

APA Table Guidelines

Purpose and General Information:

Tables are useful for presenting a large quantity of information clearly and concisely. They typically display numerical data in columns and rows for easy classification and comparison. Tables do not duplicate text, but rather present new information. They should be interpretable without the text.

Basic Presentation and Formatting:

1. **Numbering:** Each table is preceded by the capitalized word “table” followed by an Arabic number (e.g., Table 1, Table 2, Table 3). The number given to a table is determined by the order in which that table is referred to in the text (i.e., the first table discussed is Table 1, the second is Table 2, and so on). Capitalize “table,” put a period after the table number, and do not bold or italicize the text.
Example: Table 1.
2. **Titling:** Each table has a unique title written directly below the table number. Titles should be brief yet descriptive. Capitalize each major word in the title (but not *of, on, in, and, etc.*). Italicize titles. Don’t put a period. **Example:** *Mean Performance Scores of Students With Different College Majors*
3. **Spacing:** Double-space the entire table. This includes the number, the title, the rows and columns, and any notes to the table.
4. **Ruling:** Put lines in a table only when they are necessary for clarity. Horizontal lines are permissible; vertical lines are not.

Columns and Headings:

1. Generally, arrange tables such that different types of information are located in different columns, with items to be compared located in neighboring columns.
2. Each component of a table is unique; don’t repeat rows or columns within a table.
3. Each column and row will have a heading; headings should be concise but descriptive. Capitalize the first word of each heading. Do not bold or italicize the text, and do not put a period after the heading. **Example:** Temporal lobe
4. Column headings refer to information below, not next to, the heading.
5. Column headings can be of two types: They can cover just one column, or they can cover multiple columns (technically called “spanners”). If a heading covers multiple columns, there must be a row above or beneath that heading that contains individual column headings.
6. Column and row headings may contain standard symbols and abbreviations (e.g., %, M, SD, df, F) without explanation, but nonstandard abbreviations should be

explained in a **note to the table** (below). Unlike full words, abbreviations in headings don't necessarily need to be capitalized.

Body:

1. If individual cells contain text, capitalize the first word.
2. Cells typically contain numbers, not text. Use the number of decimal places that is appropriate for your analysis. This will often be two, but may be more or less depending on the level of precision required by your analysis.
3. Be consistent in the number of decimal places you use within a column and within comparable values elsewhere.
4. If a cell must remain empty, put in a dash (--) and explain your absence of data in the note to the table.

Notes to a Table:

1. Occasionally you may need to provide additional information about an aspect of a table. You can present this information in a note to the table rather than in the text or in the table itself.
2. Notes to the table appear underneath the table being supplemented. Notes begin under the first column and are left-justified and double spaced. Each note begins on a new line.
3. There are three kinds of notes to tables:
 - a. **General notes** are about the table as a whole. They begin with the capitalized and italicized word "*Note*" followed by a period. The first word of the text of the note is capitalized, and the note ends in a period. **Example:** *Note.* All nonsignificant three-way interactions were omitted.
 - b. **Specific notes** are about a particular column, row, or cell. They begin with a lower-case letter in superscript format (e.g., ^a); this letter will also appear in the column, row, or cell that your note refers to. Use letters in alphabetical order. Order the letters in the body of the table from the upper left-hand side of the table to the lower-right hand side. Notes end with a period. **Example:** ^an = 15 for each group.
 - c. **Probability notes** are about statistical findings. These are commonly used to specify the p-value of a particular statistical test. For example, if you have some results that are significant at the p = .05 level and others that are significant at the p = .01 level, put different symbols next to those results in the table, and provide an explanatory note of your symbols underneath the table. Begin probability notes with the symbol to be defined and end them with a period. **Example:** *p < .05. **p < .01.
4. If you have a note of each kind (or of any two of the three kinds), they must appear in the order of General note, Specific note, and Probability note.

Table Checklist

- ❑ Is the table necessary?
- ❑ Is the table referred to in the text?
- ❑ Is the entire table—including the title, headings, and notes—double-spaced?
- ❑ Are all comparable tables in the manuscript consistent in presentation?
- ❑ Is the title brief but explanatory?
- ❑ Does every column have a column heading?
- ❑ Are all abbreviations, special symbols, and special use of italics, parentheses, and dashes explained?
- ❑ Are all probability -level values correctly identified, and are asterisks attached to the appropriate table entries? Is a probability level assigned the same number of asterisks in all tables in the same article?
- ❑ Are the notes in the following order: general note, specific note, probability note?

Sample Table:

Table 1.

Error Rates of Older and Younger Groups

Level of difficulty	<u>Mean error rate</u>		<u>Standard deviation</u>		<u>Sample size</u>	
	Younger	Older	Younger	Older	Younger	Older
Low	0.05	0.14	0.08	0.15	12	18
Moderate ^a	0.05	0.17	0.07	0.15	15	12
High	0.11	0.26	0.1	0.21	16	14

Note. Younger groups were 12-14 years old. Older groups were 18-21 years old.

^aOne participant gave only one incorrect response.

Reference:

American Psychological Association. (2001). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (5th ed.). Washington, D.C.