

# TESL-EJ Style Sheet for Authors

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This style guide reflects the format and policies that are applied to all published articles in TESL-EJ. While it is the task of the TESL-EJ copyeditors to assure that accepted manuscripts conform to these guidelines, please make their job easier by submitting articles that follow them as much as possible. In general, this style sheet follows the APA *Publication Manual* (7th edition, 2020). Please refer to this manual for any format issues not covered here. Also, the APA site and blog are useful:

<https://apastyle.apa.org/>. However, this TESL-EJ style sheet does differ from the APA style on a few points, **identified by red** in the text below. See section 11 for a summary of the differences. When there is a difference, please follow these guidelines rather than the APA's. Numbers in brackets such as [12.7] indicate the section of the APA manual where full information can be found.

## 1.0 Overall formatting

Review a few published articles, preferably in your own topic area, for a general idea of how articles are formatted. Note that an abstract is required in the version submitted for review even though it is also requested for the "metadata" that you will fill in during the submission process. Documents must be submitted as editable MS Word files although they may be created with any compatible software such as Open Office.

### 1.1 Blinding. (Called “Masked review” in APA) [12.7]

TESL-EJ articles are “double-blind” refereed. This means that the referee should have no clue to the identity of the author(s) nor should the authors know who their referees are. See Section 9 for a fuller discussion of the blinding process.

### 1.2 General layout

**Title:** Use “Title Case” (Capitalize the major words in the title.) [6.17]

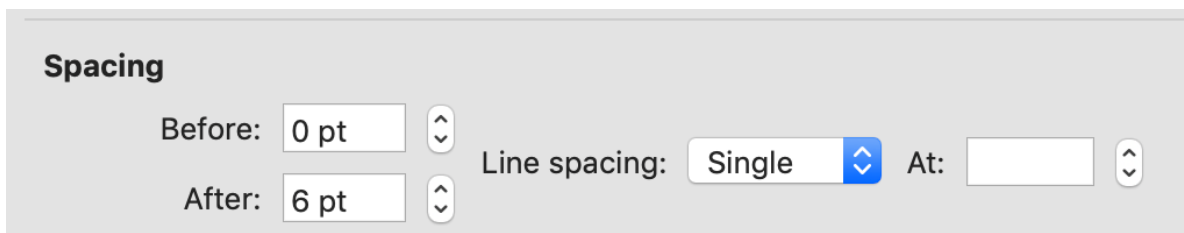
**Correct:** A Guide to Learning Disabilities for the ESL Classroom Practitioner

**Wrong:** A GUIDE TO LEARNING DISABILITIES FOR THE ESL CLASSROOM PRACTITIONER.

**Font:** Use 12 point Times New Roman for the body of your text. [2.19]

**Spacing:** Set MS Word's line spacing (Format/Paragraph menu) to “Single”.

**Inter-paragraph spacing:** Put an extra line break between paragraphs or use MS Word's paragraph formatting to add 6 points after each line break.



Line spacing and inter-paragraph spacing with MS Word

### 1.3 The abstract [2.9]

The abstract should be between 150 and 200 words. Abstracts with word counts of greater or fewer words will be automatically rejected. Be sure that the abstract covers the major points of the paper including the need for the study, the method employed, and a rough indication of the results.

### 1.4 Section headings [2.27 and Table 2.3]

**Major (level 1) headings:** Title case, 14-point Times New Roman, **bold**. (This applies to headings such as “Literature Review,” “Method,” “Discussion,” “Conclusion,” and “References.”). Recommendation: Use the MS Word “Style Pane”, select “All styles” from “List:” at the bottom, and then apply “Heading 3”. This will automatically turn into an “<h3>” tag when put into HTML. You may adjust the style to “14-point Times New Roman, **bold**” as long as you retain the original name, “Heading 3”. See [this 50-second video](#) for a graphic illustration of the process.

**Subheadings (level 2):** Title case, **flush left**, 12-point Times New Roman, **bold italic**, and underlined. (The underlines will be removed when formatted for publication, but help us to differentiate major and minor headings in the manuscript.) Similarly to above, select “Heading 4” for all subheadings.

**Minor headings (level 3):** Sentence case, indented, 12-point Times New Roman, **bold**, ends with a period. Continue with the text on the same line.

Example:

Major: **Method**

Subheading: ***Methodological Approach***

Minor: **Considerations for optimal results.** To assure that ....

Note that The APA manual states specifically: “Do not begin a paper with an ‘Introduction’ heading” [2.27]. **Instead when possible, employ a heading that is more descriptive of the content of your first section. If nothing comes to mind, then omit the heading.**

### 1.5 Other points

- Sections and subsections should not be numbered.
- TESL-EJ employs endnotes rather than footnotes, but please use them sparingly.
- There is no length limit or word count for articles, though the author should consider the reader’s patience and time. The ideal length is between 3,000 and 10,000 words.

### 2.0 Spelling and Punctuation

Authors may use British, Canadian, or American English spelling, but it must be used consistently throughout the document. Use the Microsoft Word “Tools-->Language” setting to change the spell-checker to the desired variety of English.

Proper diacritical markings should be used for names, relevant words, etc.

#### 2.1 Punctuation style

Use the punctuation style that is consistent with your spelling choice. When in doubt follow the recommendations in 2.2 and 2.3 below.

#### 2.2 Commas and periods go inside quotation marks. [6.7]

Example: Smith (2009, p. 2) writes, “Blah blah blah.”

Example: “Blah blah blah,” Smith writes (2009, p. 2).

### 2.3 Page number indications [8.25]

Use p. for a single page.

Use pp. for multiple pages. Separate the page numbers with an en dash.

Insert a space after the period (full stop).

Example: p. 14, or pp. 42–44

### 2.4 Only one space after an end-of-sentence period (full stop). [6.1]

### 3.0 Capitalization

#### 3.1 Titles of articles (at the top of the article) should use title case. [6.17]

Example: Bridging Policy and Practice: A Study of EFL Teacher Talk in China

#### 3.2 Titles of articles and books in reference lists use sentence case, with an initial capital letter after a colon. Do not use quotation marks around titles. [6.17, 9.19]

Example: Classroom code-switching: Three decades of research.

#### 3.3 Names of journals use title case. [9.25]

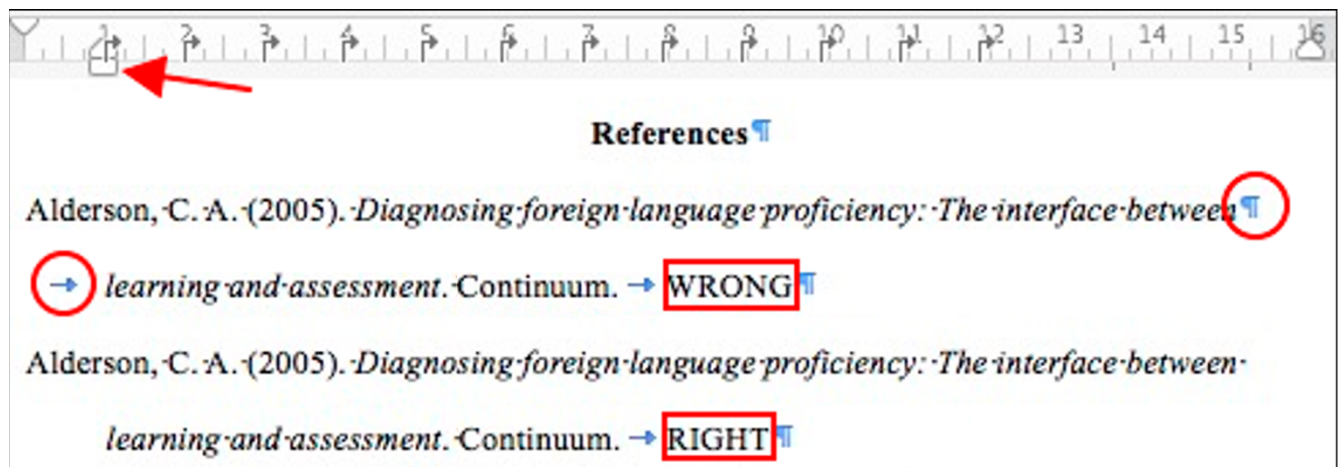
### 4.0 Reference list

**The highest number of errors in any article is found in the reference list. Check your references for:** Links that work (watch for erroneous spaces).

- Proper formatting (see below)
- All references are actually mentioned in the text and vice-versa. (Do not forget to adjust the references when revising the main text of your article.)

#### 4.1 Formatting references in MS Word

There should be no tabs, extra spaces, or line breaks within each reference. Use the markers on the ruler line to control indentation. The hanging indent should be 0.5 in. [9.43] Authors might find [this 2-minute tutorial useful](#).



**Note: The new APA guidelines forbid listing publisher location [9.29]**

#### 4.2 Journal article entry [9.25, 10.1]

Jacobs, A. S., & True, P. (2011). Linguistic significance: What learners know. *Journal of Language Stuff*, 59(1), 12–19. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0022-006X.59.1.12>

- Surname plus initials (no first names); space between double initials
- Comma after the first set of initials if two authors
- Use an ampersand (not the word ‘and’)
- Period (full stop) after year
- Italics for journal name and volume number but not for parentheses and issue number
- The highlighted periods (full stops) show punctuation after the author names, date (inside parentheses), title, and source. Use a comma after the journal name. [9.25]
- Do not add punctuation marks after DOIs or URLs; the exact address, without added punctuation, should be used. [9.35]
- If more than one work from an author is cited, they should be listed in date order (oldest first). If two works are from the same year, use “a” and “b” after the year to distinguish them. [9.46, 9.47]

#### 4.3 Book entry [9.29, 10.2]

Jacobs, A. S., & True, P. (2011). *Language stuff*. Publisher.

Use sentence case for titles; italicize the title.

#### 4.5 Chapter in edited book [10.3]

Arthur, A. A., & Window, B. B. (2012). This is my chapter. In A. A. Milne & B. B. Jones (Eds.), *A really good book* (pp. 3–12). Popular Publishers.

#### 4.6 Non-English language sources

Provide a translation of the title in square brackets after the title and before the period for sources with non-English titles or data. [9.38]

#### 5.0 Latin abbreviations [6.29]

Latin abbreviations should be used only in parenthetical information and in references. In the text, use full English words. (Exception: *etc.* may be used at the end of long lists when appropriate).

Example: e.g., → for example,  
i.e., → that is,  
cf., → compare

#### Proper punctuation

- et al. (period (full stop) after al., but not et)
- etc. (period (full stop) after)
- i.e., (always with a comma)
- e.g., (always with a comma)
- cf. (no comma)

APA style does not use the Latin abbreviations *ibid.* or *op. cit.* Use full citations.

## 6.0 URLs

Check all links.

URLs should not be used in the body of the article itself. For accessibility reasons, URLs should be hyperlinked, with the URL listed in full in the references. [9.35]

Example: To date, many international platforms and online sites exist where research and current, best practices on ePortfolios are shared: The International Journal of ePortfolio (IJEP),....

In the references, the URL to the linked text (<http://theijep.com/about.html>) would be included in a citation.

**6.1 DOIs.** For references with a known DOI, specify them in this format that will make them clickable (in cases where the corresponding page has been set up). <https://doi.org/xxxxx> [9.35]

## 7.0 Countries

In the author information at the top of an article, the country of the university should be included, whether or not it seems obvious.

The name of the “United States of America” should be written as *the USA*; the adjective is *US*.

Example: US-born citizens often don’t travel outside the USA.

The USA is not the same as “America,” which might include all of North America, Central America, and South America.

Ukraine and other countries that formerly were preceded with “The” should use their current article-less title.

## 8.0 Tables and Figures

**8.1 The table number and caption appear *above* the table.** [7.9]

**8.2 Table numbers should be in bold and flush left above the caption.** Numbering is sequential and uses Arabic numbers. Start with Table 1; **place a period after the number. The title follows the number.**

Example: **Table 1. The Correlations in the Data**

**8.3 Formatting of figures,** as well, use neither tabs nor spacing.

They should not be enclosed in text boxes. Start with Figure 1; **place a period after the number. The caption follows the number.**

Example: **Figure 1. The Correlations in the Data**

**8.4 Formatting of figures** should be as images, not text boxes or tables. [7.26]

**8.5 All tables and figures** should be in place in the text, not appended to the end. [7.6]

**8.6 For accessibility reasons, color or bold face** should not be used alone to convey important information. Support color distinctions with explanatory text. [7.26]

**8.7 The PDF versions of articles are created in grayscale, not color.** Ideally, hatched patterns should be used instead of colors. If colors are used, be sure that there is clear contrast between the colors, and that the background is white or light in color. [7.26]

## 9. Blinding [12.7]

To assure that the reviewers have no information about your identity, your name or other personal information must not appear in the version submitted for review. If you need to mention your institution, simply substitute something like <authors> University or “xxxx University” for its name.

- Any publications for which you were an author or co-author must also be masked.

For example:

Kim, I. Y. (2006). An analysis of writing feedback in Korean universities. *Journal of Education, 14* (2), 102–108.

becomes:

Author (2006).

- Move these references to the correct location for references starting with “Au...”.
- Check that your name or affiliation is not included in the MS Word “properties.” See <http://tinyurl.com/tesl-ej-reminfo> for how to delete your personal information from an MS Word document.

## 10. Common pitfalls.

Please check your manuscript again to be sure that you have followed these guidelines to avoid common errors:

### 10.1 Use of the serial comma. [6.3]

Place a comma before “and” or “or” in a series of three or more items.

### 10.2 Commas and periods go inside quotation marks (2.2 above). [6.7]

**10.3 Citing multiple works in parentheses.** Arrange the citations in the text in alphabetical order by the first author’s family name, not by date. [8.12]

### 10.4 Correct use of verb tense. [Table 4.1, p. 118]

Literature review: past or present perfect

Method/description of procedure: past or present perfect

Reporting results: past

Discussion of implications: present

Presentation of conclusions, etc.: present

### 10.5 Distinction between “that” and “which.” APA style maintains a strict distinction. [4.21]

Restrictive (“that”) clauses are essential to the meaning and are not set off with commas.

Nonrestrictive (“which”) clauses add further information but are not essential to the meaning of the sentence; they are set off with commas.

### 10.6 Page citations for paraphrases. [8.23]

Paraphrases require a citation to the source of the original idea, but unlike direct quotations, the page or paragraph number is not required. However, the APA manual states: “Although it is not required to provide a page or paragraph number in the citation for a paraphrase, you may include one in addition to the author and year when it would help interested readers locate the relevant passage within a long or complex work (e.g., a book)” (APA, 2020, p. 269).

## 11. TESL-EJ’s departures from APA 7 style.

- Figures go below the relevant graphic rather than above.
- The titles of both tables and figures go on a single line, rather than one below the other.
- There is a period after the table or figure number.

- The first line of each paragraph may be indented using the ruler line setting for first lines. Do not use a tab or spaces for this purpose. (The html and pdf version of articles will have no indents.)
- Do not start your article with the heading “Introduction” if it is possible to employ a more descriptive heading instead. Otherwise, omit it.
- TESL-EJ employs a 3-level heading system, rather than the 5-level system recommended by APA. All headings are flush left.