The Basics of APA Formatting & Stylistics

Formatting
1. An APA-style paper usually includes four major sections:
   a. Title Page
   b. Abstract
   c. Body of Paper
   d. References

2. Include a page header (also known as a “running head”) at the top of every page in the “Header” space.
   a. Insert page number in top right corner of page.
   b. Type the title of your paper in all CAPS in the top left-hand corner of the left-page. On the first page, include the words “Running head:” before the title. On all following pages, simply include the title.

3. Include a title page. This should include your page header at the top of the page, and about a third of the way down the page, in this order:
   a. The title of your paper
   b. Your name
   c. The name of your university

4. If required, include an abstract on the page after your title page. Center the word “Abstract” at the top of the page. Then, directly beneath, write a concise summary of the key points of your research. Your abstract should contain at least your research topic, research questions, participants, methods, results, data analysis, and conclusions. You may also include possible implications of your research and future work you see connected with your findings. Your abstract should be a single paragraph double-spaced. Your abstract should be between 150 and 250 words.

5. On the first page of the body of your paper, include your title, centered, at the top of the page.

6. Your references page should be the last page in your essay. Center “References” at the top of the page. Below, include all references you cite in your paper. Double-space your references just like the rest of your essay.

Stylistics
1. APA style encourages using active voice instead of passive voice (“We conducted experiments” instead of “Experiments have been conducted”). In this vein, you may use first-person point of view in APA format when referring to yourself (“I examined...”). However, you should foreground the research rather than yourself.

2. APA format encourages clarity and conciseness. Wordiness and unnecessarily complex sentences can confuse readers. In addition, be specific rather than vague in descriptions and explanations.

3. Avoid bias in your language. Use non-gendered pronouns whenever possible (“they,” “the student,” etc.). Avoid language that could be interpreted as disrespectful (for example, comparing “normal” and “disabled” students).