

## APA Documentation: DOI numbers and URLs

*This information is adapted from the APA Style online guide at [apastyle.apa.org](http://apastyle.apa.org).*

The **DOI** (digital object identifier) or **URL** (uniform resource locator) is the final component of a reference list entry.

- A **DOI** is a unique alphanumeric string that identifies content and provides a persistent link to its location on the internet.
- A **URL** specifies the location of digital information on the internet and can be found in the address bar of your internet browser.

### When to include DOIs and URLs in reference entries

|                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <b>Print AND online works:</b> | <b>Include a DOI for all works that have one</b> , regardless of whether you used the online version or the print version.   |
| <b>Print works, no DOI:</b>    | <b>do not include any DOI or URL</b> in the reference.   |
| <b>Online works:</b>           |  |
| • <b>both DOI and URL:</b>     | <b>include only the DOI</b>  |
| • <b>URL but no DOI:</b>       | include the URL in the reference as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>for works without DOIs from websites (not including academic research databases)</b>, include a URL (as long as it will work for readers).</li> <li>• <b>for works without DOIs from most academic research databases</b>, do not include a URL or database information (as these works are widely available).</li> </ul> |

*Other alphanumeric identifiers such as the International Standard Book Number (ISBN) and the International Standard Serial Number (ISSN) are not included in APA Style references.*

## Formatting DOIs and URLs

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Format DOIs as follows (“xxxxx” refers to the DOI number): <b>https://doi.org/xxxxx</b> |   |
|   | The preferred format of the DOI has changed over time. Although older works use previous formats, <b>standardize all DOIs into the current preferred format</b> for all entries on your list. |
|   | It is acceptable to use <b>either hyperlinks display</b> (e.g., blue font, underlined) <b>or plain text</b> that is not underlined.   |
| <b>DO:</b>  | <b>copy and paste</b> the DOI or URL from your web browser directly into your reference list to avoid transcription errors. <i>(Be sure to change font and size to match.)</i>                |
| <b>DO NOT:</b>  | <b>include</b> the words “Retrieved from” or “Accessed from” before a DOI or URL  |
|   | <b>change the capitalization or punctuation</b> of the DOI or URL.  |
|   | <b>add line breaks</b> manually to the hyperlink; it is acceptable if your word-processing program automatically adds a break or moves the hyperlink to its own line.                         |
|   | <b>add a period</b> after the DOI. (This may interfere with link functionality.)  |

## How to find the DOI

Most (but not all) current works have a DOI number. It may or may not be readily located with your source.

- **In library databases**, the “Cite” function that provides a draft reference entry will include the DOI.
- **In a source found in an online index** (e.g., NIH/PubMed):
  - the DOI might be found near the top of the article with the author and title
  - or
  - there may be a “Cite” link (or ↗ icon) on one side or the other of the page.

**What to do if you don’t see a DOI:** If you don’t see a DOI and/or one wasn’t included in a draft entry you were provided, **search for it at crossref.org**. Type in as much information as you have (e.g., authors, title, journal). If there is a DOI, crossref will find it for you.

