MLA Format



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The Modern Language Association (MLA) publishes a citation style guide used to standardize writing and cite information. MLA format is widely used in the humanities. This handout explains how to format essays according to MLA (9th ed.) (section numbers listed in headings). This resource provides general information about formatting MLA papers, but writers should always tailor their work to their audience and assignment.

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English 2010

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Paper Format (1.1–1.6)

- Your last name and page number are right-aligned in the header of every page. For group papers, include only the page number.
- All margins are set to 1 inch.
- The heading is left-aligned and includes your name, the professor's name, course, and date.
- The paper's title is capitalized in title case, centered, and placed on its own line after the header.
- The entire document is in a clear, readable 11 or 12-point font, such as Times New Roman.
- The entire document is **double-spaced** and left-aligned with no extra space between paragraphs.
- The first line of each paragraph is **indented** an additional .5 inch from the left margin.

Block Quotes (6.35)

Writers are encouraged to limit the number of long quotes in a paper, but when quotes longer than four lines, they are formatted as block quotes. Block quotes remain double-spaced, are indented an additional .5 inch, are formatted without quotation marks, and include the in-text citation after the quote's end punctuation.

Kimmerer uses vivid sensory descriptions in order to romanticize the relationships between humanity and plants for her readers:

I expected a cluster of fat white bulbs, but in their place, I find ragged papery sheathes where the bulbs should be. Withered and flaccid, they look as if all the juice has already been sucked out of them. Which it has. If you ask permission, you have to listen to the answer. I tuck them back in the soil and go home. (Kimmerer 176)

Everyone Needs a Little Greed

Greed is often portraved as a problem that humanity should strive to avoid, but that is not

so simple. Greed is a multi-faceted impulse or desire that can be applied to anything-objects,

Kimmerer's use of imagery and personification in this quote invites readers to reflect on the uninhibited consumption of a plant. The author emphasizes describing the disappointing absence

End Punctuation

While block quotes are formatted to include punctuation after the quote, in-text citations include punctuation after the citation (". . . " (Mitchell 23).). American academic writing, in general, places punctuation inside quotation marks (". . . apart.") unless followed by an in-text citation.

Internal Headings (1.5)

Internal headings are not a commonly used in MLA. However, when used, headings in the body paragraphs should be **left-aligned with the margin** and include a line space **above and below**. Each level of heading should include two or more instances of use in the paper.

In A Bar at the Folies Bergère, Manet tells the story of one woman in particular to illustrate and extend his bold statement about the physical structure and strength of women.

Heading Level 1

In order to accurately portray the experience of the barmaid, Manet makes use of unorthodox measures to create an innovative and disconcerting perspective. The imprecise

Tables and Illustrations (1.7–1.12)

Place visual elements as close to the related text as possible. Double-space tables, labels, and captions.

Tables (1.7)

Each table is labeled with a number and title; both should be left-aligned on separate lines above the table. If adapting data from a source's table into a new table, place its source and notes in a caption below the table. To cite information from a table in-text, include the table number in square brackets after the page number, e.g., (Smith et al. 18 [table 2]).

Example: Table 1

Distribution of Literature Degrees in the U.S., 2014-2016

Academic Year	Bachelor's Degrees	Master's Degrees	Doctoral Degrees
2014–2015	16,008	2,517	762
2015–2016	16,762	2,637	778

Adapted from: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences,

National Center for Education Statistics. Digest of Education Statistics, 2017 ed.,

June 2017, table 297, nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d07/tables/dt07_297.asp.

Illustrations (1.7)

Other types of visual material (e.g., photograph, map, graph, or chart) should be labeled *Figure #* (usually abbreviated *Fig.*) and identified in a double-spaced caption below. If a writer chooses to give a full citation in the **caption** and does not cite it elsewhere, no entry is needed in the works cited.

Example: Full Citation



Partial Citation

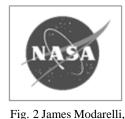


Fig. 2 James Modarelli, NASA Insignia. 1959, National Aeronautics

and Space Administration. www.nasa.gov/symbols-of-nasa.html

NASA Insignia.

Works Cited Format (1.6)

- Works cited begins on a new page
- The words Works Cited are centered but not bolded, underlined, or italicized.
- Entries are alphabetized by author's last name or organization's name.
- Each citation has a hanging indent (the first line is left-aligned and subsequent lines are indented an additional .5 inch).

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Works Cited

Alcott, Louisa May. Little Women. Little, Brown and Company, 2018.

Eve, Martin Paul, and Joe Street. "The Silicon Valley Novel." Literature and History, vol. 27,

no. 1, May 2018, pp. 81–97. EBSCOhost, https://doi.org/10.1177/0306197318755680.

Van Gogh, Vincent. Sunflowers. 1888, National Gallery, www.nationalgallery.org.uk

/paintings/vincent-van-gogh-sunflowers