Identifying the essential elements in an APA journal article citation

➤ Identify the 10 essential elements of an APA citation in this screenshot of scholarly journal article description.

Note: You can either write the number for each element where you see it on the screenshot, or draw arrows from the listed element to its location on the screenshot. Whatever works best for you.

1. Author(s) name(s)  
2. Year of publication  
3. Title of article  
4. Subtitle of article (if there is one)  
5. Title of Journal  
6. Volume number  
7. Issue Number  
8. Starting page number (if shown)  
9. Ending page number (if shown)  
10. DOI (if shown)

Spot the errors:

➤ Spot the mistakes in this computer-generated citation from Summon. Is anything missing?

Note: Many databases will automatically generate APA citations, but they usually contain errors.

Corrected APA citation for scholarly journal article:


Mistakes in the computer-generated Summon citation:

1. Citation was not indented after first line
   - Use the hanging indent feature in Word under “Paragraph > Indentation > Special”
2. Proper nouns in the article’s title were not capitalized
   - Although usually only the first word in the article title (and first word in the subtitle, if there is one) are capitalized in APA style, the words Aboriginal and Canadian are proper nouns which are normally capitalized, so they should also be capitalized in the article title.
3. DOI was missing
   - Even if a database (like Summon) does not provide a DOI for a journal article, you will almost always find one on the first page of the full-text PDF. You can see it in the screenshot.
   - Note: you may not find a DOI for an older journal article and you definitely won’t find one for a newspaper article. In that case, you would instead add
     Retrieved from [insert URL for journal or newspaper publisher here]

APA citations for newspaper articles

Newspaper articles usually do NOT have DOI numbers. If you are citing an online version of a newspaper, you have two options which are shown below. APA prefers option 1.

**Option 1: Cite the web address of the newspaper’s publisher, even if you did not get the article from that website:**


**Option 2: Cite the name of the database where you found the full-text of the article:**


Although you do not have to add the name of the city where the newspaper is published, it is a courtesy to your readers, if the location is not obvious from the title of the newspaper. You do not need to provide the page number(s) if you retrieve the article from an online source but, again, it is a courtesy to your readers.