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APA Citations for Content Generated by Artificial Intelligence (AI) Tools

Revised February 23, 2026

Note: Guidance on how to cite the academic use of AI tools is still developing. Normandale librarians will update this document as needed. The latest version will be available at the Library and on the Library website at https://www.normandale.edu/library/ai-apa. Have questions? Ask a Normandale librarian for help.

Work Generated by Artificial Intelligence Is Not the Same as Other Sources

AI-generated content is not like other sources you might cite. ChatGPT, Copilot, Gemini, and similar AI tools generate text, images, and other outputs based on the common patterns they learned from millions of *other sources* — the documents, images, or other data the AI tools trained on. It is often impossible to trace AI-generated content back to the training sources it is based on or to know how the AI tool itself works. The work generated by AI tools replicates, and often amplifies, the biases that exist in the training sources. These issues, and other ethical implications of AI tools, are beyond the scope of this document and deserve consideration on their own. Want to chat about all this? Ask a librarian!

Warning! Use Work Generated by Artificial Intelligence Carefully and Transparently

1. **Check with your instructor before using AI tools** in any assignment or in assignment preparation. Many instructors do not allow any AI use or have specific rules to follow. Also check before using any generative AI features built into other apps.
2. **Check the facts!** Text AI tools like ChatGPT write responses without concern for factual accuracy. These tools do not disclose the origin of all the "information" they provide. When they do cite sources, they may summarize the sources inaccurately or *completely make up* information and give fake source citations. Use non-AI sources to verify accuracy. We recommend you use — and cite — those non-AI sources instead!
3. **Declare your use of AI tools with an AI Use Disclosure** (or other statement as directed by your instructor) that describes which tool you used and how you used it. Include an AI Use Disclosure even if you only used AI tools for brainstorming or other preparation for an assignment.
4. **Cite the specific AI-generated content you use or take ideas from** (text, images, videos, audio, code, etc.). We recommend including both in-text citations and full citations in your References.

AI Use Disclosure Statement

Unless otherwise directed by your instructor, we recommend you include an AI Use Disclosure statement in your assignment. A good place to put the statement is after the body of your essay and before the References. Include in your statement the AI tools you used and 2-5 sentences about how you used them including how you edited or verified the generated content. We recommend you include a statement any time you cite AI-generated content *and* any time you use AI tools as part of your assignment process (even if you are not citing AI-generated content directly).

Example:

AI Use Disclosure

I used Copilot Chat to help me find a television commercial that fits the goals of this assignment. It gave me the example of the Nike "Dream Big" commercial and explained how some of the technical elements relate to polysemy of commodities. I watched the commercial, used my textbook to verify that Copilot's categorizations of elements was correct, and used my class notes to apply these technical elements to the commercial.

APA Style References for AI-Generated Content

This is a summary of the American Psychological Association's (APA) current advice for citing generative AI content (as of September 2025).

There are two ways to reference generative AI in APA:

A. one format for referencing a specific chat or other generated content that you can link directly to, and
B. another format for referencing the existence of an AI tool in general or for referring to a specific chat or image when it is unhelpful or impossible to provider your reader a link.

A. References to Specific Chats, Images, etc. with a Shareable Link

In APA Style, the company or creator of the AI tool is considered the "author." Below is the format for References entries *if* you are linking to a specific chat, image, etc.

AI Company. (Year, Month Day). *Title of chat or image in italics* [Description of the type of source such as Generative AI chat]. AI Tool Name or Model Name. URL link to the specific chat or image

Examples:

OpenAI. (2026, January 7). *Life in two worlds* [Generative AI image]. ChatGPT. https://chatgpt.com/s/m_699b354407708191849e1bec6668d619

Google. (2026, February 22). *U.S. postage stamp proposal for Judy Heumann* [Generative AI chat]. Gemini 3 Flash. https://gemini.google.com/share/e3e12883fbaa

About the Date: The date is the year, month, and day that the chat occurred, the image was generated, etc. If the chat took place over multiple days, use the date the chat ended.

About the Title: The title is the title of the chat or image. If possible, edit the title of the chat or image to something clear and descriptive for your reader.

About the URL Link: Give the web address that takes the reader directly to the chat or other AI-generated content. If you cannot provide a link or a link would be unhelpful to the reader, use a general reference to the AI tool instead (see next section).

About the Tool Name or Model Name: You may use either the tool name (e.g., Copilot Chat, Gemini, etc.) or the underlying model name (e.g., GPT-5 Chat, Gemini 3 Flash, etc.). It's up to you. If you are not sure the exact name of the tool or model you are using, ask the AI tool and provide the URL for your current chat to help the AI tool give you the correct answer.

B. References to an AI Tool in General or to Specific Chats/Images if No Shareable Link

Use the following format in any of these situations:

1) You are referencing the existence of an AI tool in general
2) You are referencing your use of an AI tool in general (not specific chats or other outputs)
3) The AI tool does not provide shareable links to specific chats or other outputs or those links are not accessible by your reader
4) The shareable links would be unhelpful to your reader. Ask your instructor for guidance. Examples:
    a. The share links created in Minnesota State's Copilot Chat (connected to your Minnesota State Microsoft 365 account) only reproduce the initial prompt and do not include the rest of the chat. Even so, if you want to use Copilot, we recommend you use the Copilot Chat connected to your school account. It has greater data privacy protections than other versions of Copilot.
    b. If you used AI chat to help you brainstorm or edit, links to these chats might not be useful to your reader unless required by your instructor.

AI Company. (Year). *Tool Name or Model in Italics* [Description of the AI type such as Large Language model]. URL link to the tool website

Examples:

OpenAI. (2025). *GPT 4.1* [Large language model]. https://chatgpt.com

Microsoft. (2026). Copilot Chat [Large language model]. https://m365.cloud.microsoft/chat

About the Year Date: The year date is the year that the AI tool was last updated. If you don't know the latest update date, ask the AI. If the AI tool does not give its latest update date, try asking for the latest update date of the model. If you cannot get this information from asking the AI tool, use the copyright date listed on the AI tool website or app. Note: AI tools and models are updated frequently. You are responsible only for giving information about the AI that is accurate at the time you used it.

About the Title (Tool Name or Model Name): When referencing an AI tool in general, the title is either the name of the AI tool (e.g., Copilot Chat, Gemini) or the name of the underlying AI model (e.g., GPT-5 Chat, Gemini 3 Flash). You can use either. For example, you could use either ChatGPT (the name) or GPT-5 (the current model as of this writing) as the title in a reference for ChatGPT. If you are not sure the exact name of the tool or model you are using, ask the AI tool and provide the URL for your current chat to help the AI tool give you the correct answer.

About the Description: Put the description of the type of AI model in brackets. For chat tools the description will probably be [Large language model]. If you are not sure how to describe the type of model, ask the AI.

If You Have Multiple References for the Same AI Company with the Same Year Date

If more than one reference has the *same author and the same year*, add a letter to the year (a, b, c, etc.). Doing this makes it clear which in-text citation matches which entry in the References. Include the year *with the letter* in both your References list *and* your in-text citations.

Example:

Microsoft. (2026a). Copilot Chat [Large language model]. https://m365.cloud.microsoft/chat

Microsoft. (2026b, February 22). *A cozy living room with lots of tropical plants and a velvet couch and a side table, on the side table is a goldfish in a fish bowl* [Generative AI image]. Bing Image Creator. https://sl.bing.net/fTeCXOR5SaO

APA Style In-Text Citations for AI-Generated Content

The purpose of in-text citations is to point your reader to the corresponding full citation in your References. If you include a citation to an AI tool or chat in your References list, you must also mention it in the text of your paper or in your AI Use Disclosure statement. The in-text citation only needs enough information for your reader to easily identify which source in the References section you are referring to.

For in-text citations in APA style, include the name of the author and the year in parentheses. In the case of AI tools and other software, the company or creator of the software is considered the author.

Parenthetical citation: (AI Company, Year)

Narrative citation: AI Company (Year)

Note: When directly quoting an AI-generated response, you do **not** need to include a page or paragraph number.

Examples:

To cook clams, "steam clams until they open" (OpenAI, 2023).

According to ChatGPT by OpenAI (2023), steamed clams are finished cooking when the shells open.

About the Year: The year included in the in-text citation must be the same as it appears in your References. If you have citations in your References that have years followed by a letter (a, b, c, etc.), include that letter in the in-text citation also.

Example:

To make fluffy basmati rice, "rinse the rice twice in cold water" (OpenAI, 2023a). In a different chat with ChatGPT, a second recipe suggested adding a tablespoon of oil to the rice (OpenAI, 2023b).

Should You State the Prompt in Your Paper or Include Copies of AI Responses in an Appendix?

If it is useful to readers, you may describe your generative AI prompts in the text of your paper or include copies of the AI-generated content (e.g., full transcript of your Copilot Chat text) in an Appendix section of your paper. Ask your instructor for guidance if you are unsure. If you do include an Appendix, start the Appendix on a separate page after your References. Mention the Appendix in your paper at least once so your reader knows it exists and knows what it contains.

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