DOI & URLs: When to use what in APA citations

**DOIs (Digital Object Identifiers)**

DOI numbers are linked to individual articles, and each number is unique. Think of them as an article’s Social Security Number. Not all articles have been assigned a doi number yet, but always use a doi in reference list citations—whether the article was in print or electronic format—if available.

To locate an article’s doi number, look at the first page of the print or pdf article. The number will be on either the top right or bottom left corner in small type.


URLs (Otherwise Known as a Web Address)

Journal.

If the article doesn’t have a doi and you use an electronic version, you need to provide the URL for the journal’s homepage—not for the database—in the citation.

To find the journal’s homepage URL, search the journal title in a web search engine. For best results, use this format: “journal title” journal. For example: “Teaching exceptional children” journal.

The correct website is normally within the first four results.

Often the description for the result will say something about how often the journal is published and what topics are covered in it.

For example: “publishes evaluative and integrative research reviews and interpretations of issues in scientific psychology” (description for Psychological Bulletin from the Google results page)

You don’t need to be able to access the full text from the journal’s homepage. This is simply what is required by APA.

If you use multiple articles from a specific journal, they will all have the identical URL regardless of what volume and issue the article is from.

Three articles in the sample reference list in this handout are from Teaching Exceptional Children, but from three different issues of the journal.
Database.

The only time you provide a database URL is if the document was originally published in that database (as with many ERIC documents) or the journal is no longer in publication but is archived in electronic form in that database (as with some journals in JSTOR). In these cases you will provide the URL to the main database page—not to the article level. The most common database URLs you will use are for ERIC (www.eric.ed.gov) and JSTOR (www.jstor.org).

Reports and other documents published in ERIC.

This conference proceeding was published in ERIC rather than a journal:


Out of print journal.

*Journal of Reading* no longer published by the International Reading Association (it ended in 1995) but is archived in JSTOR:

Sample Reference List

References


