



ANTELOPE VALLEY COLLEGE

Writing Center

MLA DOCUMENTATION

MLA = Modern Language Association

Format

See the sample page for an example of manuscript format and the use of in-text citations.

- Click “View” on the tool bar and choose “Header.” A box with broken lines will appear in which you will type your last name on the right side, click the space bar once, and then click the # symbol in the header box to have the computer assign the page number. Click “Close” to make the box disappear. Your name and page number WILL appear on every page of your paper.
- Standard to MLA format: one-inch margins, double spacing, a centered title with titles of major works italicized (not underlined), and an indentation of five spaces for the first sentence of a new paragraph.

Note: For complete manuscript guidelines, go to <http://www.avc.edu/studentservices/lc/writing/faqwriting.html> and click on “How do I write a paper in MLA style?”

This is important!

Information you have used from a source in the form of quotations, summaries, and paraphrases, must be clearly documented in your paper two ways—as in-text citations and as a list on the works cited page. This also applies to charts, graphs, artwork, maps, statistics, diagrams, scientific data, etc. See the AVC Student Code of Conduct, Section 1 (a), regarding academic violations (plagiarism).

In-text citations

Citing sources within your paper requires the use of parentheses ().

- Citations should be as concise as possible but complete enough so that readers can find the source in the list of works cited at the end of the paper, where works are listed alphabetically by authors’ last names or the first word of a title (other than *a, an, the*) of a work without an author.
- For short quotations, at the end of a sentence that contains a parenthetical citation, put a period *after* the parentheses. When the sentence ends with a quotation, put the parentheses *outside* the quotation marks, but *inside* the period. For quotations that end with a question mark or exclamation point, put the parentheses *outside* the quotation marks, but *inside* the period.
- Long quotations must be indented ten spaces and do not require quotation marks. End the quotation with a period *before* the parentheses.
- For online sources without page numbers, do not use a paragraph number (par.) or section number (sec.) unless the source itself numbers its paragraphs or sections.

Borrowed text (words, phrases, passages) in your paper should be used as quotations, paraphrases, and

summaries: quotation – use word for word what an author wrote or said; **paraphrase** – in your own words state the meaning of what an author wrote or said; **summary** – in your own words explain the main points an author wrote or said.

Use a signal phrase to introduce borrowed material:

quotation: Smith states, “Students must realize that building writing skills takes time and effort” (23).

paraphrase: Smith cites the need for students to understand that the improvement of their writing ability does not happen overnight and that progress requires lots of elbow grease (23).

summary: Smith stresses that students need to know that improving their writing depends on them (23).

You can also use a combination of a paraphrase and a partial quotation:

Smith cites the need for students to understand “that building writing skills takes time and effort” (23).

If you do not name the author in the sentence, you must write his/her last name in the parentheses.

Students need to understand that the improvement of their writing ability does not happen overnight and that progress requires lots of elbow grease (Smith 23).

Note: The first time you use an author’s name in a signal phrase, provide the first name and a frame of reference.

Janet Smith, author of *How to Write*, states, “Writing for college requires students to seek help from a tutor” (18).

Note: Go to <http://dianahacker.com/writersref/> for more information. Click on “Research and Documentation Online” and then “Humanities: Documenting Sources.” In-text citations will be one of the choices.

(over)

List of works cited

Start a new page and title your list Works Cited. Double spacing is required. List in alphabetical order all the sources that you have used in the paper. If the author's name is unknown, alphabetize by the first word of the title (other than *a*, *an*, *the*). Titles of major works (books, plays, films, etc.) must be *italicized* (not underlined). Use quotation marks for titles of works (articles, essays, stories, poems, etc.) published within larger works. Indent 5 spaces AFTER the first line of an entry. **Note:** *View an example of works cited manuscript format on the sample page attached.*

NEW! *With the 7th edition of the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, changes have been made to the works cited page:*

Each entry has a medium of publication designation, not limited to the following: Print, Web, Radio, Television, Audiocassette, Film, Videocassette, DVD, Performance, Lecture, E-Mail, and PDF File.

Example: Berg, Mark. "Tutoring in the Writing Center." *Learning Center Times* 3 Sept. 2008: A8. Print.

URLs (Internet addresses) are no longer required unless it would help the reader find the source more easily.

Example: Smith, Janet. "College Writing." *Writing Center Monthly* March 2009: 52. Web. 2 Jan. 2009.

MLA no longer makes a distinction between journals paginated by volume and those paginated by issue. All journal entries must have both volume and issue numbers.

Example: Martinez, Juan. "Writing for Work." *Journal of Business Writing* 17.2 (2009): 29-31. Print.

Online entries normally require a sponsor or publisher, date of publication, and, in some cases, page numbers.

If a source has no sponsor or publisher, use this abbreviation: n.p. **Example:** Cleveland: n.p., 2003.

If a source does not designate the place of publication: n.p. **Example:** N.p.: U of Chicago P, 1999.

If a source has no date of publication: n.d. **Example:** New York: Knopf, n.d.

If a source has no page numbers: n. pag. **Example:** Los Angeles: Argo, 2002. N. pag.

Note: If the abbreviation starts an entity within an entry, capitalize the first letter as in the second and fourth examples above.

The location of a database (the library name, for instance) is no longer used in an online entry.

Example: Lee, Jill. "Tutoring Tips." *Tutoring Journal* 10.3 (2005): 34. *Academic Search Premier*. Web. 3 Sept. 2009.

Since there are numerous cases that exist for different types of sources, it is best to consult the following:

1. *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, 7th ed.* New York: MLA, 2009. Print.

2. A writing handbook with a section on MLA such as

A Writer's Reference, The Bedford Handbook, A Pocket Style Manual, Rules for Writers, The St. Martin's Handbook, The Holt Handbook, The Brief Handbook, etc.

3. Online resources:

Frequently Asked Questions about MLA Style

http://www.mla.org/style_faq.html

Using MLA Style to Cite and Document Sources

<http://www.dianahacker.com/resdoc/>

MLA Formatting and Style Guide

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>

MLA Style: English and Other Humanities

<http://dianahacker.com/writersref/>

Note: This site also has MLA research exercises and model papers.

Be sure to view the Antelope Valley College Learning Center website for workshops on this topic. Go to <http://www.avc.edu> and click on Student Services, Learning Center, Workshop Schedule.