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Foreword

From its inception as a brief journal article in 1929, the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association has been designed to advance scholarship by setting sound and rigorous standards for scientific communication. The creators of the 1929 manuscript included psychologists, anthropologists, and business managers who convened under the sponsorship of the National Research Council. They sought to establish a simple set of procedures, or style rules, that would codify the many components of scientific writing to increase the ease of reading comprehension. This goal was subsequently embraced not only by psychologists but also by scholars in other social and behavioral sciences who wished to enhance the dissemination of knowledge in their respective fields.

Uniform style helps us to call articles quickly for key points and findings. Rules of style in scientific writing encourage full disclosure of essential information and allow us to dispense with minor distractions. Style helps us express the key elements of quantitative results, choose the graphic form that will best suit our analyses, report critical details of our research protocol, and describe individuals with accuracy and respect. It removes the distraction of puzzling over the correct punctuation for a reference or the proper form for numbers in text. Those elements are codified in the rules we follow for clear communication, allowing us to focus our intellectual energy on the substance of our research.

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