

MLA/APA Style Comparison



This handout is based on *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, Seventh Edition, and *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, Eighth Edition.

Format Basics

MLA	APA
Generally used in the Humanities and Fine Arts; <i>Handbook</i> written for students and professionals	Used in the Social Sciences; may also be used in other disciplines (e.g., Nursing, Education); <i>Publication Manual</i> written for students and professionals
Authoritativeness based on quality of information and credentials of the author	Authoritativeness based on how current the information is, where it was published, and credentials of the author, as well as the quality of the information
Uses a wide range of illustrative visual materials; guidelines for using visual are found in the 7 th edition of the <i>MLA Handbook</i>	Uses graphics (e.g., tables, charts) frequently to present data and prescribes graphics format (<i>Publication Manual</i> , Ch. 7); places graphics after References OR in text
Uses headings infrequently	Recommends headings and prescribes format for up to five levels of headings (pp. 47–49)
No title page required	Uses title page with required format (pp. 30–38)
Provides header on the upper right of all pages: Writer's last name + page number	Provides header on upper right of all pages: on student papers only page numbers appear

List of Sources

List of Sources (in normal font): Works Cited	List of Sources (in bold): References
Includes all sources cited in the text	Includes all sources cited in the text <i>except</i> personal interviews, non-retrievable data, and entire websites
Uses author's complete name	Uses author's last name, with initials only of first and middle names
Reverses first and last names of first author only; lists co-authors in traditional order	Reverses every co-author's first and last name
Uses commas between names of multiple authors (up to 3 authors); uses <i>and</i> before the last author's name; after 4 authors <i>et al.</i> may be used instead of listing all authors: e.g., Jones, Arthur, et al.	Uses commas between names of multiple authors (up to 20); uses an ampersand (&) before the last author's name
Omits the place of publication (unless place is important to paper being written)	Omits place of publication (unless place is important to paper being written)
Uses quotation marks around article titles; italicizes book and journal titles	Does not use quotation marks around, or underlining of, article titles; italicizes book, journal, report, and webpage titles
Capitalizes each significant word of a source title, subtitle, and all proper names	Capitalizes only the <i>first word</i> of the title and subtitle of articles and books; capitalizes all <i>proper names</i> and periodical titles/names
Includes retrieval information; provides DOI over a permalink and a permalink over a URL	Prefers DOI over URL; DOI supplied when known even if print version of source was used
Considers date of retrieval an optional element	Uses date of retrieval only if information is meant to change

In-text Citations

MLA	APA
<p>For all citations (summaries, paraphrases, or quotations), uses author’s last name and page number/time stamp, usually at end of the cited passage; e.g., (Estes 202).</p> <p>For all citations, the author’s name may appear in an attributive tag and page number reserved for the parenthetical; e.g., The work of Estes suggests that... (202).</p>	<p>For summaries or paraphrases, uses author’s last name and publication date separated by a comma; e.g., (Johnson, 1992).</p> <p>For quotations, also includes page number, time stamp, section heading, paragraph number; e.g., (Johnson, 1992, p. 140)</p> <p>The author and year information appears together whether in an attributive tag or a parenthetical; e.g., Johnson (1992) argued that “....” (p. 140) OR One researcher has argued “.....“ (Johnson, 1992, p. 140).</p>

MLA Works Cited Examples

Book	Atwood, Margaret. <i>Alias Grace</i> . Bantam Doubleday, 1996.
Journal	<p>Clark, Alice L., and George H. Dalrymple. “\$7.8 Billion for Everglades Restoration: Why Do Environmentalists Look So Worried?” <i>Population and Environment</i> vol. 24, no. 6, 2003, pp. 541-69.</p> <p>Robertson, Claire C. “Age, Gender, and Knowledge Revolutions in Africa and the United States.” <i>Journal of Women’s History</i> vol. 12, no. 4, 2000, pp.174-83. <i>Project Muse</i>, doi:10.1353/jowh/2001.0014.</p> <p>Sengupta, Ashis. “Staging Diaspora: South Asian American Theater Today.” <i>Journal of American Studies</i>, vol. 46, no. 4, 2012, pp. 831-54. <i>Proquest</i>, doi:10.1017/S0021875812000011.</p>
Magazine	Goldstone, Brian. “A Prayer’s Chance: The Scandal of Mental Health in West Africa.” <i>Harper’s</i> , May, 2017, pp. 41-53.

APA References Examples

Book	<p>Sundvall, S. (Ed.). (2019). <i>Rhetorical speculations: The future of rhetoric, writing, and technology</i>. Utah State University Press. https://doi.org/10.73330/9781607328315</p> <p>Timpson, W. M., & Bendel-Simso, P. (2003). <i>Concepts and choices for teaching: Meeting the challenges in higher education</i>. Atwood Publishing.</p>
Journal	<p>Degner, H., K. Wojciechowski, K., & Giroux, C. (2015). Opening closed doors: A rationale for creating a safe space for tutors struggling with mental health concerns or illnesses. <i>Praxis</i>, 13(1), 2015, pp. 27–37. issuu.com/titospans/docs/praxis_13.1_final_whole_issue/3?3=12817033/32041996.</p> <p>Gulicovski, J., Cerovic, L., Milonjic, S., & Popovic, I. (2008). Adsorption of itaconic acid from aqueous solutions onto alumina. <i>Journal of the Serbian Chemistry Society</i>, 73(8–9), 825–834. https://doi.org/10.2298/JSC0809835P</p> <p>Thurlow, C., & McKay, S. (2003). Profiling “new” communication technologies in adolescence. <i>Journal of Language and Social Psychology</i>, 22(1), 94-103.</p>
Magazine	<p>Goldstone, B. (2017, May). A prayer’s chance: The scandal of mental health in West Africa. <i>Harper’s</i>, 334(2004), 41–53.</p> <p>Leavitt, C. (2018, March–April). The novel I buried three times. <i>Poets & Writers</i>. https://www.pw.org/content/marchapril_2018</p>