

GSA General Guidelines
APSU Writing Center Handout

GSA Manuscript Formatting

Submit as a Microsoft Word (docx) document.

Double-spaced throughout (including abstract, references, captions).

12-point Times New Roman.

1-inch margins on all sides.

Continuous line numbering.

First Page Requirements

Full manuscript title.

Complete list of authors.

Each author's affiliation (department, institution, city, state/province, postal code, country).

Mailing address for each author.

Abstract

The abstract must:

- Be no more than 250 words.
- Briefly and objectively summarize the paper's content and conclusions.
- Begin with a topic sentence stating the overall scope.
- Emphasize new findings or contributions.

Introduction and Purpose

Clearly state the purpose of the study.

Provide only minimal necessary background.

Avoid claims of priority or future research statements.

Data and Interpretation

Present data concisely.

Clearly differentiate fact from interpretation.

Methods

Provide sufficient detail for understanding how data was collected.

Do not describe standard methods in detail if they can be cited.

Extended methods may be placed in an Appendix or Supplemental Material.

Heading Styles

Use the following heading format:

FIRST LEVEL HEADING (Bold, ALL CAPS)

Second Level Heading (Bold, Each Word Capitalized)

Third Level Heading (Bold Italic, Each Word Capitalized)

Fourth level heading. (Bold Italic, Sentence capitalization, indented and runs into paragraph.)

Fifth level heading. (Italic, sentence capitalization, indented and runs into paragraph.)

Units of Measure

Use SI (metric) units throughout.

If English units are necessary, place them in parentheses after metric units.

- **Example:** 5 km (3.1 mi)

Sample Location Requirements

Provide precise location data in decimal degrees.

Include projection information (e.g., WGS84, NAD27).

Figures and Tables

Cite figures and tables in numerical order (Figure 1, Figure 2, Table 1, etc.).

All figures and tables must be cited in the text.

Captions must explain all symbols and abbreviations.

Type captions consecutively on separate pages.

Do not place captions and figures on the same page.

Figures and tables should supplement the text, not repeat it.

Appendixes

Place appendixes after the main text and before References Cited.

Title them clearly (e.g., APPENDIX 1. SAMPLE DESCRIPTIONS).

Number separately:

- Fig. A1
- Table A1
- Eq. (A1)

Supplemental Material

May include extended methods or additional data.

Must be cited in the manuscript (e.g., “Supplemental File S1”).

First citation must include a footnote describing the file.

Number separately:

- Fig. S1
- Table S1
- Eq. S1

References Cited

List all works cited in text, figures, tables, captions, and appendixes.

Arrange alphabetically by author surname.

Double-space and use hanging indents.

Spell out journal titles and publisher names.

For works with more than 10 authors, list the first author followed by “et al.”

References cited only in Supplemental Material should appear there.

Citing Books

Format: Author last name, Author first initial(s), Year, Book title: Publisher location, Publisher name, volume number, page number p.

Example: Allmendinger, R.W., Cardozo, N., and Fisher, D., 2011, Structural Geology Algorithms: New York, Cambridge University Press, 304 p.

Citing a Chapter in Edited Volume

Format: Author last name, Author first initial(s), Year, Chapter title, in Editor surname, Editor first name initial(s), ed(s)., Book Title: Publisher location, Publisher Name and series v#, p. #-#, DOI [language notes].

Example: Taylor, J.C.M., 1990, Upper Permian—Zechstein, in Glennie, K.W., ed., Introduction to the Petroleum Geology of the North Sea (3rd edition): Oxford, UK, Blackwell, p. 153–190.

Citing a Journal Article

Format: Author last name, Author first initial(s), Year, Article title: Journal title, v. #, (issue) no. #, p. #-# (or article number), DOI [language notes].

Citing a Computer Program

Format: Author last name, Author first initial(s) OR Authoring Organization, Year, Program title/name: Program creator(s), version, URL.

Example: Lahr, J.C., 1999, HYPOELLIPSE: A computer program for determining local earthquake hypocentral parameters, magnitude, and first-motion pattern: U.S. Geological Survey Open-File Report 99-23, version 1.1, <https://pubs.usgs.gov/of/1999/ofr-99-0023/>.

Citing a Database

Format: Author last name, Author first initial(s) OR Authoring Organization, Year, Database title: Database host, URL (date last accessed).

Example: U.S. Geological Survey, 2006, Quaternary fault and fold database for the United States: <https://www.usgs.gov/natural-hazards/earthquake-hazards/faults> (accessed June 2012).

Citing a Guidebook

Format: Author last name, Author first initial(s), Year, Guidebook title: Publisher name Book type volume number, # p., DOI [language notes].

Example: Barton, C.C., and Hsieh, P.A., 1989, Physical and hydrologic-flow properties of fractures, in International Geological Congress, 28th, Field Trip Guidebook T385: Washington, D.C., American Geophysical Union, 36 p.

Citing a Map

Format: Author last name, Author first initial(s), Year, Map Title: Publisher name and map number (if applicable), scale 1:###, # sheet(s)/plate(s), # of text pages, DOI/URL.

Example: Ernst, W.G., 1993, Geology of the Pacheco Pass quadrangle, central California Coast Ranges: Geological Society of America Map and Chart Series MCH078, scale 1:24,000, 1 sheet, 12 p. text.

Citing Proceedings from a Symposium or Conference

Include year of conference if it differs from publication year.

Format: Author last name, Author first initial(s), Year, Title, in Proceedings, Conference/Symposium title, Conference/Symposium number: Location, Date(s), Conference/Symposium host, v. #, (issue) no. #, p. #–#, DOI.

Example: Baar, C., 1972, Creep measured in deep potash mines vs. theoretical predictions, in Proceedings, Canadian Rock Mechanics Symposium, 7th, Edmonton: Ottawa, Canada Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, p. 23–77.

Citing a Thesis or Dissertation

Format: Author last name, Author first initial(s), Year, Thesis/Dissertation title [thesis type (e.g., Master's thesis, Ph.D. dissertation, etc.)]: City of university, University name, total pages [language notes].

Example: Wopat, M.A., 1990, Quaternary alkaline volcanism and tectonics in the Mexican Volcanic Belt near Tequila, Jalisco, southwestern Mexico [Ph.D. thesis]: Berkeley, University of California, 277 p.

Citing a Website

Format: Author last name, Author first initial(s), Year, Website title: URL (date last accessed [Month Year]).

Example: Helmuth, L., 2009, The ten most spectacular geologic sites: Smithsonian Magazine: <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/the-ten-most-spectacular-geologic-sites-38476122/> (May 2024).

References

Golden West College. (2025, August 13). Citations: GSA Style Guide.

<https://goldenwestcollege.libguides.com/gsa>

The Geological Society of America. (2024). Reference Guidelines and Examples.

https://www.geosociety.org/GSA/Publications/Info_Services/guidelines-and-policies/GSA/Pubs/ref-guide-examples.aspx?

University of South Carolina. (2025, August 5). GSA Style.

<https://guides.library.sc.edu/sciencecitationstyles/gsa>