

# APA FORMATTING

Don't miss the point! APA requires certain sections and headings and pagination, but each part of the whole serves a purpose. **Before you adjust your margins and line-spacing, take a look at what you say in each section of the paper to make sure that it serves the ultimate purpose of your paper.**



*Speaking of purpose...do you know what that is?* The purpose of your paper is to report on your findings and to demonstrate how your work contributes to the body of knowledge about this subject. (The “body of knowledge” refers to all the people who have researched this subject before you. We call them “sources,” but really sources are people, just like you.)

## PARTS OF AN APA PAPER...AND WHAT THEY DO

**Abstract:** Summarize the major elements of the paper

**Introduction:** provide context and rationale for your study

**Literature Review:** survey articles, books, journals, dissertations and other sources relevant to your research question; the purpose of this section is to explain what is known about the research question **and** what is not yet known. (this should lead to your hypothesis and/or objectives for this study)

**Methods:** describe what you did in your study

**Results:** report on the outcome of the study—what happened—without interpretation

**Discussion:** interpret the findings of your study; what do the results prove or show? How does it relate to what was known or not known in the research (*as described in your lit review*)

**References:** list of all sources cited in the paper