**Do I use the DOI or the URL?**

APA style requires that when a DOI (Digital Object Identifier – e.g. doi: 10.1037//0033-2909.126.6.910) is **not** available for a journal article retrieved online, the **URL of the homepage for the journal** should be used instead.

If an article has been retrieved from a database or reading list, but does not have a DOI, a separate search will need to be made to locate the homepage of the journal that the article is from. The URL of the individual article should not be used.

Before proceeding with a search carefully check your article for a DOI. Sometimes they are not very clear. If the DOI is not obvious at the top of the page, it may be ‘buried’ in amongst the publisher’s information, or at the bottom of the page at the end of the reference list. If the journal is available on multiple databases check each database for a DOI (in some instances you may find one database doesn’t have a DOI while another one does).

Using the flowchart below may help you decide if you need to use and locate the DOI or URL

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*If the article you have is available in electronic format but no DOI is evident, you can check a website called CrossRef.org (http://www.crossref.org/) to see if one is available.*

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If it is clear that there is no DOI you must use the homepage URL of the journal, or URL of the publisher if it is an electronic book or report.
Tips for finding the homepage of the journal

Using Google (or your preferred search engine) is the easiest way to find the journal homepage. When conducting your search it is best to enclose the title of the journal in quotation marks.

The following are some sample searches for journal homepages, including examples of what the reference should look like in APA style.

Example 1. – British Journal of Nursing (Article linked from a reading list direct to pdf)

Sometimes it is not clear which is the direct link to the home page of the journal. You may need to click into a number of links to determine which one takes you to the homepage.

Depending on the title of the journal you may need to add the term ‘journal’ to narrow your search

Make sure that you choose the correct journal and not just the first one on the list

Clues to identify if you are on the correct page may include:

Is the title clearly visible?

Is there a description, contents list or active links to the content?

An image of the cover page

APA 6th reference:


Example 2. – Australian Journal of Early Childhood (Article found on the A+Education database)
APA 6th Reference:


Example 3 – Brain Impairment (Article found on reading list, publisher as homepage)

APA 6th Reference