

# THE APA GUIDELINES EXPLAINED: GENERATIVE AI

Dutch APA Working Group of Universities of Applied Sciences

Version 1.0

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

With the introduction of ChatGPT, there has been an increasing demand for guidance on how to use this and other generative AI (GenAI) in-text and in the reference list of a publication according to APA guidelines. An official guideline from the APA Style experts from America is overdue, so far only a blog post on [ChatGPT](#) has been published.

The Dutch APA Working Group of Universities of Applied Sciences has taken the initiative to draft its own guideline that does justice to the existing APA guidelines and focuses on applicability in a publication, both for the student and the reviewer. The working group is following the recommendations given in the aforementioned blog.

The outcome generated by AI cannot be retrieved by other users of the tool. Because GenAI gives a different output each time, even when you use the same prompt/input, the results cannot be reproduced by others.

GenAI is capable of creating various types of output from various types of input as well. This manual therefore pays explicit attention to other forms of input and output in addition to text input (as in ChatGPT).

## 2 IN-TEXT

Parenthetical citation: (Developer, year)

In-text citation: Developer (year)

### Example

Parenthetical citation: (Microsoft, n.d.)

In-text citation: Microsoft (n.d.)

Indicate in-text how GenAI was used. This can be done, for example, in the introduction (if the tool was a writing aid) or when describing your method of research.

## 2.1 GenAI as a writing aid for texts

If you have used GenAI to help you write the text of your publication, for example to remove spelling mistakes from your text or to adjust the wording of sentences, mention the use of the tool in the introduction. In this case, you do not need to include the prompt in your report.

It is only in the first entry that the name of the tool is written in italics.

### **Example**

A requirement of this assignment was to create a lay summary. For this, *Read Easy.ai* (Accessibility Desk, n.d.) was used. Read Easy.ai is an extension for Word that helps articulate a text at B1 level.

## 2.2 GenAI as a research tool

If you use the tool for purposes other than as a writing aid, describe this in the section of the text where you give an account of your research methods.

Include at least these three elements:

- the tool you used (in the same way as described in 2.1)
- a description of the input to the tool (see 2.2.1 and 2.2.2)
- a description of the output of the tool (see 2.2.1 and 2.2.3).

If applicable, the text may also indicate how often, over what period, etc. the tool has been used.

In case you can change settings when using GenAI, state this in a way and with a level of detail required by the course you are enrolled in.

### 2.2.1 Text as input and output

Make a note of the prompt if this is relevant to the publication; this may be done in an appendix for long texts or multiple prompts.

Furthermore, you mention the text that the tool creates (output). This can be in its entirety, or just the relevant part. As with the input, this may be in the text itself, or in an appendix (if this makes the publication more readable).

If the tool can create a link to the conversation record (such as ChatGPT), this link can be mentioned in the reference list and no copy needs to be included in the publication. The tool itself can provide this option, but there are also websites where conversation records between people and GenAI can be stored, for example <https://aiarchives.org/>.

### **Example 1**

ChatGPT (OpenAI, 2024) was used to create the research question with the prompt: “Devise a question for a literature review on college education for students with visual impairments”.

Based on the outcome, “What are the key challenges and best practices for providing effective education to students with visual impairments at colleges, and what approaches can help improve accessibility and learning outcomes for these students?”, I formulated this research question:

What are the main challenges and best practices in increasing learning efficiency in teaching college students with visual impairments?

### **Example 2**

(OpenAI, 2024; see Appendix A for the full transcript of the chat).

#### **2.2.2. Input other than text**

If the input you used in the tool was not text, indicate what type of media you entered. It could be a picture, a film, some form of audio (speech, music, etc.), programming code, etc.

These are two possible situations:

- The input is your own work: put it in an appendix or make it available online. Cite the source in the text and in the list of references. List your own name as the author.
- The input is not your own work: acknowledge the source in the text and in the reference list, as described in the *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association*.

Please note: if the input material is copyrighted you should mention this. See Chapter 7 of the *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association*. Note that you may need to obtain permission from the copyright holder of the material.

### 2.2.3. Output other than text

Indicate the type of media GenAI provided as output. Place (the relevant part of) the output in an appendix or make it available online via a URL, e.g. a video on YouTube. Use the applicable guidelines from the *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association*. In this case, the author's name is your own.

Fictitious example of image (input) to video (output):

#### ***In the text***

Today, generative AI tools are capable of creating a video based on a photo. The photo in Figure 1, showing pedestrians on a pavement, served as the basis for the video *Pedestrians on the Street* (Bakker, 2024) in which pedestrians are really walking. This video can be found on YouTube and was created with *Gen-2* (Runway, n.d.).

#### **Figure 1**

*Pedestrians on the Street*



Note. Adapted from *People walking at the street* by B. Sayles, 2018 (<https://www.pexels.com/photo/people-walking-at-the-street-1000754/>). In the public domain.

#### **Reference list**

Bakker, A. (2024, April 10). *Pedestrians on the street* [Video]. YouTube.

Retrieved April 10, 2024, from [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E\\_ASeUXw0-3](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E_ASeUXw0-3)

Runway. (n.d.). *Gen-2* [Generative AI]. <https://app.runwayml.com>

Sayles, B. (2018, April 8). *People walking at the street*. Pexels. Retrieved April 10, 2024, from

<https://www.pexels.com/photo/people-walking-at-the-street-1000754/>

### 3 REFERENCE LIST

Developer. (Year). *AI tool name* (Version) [Generative AI]. <https://xxxx>

#### **Example**

OpenAI. (2024). *ChatGPT* (Version 3.5) [Generative AI]. <https://chat.openai.com>

As mentioned in Section 2, the reference list includes:

- the GenAI used
- the link to the chat transcript or:  
the input to GenAI (if not included in the publication itself), AND the output produced by GenAI (if not included in the publication itself).

A reference entry of a GenAI consists of six elements:

1. **Developer** The name of the company providing GenAI.
2. **Year** List the year, if a year or date is missing use n.d. (=no date).
3. **Name GenAI** The name is in italics.
4. **Version** List version + number in brackets, omit this part if no version number is given.
5. **Description** List description in square brackets: [Generative AI].
6. **URL** List the web link without the viewing date.

## 4 MORE EXAMPLES

### *In the text*

Figure 2 shows what the library might look like in the future.

### *Above the image*

#### **Figure 2**

*A library in the year 2030*



### *Below the image*

*Note.* Image generated with the prompt “Create a photorealistic image of a library in the year 2030” by Microsoft, *Copilot*, n.d. (<https://copilot.microsoft.com/>).

### *Reference list*

Microsoft. (n.d.). *Copilot* [Generative AI]. <https://copilot.microsoft.com/>

**Please note:** no copyright notice will appear below the image because there is no definite ruling yet on AI-generated images and copyright.

### *In the text*

After I drafted my research question, I asked *Gemini* (Google, 2024), “Formulate 5 sub-questions for the research question: what techniques can secondary school teachers use to support troubled young people?”

Based on the input, I .....

## Reference list

Google. (2024). *Gemini* [Generative AI]. <https://gemini.google.com/>

## In the text

The debate about the shape of the Earth (flat or spherical) has recently flared up in the form of conspiracy theories. These are mostly spread via social media. The discussion can also be conducted with a chatbot. An example is the discussion that started with “Is the earth flat?” This chat transcript can be read back on A.I. Archives (Google, 2023; OpenAI, 2023a, 2023b).

## Reference list

Google. (2023). *Gemini* [Generative AI]. A.I. Archives.  
<https://aiarchives.org/id/MGX23k0ssC41AH5YWPIU>

OpenAI. (2023a). *ChatGPT* [Generative AI]. A.I. Archives.  
<https://aiarchives.org/id/47cHEyBfeCXk3i1XCzMp>

OpenAI. (2023b). *ChatGPT* [Generative AI]. A.I. Archives.  
<https://aiarchives.org/id/DbshXI4LWKG1zkGkp9BF>

For all other APA guidelines, see:

American Psychological Association. (2020). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association: The official guide to APA style* (7<sup>th</sup> edition).

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