

Using Ellipsis in APA Style

Author/Creation: Karalyn Jones, September 2007. **Revised:** 2009.

Summary: Provides advice for handling omitted material in quotations using APA documentation style.

Learning Objectives: To know when to use ellipsis in APA. To be able to format omitted material correctly.

Sometimes it is necessary to omit context from quoted material. An ellipsis (. . .) is used to indicate something was omitted. In APA, the ellipsis is generally used only to indicate omitted material from *within* a sentence.



Importantly, writers should ensure the omission of material (words, phrases, etc.) does not change the meaning of the quoted material (the author's intent) or create grammatical errors.

To form an ellipsis in APA style, use three periods with a space before each period and a space after the last period.

Original: The hurricane no longer posed much of a threat to the Houston home of Mission Control, but managers did not want to take any chance and proceeded toward a Tuesday landing.

Parts Omitted: “The hurricane no longer posed much of a threat . . . but managers did not want to take any chance and proceeded toward a Tuesday landing” (Peterson, para. 2, 2007).

Four periods are used to indicate omitted material **between** sentences: one to indicate the end of the sentence and three to indicate the omission. Notice that there is no space before the first period—the one that indicates the end of the sentence.

Original: Primary sources are original works. They can be first hand accounts, created by participants or observers (eyewitnesses) to events, or original works of art (written and visual). They may have been created at the time of the event or at a later date.

Parts Omitted: “Primary sources are original works. . . . They may have been created at the time of the event or at a later date” (Leibensperger, para. 2, 2005).

Ellipses are usually not included at the beginning or ending of a quoted passage in APA unless the ellipses are needed to prevent misreading.



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Practice Exercises

For each of the following, use ellipsis to replace the underlined material.

1. In addition, Richard Cockett says, large numbers of refugees from Darfur have fled to Uganda in the south and to Egypt in the north.

-From the 5th paragraph in Judith Latham's "Deployment of UN Peacekeepers May Not End Violence in Sudan, Say Africa Experts" copyrighted 2007.

2. You not only must understand your audience but also keep this audience in mind at all times as you draft your paper. Many times your audience will be dictated to you by your instructor or workplace situation; other times you will get to choose an audience. In either case, you'll have to understand and then adapt your writing to that audience

- From the second page of Summer Leibensperger's "Define the Purpose, Consider the Audience, and Develop the Thesis" copyrighted 2003.

3. Of key importance to the theoretical structure of the model is the tenet that individual styles must be assessed and that, if a learner is going to have the best opportunity to learn, instructional techniques must be used that are congruent with each student's style

-From paragraph eleven in DeBello's "Comparison of Eleven Major Learning Styles Models" copyrighted 1990.

Answers

1. Crocket suggests that "large numbers of refugees from Darfur have fled to Uganda" (as cited in Latham, 2007, para. 5).
2. "You not only must understand your audience but also keep this audience in mind at all times as you draft your paper . . . and . . . adapt your writing to that audience" (Leibensperger, 2003, p2).
3. "Individual styles must be assessed, and, . . . if a learner is going to have the best opportunity to learn, instructional techniques must be used that are congruent with each student's style"(Bello, 1990, p. 205).



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