Ecology Style formatting, established by the Ecological Society of America (ESA), is typically used when writing for ESA publications. Ecological Style is a format in which specific style guidelines are determined by the requirements of the specific journal you are submitting to, which means that some aspects of paper formatting may vary depending on how and where your work is being presented or what your professor’s guidelines are. However, Ecological Style does have some standards you can apply to any Ecological Style paper, as detailed below.

# Font and Layout

Times New Roman 12-point font is recommended. Typical Ecology Style formatting calls for front to be double-spaced with no additional spacing between paragraphs. Paragraphs begin with half-in indents on the first line and margins are 1 inch all around. Pages should be numbered in the top right corner sequentially, beginning at 1 on the title page.

# Title Page Format

A title page is the first page of your paper. Ecology Style calls for a tile page that contains the following information:

* The title of your paper
* A list of all author(s) names
* Names and addresses of the institution(s) of the authors (this is typically your university or academic institution)
* (If submitting for publication) The name, address, and email of the submitting author

# Abstract

Ecology Style recommends following the title page with a paper abstract. Abstracts are short summaries of a work that provide readers a review of the information contained with the larger academic paper. Abstracts are typically 150 – 350 words in length and provide a complete overview of from the paper, focusing on the question or topic being explored, and the key takeaways. Ecology Style recommends formatting this section using numbered statements. The final statement is titled “Synthesis” and offers a final summation of the paper and how the information within it advances or adds to the field of ecology.

## Keywords

Keywords are typically listed at the end of the abstract. They are words or short phrases that can be used by databases to help make your paper more easily searchable by readers. Keywords should be specific enough to bring readers to your paper’s specific content, but broad enough to allow your paper to show up in searches for information related to your topic. Ecology Style recommends providing no more than eight keywords.

# Beginning Your Paper & Using Headings

Ecology Style papers follow a layout similar to that of formal lab reports and typically include the following sections:

* Introduction
* Materials and methods
* Results
* Discussion
* Conclusions (optional)

For more guidance on what types of information are typically found in these sections, see our Lab Reports guide.

## Headings

While Ecology Style does not offer guidance for formal heading structures, the inclusions of headings can be helpful in distinguishing sections and subsection of information within your paper. If you decide to use headings, we recommend following the heading guidelines found in the APA 7th edition manual. For more information regarding APA headings, see our APA Formatting and Citations guide.

# Incorporating Sources

## Incorporating Sources into Your Paper

Whenever you are utilizing any research or reference material that comes from a source outside of yourself (is not your own original thought), you are using external sources and therefore need to incorporate references to this material into your paper. When you use another source in your own writing, you use quotation marks to separate another author’s writing from your own. If you are paraphrasing from another author’s original words, you use a citation at the end of every sentence that refers to material gathered from another source. Failing to properly cite ALL reference information is plagiarism. As a general rule, Ecology Style preferences paraphrasing and summarizing over direct quotes.

## In-Text and Parenthetical Citations

Typical Ecology Style formatting uses the following baseline for all in-text citations: (Author, Year). The following table includes formatting for the common types of sources you might use in a paper.

### Examples:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Type of citation** | **Citation in text** | **Parenthetical citation in text** |
| **Source with one author** | Blain (2007) | (Blain, 2007) |
| **Source with two authors** | Prosnak and Blain (2012) | (Prosnak & Blain, 2012) |
| **Source with three or more authors** | Blain et al. (2012) | (Blain et al., 2012) |
| **Source by an institution, corporation, or government author** | U.S. Department of Basket Weaving (2004) | (U.S. Department of Basket Weaving, 2004) |
| **Source with NO author** | “Basket Weaving Studies” (2010) | (“Basket Weaving Studies,” 2010, pp. 82-3) |

## Block Quotations

A block quotation is a direct quotation from an outside source that consists of 40 words or more and is specially formatted with indentation to set it apart from the rest of the paper. Block quotations are only for direct quotes from another source and will likely appear rarely in papers following Ecology Style formatting. If you do need to utilize a block quote, we recommend following the block quote guidelines found in the APA 7th edition manual. For more information regarding APA block quoting, see our APA Formatting and Citations guide.

## Citing Indirect Sources

An indirect source is “a source within a source”. It occurs when the author whose source you are using refers to information and/or quotations that come from another scholar’s work. If you are referring to the information given by the second scholar, that information has been received from an *indirect source.* We recommend following APA guidelines for any indirect sources used.

Let’s look at an example scenario: Dana Peteroy wrote an article about basket weaving. Peteroy quoted or paraphrased work from an underwater basket weaving study by Hannah Johnson. You want to reference the study by Hannah Johnson in your paper, but you do not have Johnson’s study available to reference directly. Therefore, your direct source is Peteroy, and Johnson is an indirect source. **If you cite an indirect source in your paper, you only need to list the direct source on your reference page.**

### Example:

|  |
| --- |
| In her study, Johnson argued that asynchronous basket weaving would be the next Internet meme (as cited in Peteroy, 2010). |

# Ecology Style Reference Page

## References

References are a list of the sources you have used in writing your paper. This includes references that are directly quoted (using quotations) and indirectly quoted (paraphrasing and summarizing). You need to provide a reference when you are using any sources within your paper that are not your own original thoughts. Your reference list will be in the same format as the rest of your paper (Times New Roman, 12-point font, double-spaced, 1” margins, and no bullet points) and use “hanging indents.” Reference list entries should be in alphabetical order.

Generally speaking, Ecology Style does not provide set guidelines for formatting various reference page entries. However, because Ecology Style follows an Author-Date citation style, we recommend following the referencing guidelines found in the APA 7th edition manual. For more information regarding APA references, see our APA Formatting and Citations guide. Below are some initial guidelines for APA-style references to help get you started.

## General Guidelines for References

Formatting for individual reference page entries will vary based on the type of source being referenced; however, most sources will generally follow consistent formatting guidelines. When creating your references page, keep the following in mind.

* Ecology Style references are written in 12-point, Times New Roman font and double spaced. Individual references should begin on a new line with no additional spacing between previous or following entries.
* Each reference page entry should be formatted using a “hanging indent.” Hanging indents leave the first line aligned to the left margin and indent every subsequent line a half inch.
* Ecology Style references should begin with the author of a source (whether that author is a person, group of people, or an organization). The names of people should be written as last name, a comma, and then any first and middle names indicated with just the initial followed by a period. For sources with multiple authors, author names should be written in the order that they appear on the original publication. The names of organizations should be written out in full.
* Electronic sources should include enough information to help a reader find that source for themselves.