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Understanding the APA Dictionary of Psychology

Before diving into the citation specifics, it's helpful to understand what the APA Dictionary of Psychology is and why it's a valuable source. Published by the American Psychological Association, this dictionary offers concise definitions and explanations of psychological terms, concepts, and theories. It is an authoritative resource widely used by students, educators, and professionals in psychology and related fields. Given its status as a reference work, citing dictionary entries differs somewhat from citing books or journal articles. The goal is to acknowledge the source of the definition or explanation you are using while adhering to APA standards.

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Citing the Print Version of the APA Dictionary of Psychology

When you are referencing a physical copy of the dictionary, the citation should include: - The American Psychological Association as the author - The year of publication (e.g., 2020 for the latest edition) - The title of the entry you are citing (in sentence case) - The title of the dictionary italicized - The edition number if applicable Here's an example citation for a print dictionary entry: American Psychological Association. (2020). Cognitive dissonance. In *APA dictionary of psychology* (2nd ed.). American Psychological Association. If you mention the dictionary as a whole without referencing a specific entry, you would simply cite the entire work without the entry title.

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Tips for Accurate and Effective APA Dictionary of Psychology Citations

Sometimes, citing reference works like dictionaries can be confusing, especially when the author is an organization, or when you are citing a specific term rather than the entire book. Here are some useful pointers:

1. Identify the Correct Author and Date

Always use the American Psychological Association as the author unless the dictionary lists a specific editor or contributor for the entry. The publication year corresponds to the edition you are using. Avoid guessing or defaulting to the most recent year unless you have that edition in hand.

2. Use Sentence Case for Entry Titles

In APA style, dictionary or encyclopedia entry titles are written in sentence case—only the first word and proper nouns are capitalized. For example, “operant conditioning,” not “Operant Conditioning.”

3. Italicize the Dictionary Title

The title of the dictionary should be italicized and formatted as a book title. Include the edition number in parentheses immediately after the title if it is not the first edition.

4. Include Retrieval Information for Online Sources

When citing online entries, always provide the URL and retrieval date. This practice is especially important if the source is dynamic or regularly updated.

5. Avoid Over-Citing Common Knowledge

If you are using a basic psychological term that is widely known, you might not need to cite the dictionary. However, when specific wording, definitions, or interpretations are drawn directly from the APA Dictionary of Psychology, proper citation is necessary.

Examples of In-Text Citations for APA Dictionary of Psychology

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Additional Resources to Master APA Citation Style

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Understanding the Importance of Citing the APA Dictionary of Psychology

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How to Cite APA Dictionary of Psychology in APA Style: Core Guidelines

When addressing how to cite APA Dictionary of Psychology, it is important to consider whether you are referencing the print edition or the online version, as citation elements vary slightly.

Citing the Print Edition

For the print edition of the APA Dictionary of Psychology, the citation generally follows the format for a reference work authored by an organization or an editor. Since the American Psychological Association is both the author and the publisher, the citation takes a straightforward form. **Basic structure:** Author or Organization. (Year). Title of dictionary (Edition). Publisher. **Example:** American Psychological Association. (2020). *APA dictionary of psychology* (2nd ed.). American Psychological Association. In-text citation: (American Psychological Association, 2020) This format highlights the edition number, which is important because definitions can evolve between editions. Always use the most recent edition relevant to your research.

Citing the Online Edition

Increasingly, researchers prefer to access the APA Dictionary of Psychology online, often through institutional subscriptions or the APA's official website. When citing the online version, the citation must include the URL or DOI to direct readers to the source. **Basic structure:** Author or Organization. (Year). Title of dictionary (Edition). Publisher. URL or DOI **Example:** American Psychological Association. (2020). *APA dictionary of psychology* (2nd ed.). American Psychological Association. https://dictionary.apa.org/ In-text citation: (American Psychological Association, 2020) Including the URL ensures transparency and ease of access. However, APA style recommends using a direct link to the dictionary homepage rather than a permalink to a specific entry, unless the entry is essential to your argument.

Special Considerations When Citing Dictionary Entries

While the above formats suffice for citing the entire dictionary, sometimes scholars need to cite specific entries or definitions from the APA Dictionary of Psychology. APA style offers flexibility but expects clarity in guiding readers to the precise information referenced.

Referencing Specific Dictionary Entries

If citing a particular dictionary entry, identify the entry name and include it in the citation to specify the focus. **Example:**

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