

Citation Styles: Introduction to MLA and APA

UHCL Writing Center
Updated Spring 2015

Focus of MLA & APA Styles

Modern Language Association (MLA)

- Humanities and related areas (i.e. literature)
- Focuses on authorship: “...(Smith and Johnson)”
- Format is designed for ease of presentation
- Often viewed as “easier” to follow by students
- Commonly taught first to students

American Psychological Association (APA)

- Social sciences (i.e. psychology, sociology, and linguistics)
- Focuses on date of publication: “...(Smith & Johnson, 2009)”
- Format is designed for comparison of research and determining relevance
- Often thought of as more difficult by students
- Commonly taught as an alternative citation style

Basics of MLA & APA Citations (Book Example)

MLA

- Name(s) of author(s)
- Work title
- Publication city and year
- Publisher
- Publication medium (i.e. print, web)

In-text citations:

MLA: "...no significant results" (Johnson 34).

APA: "...no significant results" (Johnson, 2003, p. 34).

Reference citations:

MLA: Johnson, Thomas. *Studies in College*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2003. Print.

APA: Johnson, T. (2003). *Studies in college*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

APA

- Name(s) of author(s)
- Publication year
- Work title
- Publication city
- Publisher

Comparing In-Text Citations

- In-text citations are used when you need to give credit to an author for using a quote (exact wording), paraphrasing (rewording), or discussing his/her ideas. Example: (Mathis and Jones, 2009, pg. 74)
- All in-text citations for MLA and APA must reference the author's name.
- Reference to the page number or publication year depends on the situation and citation style.
 - When using APA, always give the year of publication.
 - When quoting, always give the page number in MLA & APA.
 - When paraphrasing or simply referencing, no page number is needed for either style.

Comparing In-Text Citations (Cont.)

Example: “The study provided no significant findings regarding the relationship of gender and success in language classes.” -- Johnson, Thomas and Arlene Maiden. *Studies in College*. New York: 2003. McGraw-Hill. Print.

Paraphrase

MLA: As stated by Johnson and Maiden, the research showed that there was...

APA: As stated in Johnson & Maiden (2003), the research showed that...

Quote (incorporation in text)

MLA: As Johnson and Maiden explained, their “study...classes” (34).

APA: As Johnson & Maiden (2003) explained, their “study...classes” (p. 34).

Quote (no incorporation in text)

MLA: “...in language classes” (Johnson and Maiden 34)

APA: “...in language classes” (Johnson & Maiden, 2003, p. 34)

Comparing References

- At the end of each research paper, a section must be devoted to listing the information for each resource that you used in the paper. This includes all resources that you quoted, paraphrased, or mentioned.
- If you have done your citing correctly, you should have mentioned each reference work at least once in your paper and each cited resource should have a reference citation.
- Different citation styles use different terms for this section:
 - MLA: Bibliography (Works Cited title)
 - APA: Reference Page (Reference title)
- Both MLA and APA require that you organize your citations alphabetically by the first letter of an author's last name.

Books

Template

MLA: Lastname, Firstname. *Title of Work*. City of Pub: Publisher, Year. Medium.

APA: Lastname, First Initial. (Year). *Title of work*. City of Pub, State: Publisher.

Examples

MLA: Johnson, Thomas. *Studies in College*. New York: 2003. McGraw-Hill. Print.

APA: Johnson, T. (2003). *Studies in college*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

Notice these primary differences...

- MLA uses the full first name; APA uses only the first initial.
- MLA capitalizes all major words (excluding articles (a/an/the) and prepositions (of, out, in)); APA only capitalizes first words in the titles and proper nouns (names).
- MLA states the medium of publication (print, web); APA does not.

Books (cont.)

Template

MLA: Lastname, Firstname. *Title of Work*. City of Pub: Publisher, Year. Medium.

APA: Lastname, First Initial. (Year). *Title of work*. City of Pub, State: Publisher.

Examples

MLA: Johnson, Thomas. *Studies in College*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2003. Print.

APA: Johnson, T. (2003). *Studies in college*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

Try to cite the following book in both MLA and APA...

Author: Stephen Jones

Title: A Review of Industry Standards

Year of Pub: 2010

City of Pub: London

Publisher: Stanton Publishing Group

Books (cont. 2)

Template

MLA: Lastname, Firstname. *Title of Work*. City of Pub: Publisher, Year. Medium.

APA: Lastname, First Initial. (Year). *Title of work*. City of Pub, State: Publisher.

Examples

MLA: Johnson, Thomas. *Studies in College*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2003. Print.

APA: Johnson, T. (2003). *Studies in college*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

Answers...

MLA: Jones, Stephen. *A Review of Industry Standards*. London: Stanton Publishing Group, 2010. Print.

APA: Jones, S. (2010). *A review of industry standards*. London: Stanton Publishing Group.

Articles in Journals

Template

MLA: Lastname, Firstname. "Title of Work." *Journal Title* Volume.Issue (Year): page numbers. Medium.

APA: Lastname, First Initial. (Year). Title of work. *Journal Title*, Volume(Issue), page numbers.

Examples

MLA: Smith, Linda. "Students in Danger." *New England Journal of Student Progress* 7.2 (2007): 142-154. Print.

APA: Smith, L. (2007). Students in danger. *New England Journal of Student Progress*, 7(2), 142-154.

Notice these additional differences...

- MLA puts the article title in quotation marks; APA does not.
- MLA uses the V.I format for volume and issue numbers; APA uses V(I).

Articles in Journals (cont.)

Template

MLA: Lastname, Firstname. "Title of Work." *Journal Title* Volume. Issue (Year): page numbers. Medium.

APA: Lastname, First Initial. (Year). Title of work. *Journal Title*, Volume(Issue), page numbers.

Examples

MLA: Smith, Linda. "Students in Danger." *New England Journal of Student Progress* 7.2 (2007): 142-154. Print.

APA: Smith, L. (2007). Students in danger. *New England Journal of Student Progress*, 7(2), 142-154.

Try to cite the following journal article in MLA and APA...

Author: Samuel Brown

Volume: 4

Pages: 164-184

Title: Working for the Union

Issue: 1

Journal: Workplace Review

Year: 1995

Articles in Journals (cont. 2)

Template

MLA: Lastname, Firstname. "Title of Work." *Journal Title* Volume.Issue (Year): page numbers. Medium.

APA: Lastname, First Initial. (Year). Title of work. *Journal Title*, Volume(Issue), page numbers.

Examples

MLA: Smith, Linda. "Students in Danger." *New England Journal of Student Progress* 7.2 (2007): 142-154. Print.

APA: Smith, L. (2007). Students in danger. *New England Journal of Student Progress*, 7(2), 142-154.

Answers...

MLA: Brown, Samuel. "Working for the Union." *Workplace Review* 4.1 (1995): 164-184. Print.

APA: Brown, S. (1995). Working for the union. *Workplace Review*, 4(1), 164-184.

Online Sources

Template

MLA: Author. *Title of Site*. Sponsor, Date created (use n.d. if not given). Medium. Date accessed. <URL (optional)>.

APA: Author. (Year, Month[use n.d. if not given]). Article or page sub-title. *Major Publication Title*, volume or issue number (if available). Retrieved from <http://url>.

Examples: We are citing the data found [here](#).

MLA: Department of Enrollment Management. *2013 Fall Term Comparison*. University of Houston-Clear Lake, 24 Oct. 2013. Web. 21 Oct. 2014.

APA: Department of Enrollment Management. (2013). 2013 Fall Term Comparison. *Enrollment Management 2013 Reports*. Retrieved from <http://prtl.uhcl.edu/portal/page/portal/PRV/Enrollment-Management/images/Enrollment%20and%20SCH-Fall%202013%202-Yr%2010242013%20final.pdf>

Online Sources (cont.)

Template

MLA: Author. *Title of Site*. Sponsor, Date created (use n.d. if not given). Medium. Date accessed. <URL (optional)>.

APA: Author. (Year, Month[use n.d. if not given]). Article or page sub-title. *Major Publication Title*, volume or issue number (if available). Retrieved from <http://url>.

Examples: Try to cite the following website in MLA and APA...

<http://www.cdc.gov/teenpregnancy/aboutteenpreg.htm>

Online Sources (cont. 2)

Template

MLA: Author. *Title of Site*. Sponsor, Date created (use n.d. if not given). Medium. Date accessed. <URL (optional)/>.

APA: Author. (Year, Month[use n.d. if not given]). Article or page sub-title. *Major Publication Title*, volume or issue number (if available). Retrieved from <http://url>.

Examples: We are citing the data found [here](#).

MLA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDCP). *About Teen Pregnancy*. CDCP, 19 Jun. 2014. Web. 27 Oct. 2014.

APA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDCP). (2014, June). About Teen Pregnancy. *Teen Pregnancy*. Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/teenpregnancy/aboutteenpreg.htm>.

Where to go for further help...

- The UHCL Writing Center—each student can have two 45-minute appointments per week to help with all aspects of the writing process, including citation styles.
- The Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL)—known for its simplified explanation of MLA and APA citation styles: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>
- For further examples of citations and reference pages, you can review Cornell University's informative website: <https://www.library.cornell.edu/research/citation/apa>

See the coordinating worksheet, available on the Writing Center website, to further test your APA citation skills.