Use of Italics

APA has specific guidelines for the use of italics. You can find them in section 4.21 of the sixth edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. As a general rule, use italics sparingly.

According to the manual, italics are **appropriate** for:

- Titles of books, journals and periodicals, films, and videos
  - *The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*
  - In the show *Friends*, Rachel and Ross
  - *The American Journal of Psychology*

- Introduction of new key technical term or label
  - The term *zone of proximal development*
  - Adolescents labeled *high risk*

- Anchors of scale
  - Scores ranged from 0 (*never*) to 5 (*continuously*)

- Words, phrases, or letters presented as linguistic examples
  - Kids learn words such as *play* and *game*
  - Many exotic words begin with the letter *x*

- Genera/scientific names, species, and varieties
  - *Equus caballus*

- Letters in statistical symbols or algebraic variables
  - *n* = 5
  - *LL*, *MSE* (see list on p. 120 of APA manual)

Italics are **inappropriate** for:

- Emphasis
  - This conclusion is *not* supported by evidence
  - (APA does, however, allow exceptions in cases in which a reader might miss the intended emphasis.)
- Foreign phrases common in English
  et al.  a posteriori  ex post facto
  (If the word or phrase is found as a main entry in *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary* it need not be italicized.)

- Greek letters
  \( \alpha \)

- Nonstatistical subscripts to statistical symbols
  \( F_{\text{crit}} \)

- Chemical terms
  OH, LSD