

## How to Write an APA Style Reference When Information Is Missing

| What's missing?                         | Solution  | Reference template  |            |   |  |
|---|---|---|------------|---|--|
|   |   | Position A  | Position B | Position C  | Position D   |
| Nothing—all pieces are present          | List information in the order of author, date, title (with description in square brackets if necessary for explanation of nonroutine information), and source | Author, A. A.   | (date).    | <i>Title of document</i> [Format].<br>or<br>Title of document [Format]. |  |
| Author is missing                       | Substitute title for author; then provide date and source   | <i>Title of document</i> [Format].<br>or<br>Title of document [Format]. | (date).    | n/a   |  |
| Date is missing                         | Provide author, substitute <i>n.d.</i> for <i>no date</i> , and then give title and source  | Author, A. A.   | (n.d.).    | <i>Title of document</i> [Format].<br>or<br>Title of document [Format]. | Retrieved from<br>http://xxxxx<br>or                     |
| Title is missing                        | Provide author and date, describe document inside square brackets, and then give source   | Author, A. A.   | (date).    | [Description of document].  | Retrieved Month<br>Day, Year, from<br>http://xxxxx<br>or |
| Author and date are both missing        | Substitute title for author and <i>n.d.</i> for <i>no date</i> ; then give source   | <i>Title of document</i> [Format].<br>or<br>Title of document [Format]. | (n.d.).    | n/a   | Location:<br>Publisher.<br>or                            |
| Author and title are both missing       | Substitute description of document inside square brackets for author; then give date and source   | [Description of document].  | (date).    | n/a   | doi:xxxxx  |
| Date and title are both missing         | Provide author, substitute <i>n.d.</i> for <i>no date</i> , describe document inside square brackets, and then give source                                    | Author, A. A.   | (n.d.).    | [Description of document].  |  |
| Author, date, and title are all missing | Substitute description of document inside square brackets for author, substitute <i>n.d.</i> for <i>no date</i> , and then give source                        | [Description of document].  | (n.d.).    | n/a   |  |
| Source is missing                       | Cite as personal communication (see §6.20) or find a substitute   | n/a   | n/a        | n/a   | n/a  |

*Note.* Italicize a title when the document stands alone (books, reports, etc.) but not when it is part of a greater whole (chapters, articles, etc.). The retrieval statement should reflect either a URL (for online documents without DOIs), a publisher location and name (for print sources), or a DOI (for any document that has one). Include a retrieval date with a URL only when a source is likely to change (e.g., wikis). Create an in-text citation by using the pieces from Positions A and B. For titles in Position A, use italics for works that stand alone (*Title of Document*, date) and quotation marks for works that are part of a greater whole (“Title of Document,” date). Retain square brackets for descriptions of documents in Position A ([Description of document], date).