



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.

- Using the menu of your word processing program, create a header ½ inch from the top of the page that shows your last name and the page number on each page.
- 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. **See sample first page attached.**

Information you have quoted, paraphrased, or summarized from any source must be clearly documented in your paper in 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 regarding academic violations of this rule (i.e. plagiarism).

IN-TEXT CITATIONS

Borrowed information in your paper may be quoted, paraphrased, or summarized. Know the differences.

Quotation: exactly what an author wrote or said, word for word. Use quotation marks.

Paraphrase: the meaning of what an author said rephrased in your own words.

Summary: a brief explanation of an author's main points in your own words.

All three ways of using sources require citation.

To cite sources within your paper, use a combination of signal phrases and page numbers in parentheses. A **signal phrase** introduces the borrowed information with the author's name and a frame of reference the first time you use the source.

Example: Allen Lawson, a professor at Sierra Madre College, states, "Writing for college requires students to seek help from a tutor" (18).

If you do not name the author in the sentence, you must write his or her last name in the parentheses with the page number if there is one.

Example: Writing instructors agree that college students benefit from tutoring (Lawson 18).

- For short quotations (less than 4 lines of text), put the period or other punctuation *after* the parentheses at the end of the sentence.
- For long quotations (more than 4 lines), indent the passage 5 spaces (1 tabs), do not use quotation marks, and end with a period *before* the parenthetical citation.
- For sources without page numbers, such as websites, films, works of art, etc., use only the author's name in the signal phrase or parentheses.

- For a source without an author, use the full title in the signal phrase or a shortened form of the title in parentheses. Include the page number if there is one.
Example: Students can even find documentation instruction on *Youtube* now (“Choosing a Format”).

WORKS CITED PAGE

- Start a new page (continuing the header) and title your list Works Cited. Continue to double space each line.
- List all the sources that you have used in the paper in alphabetical order by author (last name first). If the work has no author, alphabetize by the first word of the title (other than *a*, *an*, *the*). Titles of major works (books, plays, films, databases, etc.) must be *italicized* (not underlined). Use quotation marks around titles of shorter works (articles, essays, stories, poems, etc.) published within larger works.
- Indent 5 spaces (1 tab) *after* the first line of an entry (this is called a hanging indent). **See sample Works Cited page attached.**

In general, each entry on the Works Cited page should include the source’s author or creator, the title, publication information, the date of the source, and page numbers (when appropriate).

Note: An online journal article also includes a permalink or DOI (digital object identifier) if the source has one. If not, include the URL (internet address) without http://.

Example:

Kunzman, Robert. “Education, Schooling, and Children’s Rights: The Complexity of Homeschooling.”

Educational Theory, vol. 62, no. 1, Feb. 2012, pp. 75-89. *ERIC*, doi: 10.1111/j.1741-5446.

Since so many different types of sources and cases exist, we recommend the following resources:

1. A writing handbook is a great help to college students. When purchasing a handbook, make sure that it includes the 2016 MLA update. Reputable handbooks include *A Writer’s Reference*, *Rules for Writers*, *The Bedford Handbook*, *A Pocket Style Manual*, *The MLA Handbook*, and others.

2. Online resources:

The *MLA Style Center*

<https://style.mla.org/>

MLA Formatting and Style Guide

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

3. Workshops on this topic at the AVC Learning Center. See our website for the workshop schedule in Lancaster and Palmdale:

<http://www.avc.edu/student-services/lc/>