

10 Don'ts of APA 7th Citation Style

Error Type	Description of the Mistake	APA 7th Rule/Correction
1. Missing In-Text/Reference Match	Not all in-text citations have a corresponding entry on the References list, or vice versa.	Every source cited in the text must appear in the References list, and every source in the References list must be cited in the text.
2. Ampersand (&) Misuse	Using the word "and" in a parenthetical citation or using the ampersand (&) in a narrative citation.	Use "&" only in parenthetical citations (e.g., (Smith & Jones, 2021)) and in the References list. Spell out "and" in narrative citations (e.g., Smith and Jones (2021) found...).
3. Incorrect et al. Rule	Not using "et al." for sources with three or more authors from the very first citation. (This is a change from APA 6th).	For a work with three or more authors, cite only the first author's last name followed by "et al." in every citation. (e.g., (Chen et al., 2020))
4. Missing Page/Locator for Quotes	Directly quoting a source without including a specific page number or other locator in the in-text citation.	For direct quotes, you must include a locator: p. (single page), pp. (page range), para. (paragraph number), or a heading/section name. (e.g., (Lee, 2019, p. 45))
5. Incorrect Reference List Indentation	Using a standard paragraph indent or no indent at all on the References page.	Each reference entry must use a hanging indent—the first line is flush left, and all subsequent lines are indented 1.27cm.
6. Title Capitalization (References)	Inappropriately using Title Case (capitalizing major words) for the titles of books, articles, and book chapters.	Use Sentence Case for the titles of books, articles, and chapters. Capitalize only the first word of the title, the first word after a colon or dash, and any proper nouns.
7. Incorrect Journal Title Formatting	Failing to italicize and use Title Case for the journal name and volume number.	The name of the Journal/Periodical and its volume number must be in Title Case and italicized. The issue number is generally not italicized. (e.g., <i>Journal of Applied Research</i> , 45(2), 1-15.)
8. Inaccurate DOI/URL Format	Using the outdated "Retrieved from" before a URL, or failing to format the DOI as a hyperlink.	Do not use "Retrieved from" (unless a retrieval date is required). Format the DOI as a hyperlink beginning with https://doi.org/ . URLs and DOIs should be live links.
9. Forgetting References List Header Formatting	Not properly formatting the main heading of the reference list.	The title "References" must be centered and bolded on a new page.
10. Page Number Misplacement with Punctuation	Placing the sentence punctuation (e.g., a period) before the closing parenthesis of the in-text citation.	The in-text citation must be placed before the final punctuation mark of the sentence. (Incorrect: ...research on this topic (Jones, 2021). Correct: ...research on this topic (Jones, 2021).