

INCORPORATING VISUALS IN APA DOCUMENTS

If you are following APA rules for visuals, this is a short presentation of the rules that must be followed.

This information is from the APA's 6th edition.

Types of Visuals

- tables
- figures
- equations

Every visual is one of these three types. If it is not a *table* or an *equation*, it is a *figure*. Treat equations like figures.

Visual Placement

For manuscripts (academic articles being sent to a publication), place each visual on a separate page at the end of the manuscript. In the text, refer to the visual by its caption and title.

For printed documents with visuals small enough to be included in the text, introduce the visual in the text and refer to it by its caption.

The Basic Elements for Visuals

Table and figure visuals include the following five elements:

- (If the visual goes in the text) Introduction of the visual in the text including reference to the visual by its caption (i.e. Table 2 or Figure 4)
- The visual's caption: Table # Figure # Equation #
- The visual's title (italics for tables, not italics for figures; upper and lower case lettering)
- The visual
- The note: *Note* (italicized and followed by a period) follows the table or follows the figure caption and title and may be "general notes, specific notes, and probability notes" (3.70, p. 170). For reports displaying data from resources, the notes should explain where the data was obtained. Notes also serve as a place to include a copyright notice for original work.

Special Features of Tables

Tables follow these formatting rules:

- Caption placement: top of table
- Table caption (number) first line, normal font
- Table title in normal italics font on second line
- Headers and sub-headers as appropriate
- Data presented in columns and rows
- Use of horizontal lines at the top, bottom, and dividing sections, but no vertical lines and no colors or shading
- *Note* (in italics and followed by a period) follows the table to provide source information

Example of APA Table

Your first step is to introduce your visual in your body text, and that introduction must include the caption. Your narrative highlights important information shown on the visual, but do not relate all your data in your narrative. Just introduce your visual, and put your visual on the same page as the introduction.

Notice the following facts in the illustration of a table in Figure 1:

- Five elements
- Lines and absence of lines (vertical top & bottom of header row and at the bottom of the table)
- Absence of color and shading
- The caption goes above the table (remember this: Table Top!)
- The *Note* is followed by a period.

Some students manage to correctly follow all the APA rules on their first try, as shown in Table 4. Others need more practice.

Table 4

Rodgers' Estimate of Students Following APA Formatting Rules

Practice Tries	APA Correct	APA Incorrect	Total Students
1st Try	5	95	100
2nd Try	50	50	100
3rd Try	95	5	100

Note. From "How to Incorporate Visuals" by I.L. Rodgers, p. 2.

Element 1. Introduction of table in text uses the table's caption

Element 2. Table caption with number on first line

Element 3. Table title (italicized) on second line

Element 4. Table with horizontal lines, no vertical lines and no colors or shading

Element 5. *Note* (italicized and followed with a period) follows table with citation information.

Figure 1 An APA style table.

Note. This work by [Ida L. Rodgers](#) is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](#).

Special Features of Figures

Figures follow these formatting rules:

- Caption placement: bottom of figure
- Figure caption (number) and title (not italics) are on the same line
- *Note* (in italics and followed by a period) follows the figure caption and title to provide source information

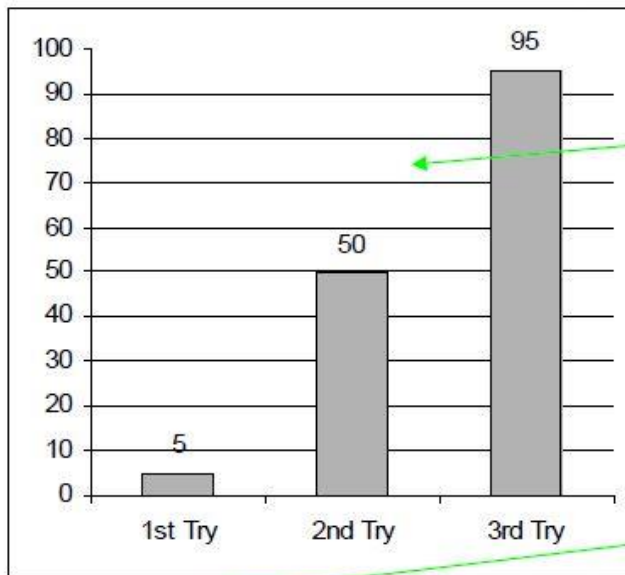
Example of APA Figure

Your first step is to introduce your visual in your body text, and that introduction must include the caption. Your narrative highlights important information shown on the visual, but do not relate all your data in your narrative. Just introduce your visual, and put your visual on the same page as the introduction.

Notice the following facts in the illustration of a figure in Figure2:

- Five elements
- Absence of color
- The caption goes below the figure (remember this: Table Top! so Figure Bottom!)
- The *Note* is followed by a period.

Although some students correctly follow all the APA rules on their first try, as shown in Figure 1, others need practice. However, with a little practice most students succeed as illustrated in Figure 2.



Element #1. The figure is mentioned in the narrative preceding the figure.

Element #2. The figure without color and without a built in caption or title but with, if appropriate, a legend.

Element #3. Figure caption with number follows figure

Element #4. Figure title begins on same line as figure caption.

Element #5. *Note* (italicized and followed by a period) follows the figure caption and title on a new line. The note should provide citation information.

Figure 2. Students Succeed Using APA over Time.

Note. From data in "How to Incorporate Visuals" by I.L. Rodgers, p. 2.

Figure 2. An APA style figure.

Note. This work by [Ida L. Rodgers](#) is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](#).

About Color

APA style is meant for creating manuscripts being sent to journals for publication, not final-copy documents. APA does not use color because most academic journals print only in black and white.. However in business and technical documents, color may be appropriate. Such decisions must be made for each document situation rather than slavishly following rules meant for different situations. Analyze your document situation before making format decisions.

Reference

American Psychological Association (2001). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association*