An often-overlooked APA guideline for tables requires columns of numbers to be aligned on the decimal point. This alignment gives the table an orderly appearance and makes the numbers easier for the reader to process quickly. Many people think they’re following the guideline by using a center justification for a column of numbers, but that approach doesn’t work unless you’re using a monospaced font such as Courier that uses the same space for each character. Because popular fonts such as Times New Roman, Arial, and Calibri adjust the horizontal space based on width of each character, the paragraph justification options don’t work to align numbers on the decimal point, especially if your table includes asterisks noting \( p \) values or superscripts for table notes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Left justified</th>
<th>Center justified</th>
<th>Right justified</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>123.45**</td>
<td>0.675</td>
<td>8.901*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>123.45**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.901*</td>
<td>0.675</td>
<td>8.901*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The solution? Use the decimal tab on the Word ruler and following the steps below.

1. Open your Word document and make sure the ruler is shown at the top of the page. If not, go to “View” and select the Ruler option.

2. Select the column of numbers

3. Set the column to left justification.

4. Click the tab icon at the (top corner of the ruler) the decimal tab, which looks like an upside down T point.
5. On the ruler, locate the two flag markers that show the column width. Click on the ruler between the two at the point where you want to place the decimal.

6. Voila! Your numbers are now aligned on the decimal point!

**Set a decimal tab for multiple columns**

The steps are similar for aligning several columns at once using the same decimal tab alignment.

1. Select all the columns you want to align on the decimal point and make sure the columns are left-justified.
2. Click the tab icon at the top left of the ruler until it shows the decimal tab icon.
3. On the first column, click on the ruler between the two flags to set the decimal placement; all columns will have the same decimal placement applied at once.