



# Suggestions for Writing a Nursing Paper

## The basics:

When writing a nursing paper at IWU, the professors expect students to use APA 7th edition, unless stated otherwise.

- Use professional style (**not** student style)
  - Title page formatted according to APA 7<sup>th</sup> edition for professional papers
    - Centered in the middle of the paper, title in bold, author, institution
- Running head and page number appear as they do on this document
- Abstract if professor states necessary
- Margins are 1” on all sides
- The font is consistent throughout the paper
  - The font is 12-point New Times Roman or 11-point Calibri.

Because nursing papers are written in the APA format, the paper needs to be as precise as possible. Papers should read like a textbook. For example:

- NOT PRECISE Writing:
  - Because **some** rural areas have a **slightly** lower population than **bigger** urban areas **that have a lot of people**, it can be **more difficult and** harder to find **nice, smart**, sympathetic, and well-trained physicians for **certain members of the** LGBT community.
- PRECISE Writing:
  - Because rural areas have a lower population than urban areas, it can be harder to find sympathetic and well-trained physicians for the LGBT community.

## How to write an effective introduction:

- Start the paper with an introduction to the topic; however, no flashy attention-getters are needed.
  - For example, “Nursing students interact with the geriatric population often, but continue to struggle to communicate with elders.”

- Do **NOT** use the title of the reviewed article in the paper. For example, do not start with, “In the research article, Nursing Students and the Geriatric Population...”.
  - Use the researcher’s last name instead. Smith (2020) analyzed...

### How to write body paragraphs:

- The body of the paper is double spaced
- The body of the paper is left-aligned, paragraph indented by one tab key, without extra spacing between paragraphs.
- In-text citations are used appropriately (Smith, 2020) or (Smith, 2020, p. 3).
  - Page numbers are only used with direct quotes that are noted by quotation marks.
  - **DO NOT** overuse direct quotes. Professors are interested in what the student has to say. If the paper is full of quotes the professors will believe you have nothing to say about the topic. 2 or fewer direct quotes for most assignments, unless stated otherwise

### How to write a conclusion paragraph:

- The conclusion paragraph should encompass all of the paper’s essential information.
- If the reader read only the conclusion paragraph they should know the most important takeaways of the paper.
- Do not introduce new content in the conclusion!

### References:

- Reference page after the new page with heading “Reference” centered and bolded
  - References are before the appendix
- References used in a nursing paper need to be **equal to or less than 5 years old**. Articles that are older than 5 years are not considered reliable.
- Systematic reviews are the most reliable form of research
- No secondary citations. If the author of the article is John and they cite a work by Smith and you want to use content from Smith, you need to look up the article by Smith and cite Smith.

### Common mistakes some IWU professors dislike:

- Avoid the use of: this, that, it, they, them, etc. The reader may have difficulty understanding to whom or what you are referring.

- If you need to use these words make sure they are specified by a noun. Without the noun after the demonstrative pronoun, your points will not be as clear for your reader.
  - This is good. What is good? **This idea** is good.
  - Before reading **these articles**, it was easy to believe that the LGBT community no longer faced healthcare discrepancies.
- Do not use contractions; it appears unprofessional.
  - Don't -> do not
  - It's -> it is
- Avoid using space wasters, specifically “in order to”, and “based off of”
  - Remember you are writing as specific and as concise as possible
- Watch subject-pronoun agreement.
  - “**A student might** communicate better if **they** do...”
    - Student is singular, and “they” are plural.
    - Make the subject plural as in students as often as possible.
      - This mistake most often happens because students are trying to be inclusive of all genders. Only use “they” and a single noun if the person uses they/them pronouns
- Try to avoid gender terms unless relevant
  - APA tries to stay away from gender unless necessary to research
  - Never state the author’s gender unless relevant.
    - By not stating the gender of the researcher, bias is avoided.
- Avoid anthropomorphisms.
  - Do NOT write, “the article says” or “the study concluded”.
    - Researchers and authors say things, but the article does not. Articles cannot talk or make conclusions.

### Resources for Further Support:

- APA Manual of Style—[Available](#) at Ames Library’s Reserves
- The Nursing and Health Librarian—[Meg Miner](#), available for scheduling one-on-one appointments
- Writing for Publication in Nursing—[Available](#) at Ames Library as an e-Book
- Writing Skills in Nursing and Healthcare—[Available](#) at Ames Library as an e-Book