference in the References." (see APA5 4.16 ¶ 22; APA6 6.17)

6.17   "Use secondary sources sparingly, for instance, when the original work is out of print, unavailable through usual sources, or not available in English. Give the secondary source in the reference list; in text, name the original work and give a citation for the secondary source. For example, if Allport's work is cited in Nicholson and you did not read Allport's work, list the Nicholson reference in the reference list. In the text, use the following citation: *Allport's diary (as cited in Nicholson, 2003)*" APA6 6.17.

6.18   **Classical Works** Cite the date of translation for classics (e.g., Aristotle, trans. 1931; James, 1890/1983). See also for citations of the Bible and Qur'an.

6.20   **Personal Communications** See APA6 6.20 for citations of recoverable and unrecoverable personal communications.

6.21   **Citations in Parenthetical Material** If a citation appears in parenthetical text, use commas, not brackets, to set off the date. See APA 6.21 for an example.

6.25   Order reference entries per APA6 6.25. Order multiple citations within parentheses in the same order that they appear in the references (APA6 6.16).

6.25   Order the reference entries as described in APA6 6.25.

6.25   References by the same author (or by the same two or more authors in the same order) with the same publication date are arranged alphabetically by title (excluding *A* of *The*). . . . Place lowercase letters—*a, b, c,* and so forth— immediately after the year, within the parentheses. Use these years with appended letters to differentiate between the sources in your citations. See APA6 6.25, p. 182.

     Citations to works by more than three authors with the same first two or three authors in the same order with the same publication dates, but not entirely identical. This is not an instance where date*a* and date*b* rules apply. See APA6 6.12 to deal with instances where *et al.* is not sufficiently precise on subsequent in-document citations.

6.27   In APA6, references with more than seven authors take the form Author1, I. I., Author2, I. I., Author3, I. I., Author4, I. I., Author5, I. I., Author6, I. I., . . . LastAuthor, I. I. (See APA6 6.27 and APA6 7.01 Example 2.).

6.31 & 6.32	APA6 requires digital object identifiers (doi's) for articles retrieved from electronic sources. This practice is described in APA6 6.31 and 6.32. If no doi is available, it is sufficient to state "Available at [URL of publisher]" after the reference. Else, the form is Author, A. A., & Author, X. (year). Title of article. *Title of Periodical, xx,* pp–pp. doi: xx.xxxxxxxxxx Keep doi's on one line. Do not include retrieval dates unless the source material may change over time (e.g., Wikis).
A7.01	Regarding citations of public law such as the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002, in text, give the popular or official name of the act (if any) and the year of the act. In the reference list entry, include the source and section number of the statue, and in parentheses give the publication date of the statutory compilation, which may be different from the year in the name of the act. See APA5 appendix D.04.9 and APA6 appendix A7.01 ff. for examples.

	Chicago Manual of Style
8.179	Not treated in the APA manual, but *The Chicago Manual of Style,* 16th ed. section 8.179 says that the "titles of most poems are set in roman type and enclosed in quotation marks. A very long poetic work, especially one constituting a book, is italicized and not enclosed in quotation marks." (e.g., Robert Frost's poem "The Housekeeper" in his collection *North of Boston;* Dante's *Inferno;* and presumably "Peter, Peter, Pumpkin Eater")
8.143	Common editorial practice is not to capitalize the names of diseases, disorders, syndromes, diagnostic procedures, and anatomical parts, but if one of the words is a proper noun, that word should be capitalized (e.g. *Down syndrome*). Although disorders are capitalized in the *DSM*, they appear there in headings. This isn't treated specifically in APA6, but good guidance is offered in the *Chicago Manual of Style* (16th ed.), section 8.143.
10.20	Regarding academic degrees, "Spelled-out terms, often capitalized in institutional settings (and on business cards and other promotional items), should be lowercased in normal prose" (*Chicago Manual of Style,* 15th ed., section 10.20; *Individuals who have attained a bachelor's degree earn, on average, $20,000 more than individuals who have only obtained a high school diploma.*)

5.220   *Etc.* is an abbreviation, and as such is always followed by a period. If *etc.* falls before a right parenthesis it still has a period. Punctuation outside the parentheses is part of the enclosing sentence and has no effect on the punctuation within the parentheses. I have quoted the *Chicago Manual of Style* 16th ed. (CMS16; section 5.220), following, regarding *et al.* and *etc.* **et al.** This is the abbreviated form of *et alii* ("and others")—the *others* being people, not things. Since *al.* is an abbreviation, the period is required. **etc.** This is the abbreviated form of *et cetera* ("and other things"); it should never be used in reference to people. *Etc.* implies that a list of things is too extensive to recite (and indeed it should be used only after at least two items, never just one). But often writers seem to run out of thoughts and tack on *etc.* for no real purpose. Also, two redundancies often appear with this abbreviation: (1) *and etc.*, which is poor style because *et* means "and," and (2) *etc.* at the end of a list that begins with *e.g.*, which properly introduces a short list of examples.

6.82   Don't use spaces around an em dash. "The em dash, often simply called the dash, is the most commonly used and most versatile of the dashes. Em dashes are used to set off an amplifying or explanatory element and in that sense can function as an alternative to parentheses (second and third examples), commas (fourth and fifth examples), or a colon (first example)—especially when an abrupt break in thought is called for" (CMS16, 6.82). Use em dashes (—) in all self-correlation cells. Instructions for creating em dashes, en dashes, and minus signs in your word processing software may be found below.

General style

Where not in the context of APA-style citations, periods and commas always go within final quotation marks.

A citation should lead directly to a reference (e.g., United States Government Accountability Office); the author should be the same in the citation and the reference entry unless you have established an abbreviation on first use, which should also lead the reference entry and be used consistently thereafter.

Examples or explanations preceded by *e.g.* or *i.e.* should be enclosed in parentheses (e.g. thus).

Capitalize epithets associated with proper names when they are used formally (e.g., President Barack Obama, the president; the School District of Philadelphia, the district).

Don't introduce sentences with adverbs in order to editorialize.