
Using Content Notes in APA Style

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Summary: Defines content notes and explains when to use them and how to format them in APA documentation style.

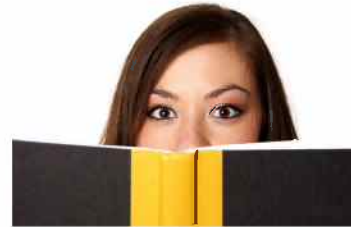
Learning Objectives: To define content notes. To format footnotes correctly. To identify reasons to use content notes.

Using content notes is a good way to add depth to your paper, to provide your reader with interesting additional material, and to impress your audience with the breadth and depth of your knowledge. In this handout, we'll define content notes, discuss how to format them, and suggest some uses for them.

What are Content Notes?

APA style makes use of parenthetical references to document certain kinds of information (author and date). This system works well to allow you to direct your readers to the sources from which you derived your paper.

But you can add another, very impressive dimension to your paper by using content notes to give your reader additional information about your topic that might be interesting and important but that might disrupt the flow of information if you include it in the body of your paper--in APA style these notes are called footnotes but are grouped together on a page after the main text of your paper.



Use footnotes in APA style to provide material that supplements or explains the primary content of your paper or to provide additional bibliographical information.

Footnotes

Footnotes should only be used when the information adds substantially to the discussion, and they should be concise. Each footnote should convey only one idea.

In the text of the paper, insert a superscript Arabic numeral at the point in the text where the material appears. The numeral can be placed following any punctuation, except for a long dash. If the note pertains only to material enclosed in parentheses, the numerical reference should be placed within the parentheses as well.

Although many word processor programs have a footnote/endnote feature, this feature should not be used in an APA paper. Instead type the numeral and change it to superscript using the font feature.



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This kind of authoritarian dominion over wives had psychological as well as legal implications according to Thompson (1973). He contends that the pervasiveness of such attitudes required reciprocal attitudes of subordination or deference in the relationship. These attitudes were embodied in wife and child.¹ Psychological characteristics. . .

The notes themselves are collected on a separate page that follows the main body of the text and the references page. Items in the footnotes page should be double-spaced, and the notes are presented in the numerical order in which they appeared in the text of the paper. Each entry should be marked with a superscript numeral and should be indented 5-7 spaces (as you would a paragraph indentation). The page numbering of the paper continues, as do other features of the APA-style text (e.g., margins should be one inch on each border).

Footnotes

¹ For a different point of view, see Ross, E. (1983). "Survival Networks: Women's Neighborhood Sharing in London before World War I," *History Workshop Journal*, 15, 3. Ross contends that working class women never learned the habit of deference from their middle class counterparts.

² The working class neighborhood in Edwardian London was a hostage to its own notions of respectability. . .

Uses for Supplementary Notes

The list below shows examples of some of the common uses for such notes.

Give Contrasting Information:

² On the other hand, Smythone (1987) notes a different result altogether in his work, contending that the overall outcome of Rommel's appeal was negative because external factors like the progress of the war intervened.



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Evaluate a Source:

⁴ While Berker's (1996) summary implies that Kohlberg's theory of moral development is universal and ungendered, he obviously fails to understand or account for the impact of Kohlberg's failure to include a representative sample of females in his study.

Provide Definitions:

⁷ For the purposes of this paper, *post-structuralism* is defined as the movement that seeks to discern the relationship between language, representation, and reality by examining the creation of and forces within certain linguistic systems.

Note: All sources given in your content notes will appear on your References page along with the material cited parenthetically in text.

References

American Psychological Association. (2001). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (5th ed). Washington, DC: Author.



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