APA Style and Literature Review Tips

1. The reference list and parenthetical, in-text citations work together to let the reader know where you got the information in each section of your paper.

2. The in-text format (Author’s last name, date) directs the reader to the alphabetical section of the reference list containing the author’s last name, and distinguishes between multiple sources by the same author by using the date.

3. Every item in the References list must be cited parenthetically in the paper. If you don’t, it will look like you are saying that you used more sources than you actually did use.

4. As often as possible, avoid typing out the whole title of a study, for example:

   Original: According to Sally Jones, author of “The effect of strong family support on recidivism rates”, family support is essential to the emotional health of inmates.

   Revision Ideas: Family support is essential to the emotional health of inmates (Jones, 2016).

   Or: According to Sally Jones (2016), family support is essential to the emotional health of inmates.

   The point of in-text citation is to shorten citations and to refer the reader to the References list for the full information.

5. When two sources make the same point, cite them both parenthetically. For example:

   a. Family support is essential to the emotional health of inmates (Jones, 2016; Smith, 2017).
   b. This demonstrates that you are writing about the shared content of the articles, not locked in to just writing about each article individually. It is called synthetic writing.

6. Whenever you use information that is not common knowledge, you need to provide a source citation for that information. You should (almost) never go a paragraph without at least one in-text citation.

7. Avoid relying to much on long block quotations. It is much better, both stylistically and for your grade, if you properly summarize/paraphrase and cite the information rather than use a long quote.

8. Check all citations against the style manual helps that are in the library guide for the class. Capitalization is the single biggest mistake. Here are a few APA tips:

   a. In the title for an article or a book, you only capitalize the first word of the title (even if it is “The” or “A”) and the first word of any sub-title. Proper nouns (names, places, organizations, etc.) are always capitalized.
   b. In the title of the journal in which an article is contained, you capitalize every word (excluding articles, preposition, and contractions, etc.). Microsoft Word will usually catch the incorrectly capitalized articles, etc. and will underline them in blue. Right click on the link to find the correct form.
   c. The title of a journal or a book are written in italics; the title of an article in a journal or chapter in a book are written in normal font and placed within quotations marks.
   d. EBSCO databases will often make errors in capitalization when you use their citation features. Just be careful to fix the errors, as explained above, and watch out for authors names being listed in ALL CAPITAL letters (i.e. JONES, S) – this always needs to be fixed.