AMA Formatting Guidelines
Contributed by: Emily Tudorache

Note: Many of the guidelines concerning document formatting, especially of the title page and subheadings, that have been provided in this resource are subject to change depending on the preference of your instructor. Always check with the rubric, instructor, or teaching assistant before making decisions about subjective formatting.

Formatting Basics
- Page number, starting at 1 on the title page, in upper right-hand corner
- Text is double-spaced
- 12-point Times New Roman or other serif type font
- 1” margins and ½” paragraph indentations

Title Page
The title page should include the article title, author name(s), institution name, abstract, and keywords. Place the title, author name(s), and institution name in the upper half of the page, centered, and double-spaced. This content should not be bolded, italicized or in a larger/differing font. Write author name(s) with first name, middle initial(s), and last name but no titles (e.g. “professor” or “Dr.”) or degrees (e.g. M.S., Ph.D., or M.D.), if you have degrees or titles.

Ex:

Effects of Music Therapy on Recovery Time in Post-Operation Pediatric Patients

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Abstract

The abstract and 3-10 key words should be included on the title page following the title, author, and institution information.

Most often, you will be writing a literature review or reporting original data, and therefore will use a structured abstract, limited to 250 words, that uses predetermined headings. The AMA handbook recommends use of the following:

- Context
- Evidence Acquisition
- Results
- Conclusions

However, this is a common variation asked for by professors:

- Objectives
- Methodology and/or Research Design
- Results (often reported quantitatively when appropriate)
- Conclusions

Ex:

*Objective*: To investigate the effect of music therapy on overall recovery time in pediatric patients post-operation. *Methods*: We used data collected from previous literature to compare recovery times in the population of interest. *Results*: Review of literature revealed a weak, negative correlation between exposure to music therapy and length of stay in recovery. *Conclusion*: While there appears to be a correlation between specialist administered music therapy and shorter recovery times in post-operation patients, more research is needed to objectively define any benefits such therapy can have in a pediatric population.

Key Words: music therapy, auditory therapy, pediatrics, post-operation recovery, length of stay.
Headings
AMA does not outline specifics requirements for typeface (e.g. boldface, italicized) or alignment (e.g centered, left-justified) of headings; as long as they are consistent within the paper and distinguishable from each other they will be acceptable.

Therefore:
- Level 1 Headings
  - May be centered or left-justified on the line above the text
  - Bolded or not
- Level 2 Headings
  - Left-justified above the text or at the beginning of the text on the same line
  - May be italicized or bolded, or not
- Level 3 Headings
  - Left-justified above the text or at the beginning of the text on the same line
  - May be bolded, italicized, or not

Text
The main sections in an AMA literature review are often the same as those found in an APA paper (Introduction, Methods, Results, Discussion, etc.).

Introduction:
This is where your background information goes. After informing the reader about your topic, this section should also present your research question and reason for your research. Include information about why this research is important and/or why it’s a problem, as well as how it ties to previous research in the field.

Methods:
This section details how you conducted your research. You should outline databases (e.g. Ebsco Host, PubMed, etc.) filters (e.g. academic/peer-reviewed sources, date limitations, etc.), and keywords used in your searches and describe trends in the outcomes of these searches. This is also the section in which you should describe and justify your inclusion and exclusion criteria, i.e. the details of a study’s publication, design, or population that either allow it to be included or excluded from your research (e.g. “only studies published after 2005 were included” or “studies including participants over the age of 16 years were not considered”.)
Results:
In a report of original data, this section will most often summarize the collected data and include tables and figures used to analyze the results. If you are reporting on original research or quantitative data, this section will not provide any commentary or analysis of the results’ significance. In a literature review, this section will summarize and synthesize the major results and conclusions of the reviewed literature. It will often be structured with subheadings that organize your analysis by topic (e.g. “Music Therapy in Neurosurgery Recovery” or “Music Therapy in Addition to Pain Management via Pharmaceuticals”).

Discussion:
The interpretation of your results goes here. Possible biases and/or weaknesses of the study or studies may be discussed, such as how sample demographics, study design, or reporting methods may have biased the results to a particular conclusion. You should also identify any gaps in the literature that may lead to potential for future research. In addition to this, your discussion section should describe the significance of your research to the greater body of knowledge or its role in solving the presented problem.

References:
The heading for this section should be “References,” bolded and left-justified at the top of the next page. The references should then be numbered down the page in the order they appear in the text. References should not be double-spaced.