



PRAIRIE VIEW A&M UNIVERSITY

The Writing Center Presents:

APA and MLA Formats: Their Main Differences

Developed By: Keith D. Evans



Style

- Papers written in MLA format are essays geared toward literary criticism and analysis. Sometimes these papers are published.
- APA papers are written to become scholarly, scientific journal articles and are treated as if they were to be sent for publication.

Disciplines

Academic Disciplines

geared toward MLA*:

- English
- Mass Communication

*These are generalizations; a professor may require students to write in a different style or in both styles.

Academic Disciplines

geared toward APA*:

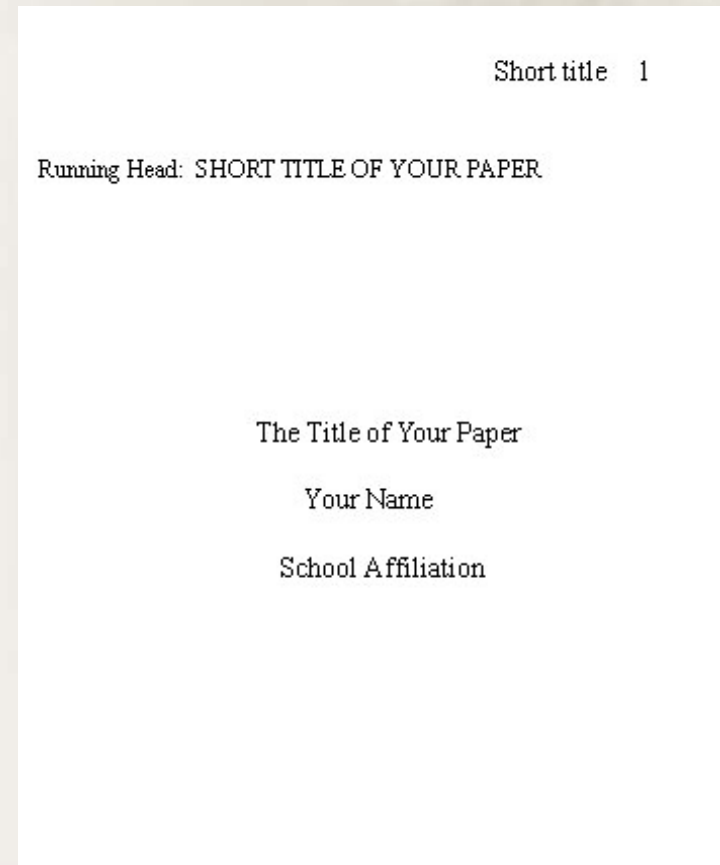
- Criminal Justice
- Education
- Engineering
- Psychology
- Most all Sciences

Starting the Paper

- A standard MLA paper does not require a cover page or an abstract, though a professor may ask you for one.
- APA style essays always include a cover page with the following information:
 - Page Header (First 2 words of your title)
 - Page Number
 - Running Head
 - Full title of your essay
 - Your name (along with any other authors you collaborate with)
 - Your University's name

Cover Pages at a Glance

- The title page for your APA essay will be considered the first page. (Page 1)
- Your Running Head should be in all capital letters.



Cover Pages Continued

- An MLA Cover page is rarely required.
- However, some professors may ask for one.
 - You should include your standard MLA heading in the center.
 - This does not go toward your page count

Title
Your Name
Professor's Name
Course Number
Date

Notable Differences

- An APA Cover Page is considered the first page of your paper and is numbered as such with the first 2 words of your title in the header.
- APA cover pages do not include a date or course number
- An MLA page does not go toward your page count and is not numbered and has no header.
- An MLA page does not include a running head or school affiliation.

Abstracts

- An abstract is the second page of an APA Essay.
- MLA essays are not required to include an abstract.
 - Some professors may ask for an abstract to be included; however it will be its own, separate assignment and not part of the main essay.

APA Abstract

- 120 word summary of your paper, procedures and outcomes.
- Counts as your second page and is part of your essay.
- It will NOT be indented.

Short Title 2

Abstract

About a half a page summary that summarizes your paper. It will serve to explain your thought processes, premise and findings. It should be no longer than 120 words usually.

MLA Abstract

Last Name 1

Your Name
Professor's Name
Course Number
Date

Title; Abstract

An MLA style abstract is regarded as a stand alone assignment and is not a part of your actual essay. Depending on the length of your essay it could be one page or several pages. It should always contain your thesis statement.

- Acts as its own assignment.
- Is not usually required.
- Has standard heading.
- Should contain your thesis statement.
- Variable in length.

Notable Differences

- While an MLA Abstract is not always required, an APA Abstract is an important part of your essay.
- An MLA Abstract varies in length while an APA is half a page, usually 120 words, and is un-indented.
- The Abstract is the second page of your APA essay while it is its own stand alone assignment in MLA format.

Starting Off; APA

- In an APA paper, your real essay begins on the third page; the cover and abstract pages act as the first two pages.
- Introduce your thesis or hypothesis.
- Present the problem then explain its relevance and your methods.
- Start all paragraphs with an indentation.

Short Title 3

Full Title

This is where your essay truly begins. The first thing you should address is your topic, then your thesis or hypothesis. This will be followed up by the processes you will use to prove your thesis or hypothesis. Be sure to explain the scientific abbreviations that you will be using by spelling them out first, then placing the abbreviation in all capitals in parentheses ().

Starting Out; MLA

- An MLA essay begins right away with an introduction on page one, following your title and heading.
- Even if you have a cover page, it is not numbered.

Last Name 1

Your Name
Professor's Name
Course Number
Date

Title

Your MLA essay begins on the first page with no other pages numbered before it. You open with setting up your problem and/or its history and give your thesis statement.

Notable Differences

- An APA essay begins on page 3 after the cover page and Abstract. An MLA page begins with page 1.
- Even if the MLA essay has a cover page, the cover page is not numbered
- An APA essay has no heading on page 3 with the main body of the paper.

In Text Citations; APA

- You must use past tense or present perfect to reference past research
- If referencing only research and not quoting, use the Author's last name followed by the year their research was formed in parentheses.
 - Last Name (Year),
- If using a direct quote you may use different styles:
 - Last Name (Year) "quote" (p. Number).
 - "Quote" Commentary (Last Name, Year, p. Number).
- The same applies to paraphrasing, though you are not required to give the page number.

APA Citations Continued

- If there is more than one author to a single source, use an ampersand between their names.
- If there are more than two authors, use commas between names.
- If there are more than six authors, give the main our first given author's last name followed by et al.,

In Text Citations; MLA

- Whether you are paraphrasing or directly quoting you follow the same format:
 - “Quote” (Last Name Number).
- There is only a space between the author’s last name and the page number. No comma or p.
- If you are citing more than one source at once, separate the two sources with a semicolon ;
 - (Author 1 page number; Author 2 page number).
- The last punctuation mark of the quote does not go within the quote. It goes outside the end parentheses.

MLA Citations Continued

- When quoting poetry use a / between lines.
- Instead of page numbers, you will use line numbers.
- You do not need to include the Author's last name in the citation if you already establish who the author is before quoting.
- Use ellipses "... " to omit passages from a quote.
- To add information within a quote, put the added info in brackets []

Notable Differences

- In APA the page number is preceded by a p.
- In MLA nothing but the single space between it and author's last name precedes the page number.
- MLA citations never include the date.

Block Quotes

- Use use a block quotation format if the quote goes on for more than 40 words in APA.
- Omit quotation marks.
- Start the quote on a new line, 5 spaces from the left margin.
- Citation information comes after the closing punctuation. No punctuation follows the citation.
- Use the block quotation in an MLA essay if the quote goes on for more than 4 lines.
- Omit quotation marks.
- Start the quote on a new line, indented 1 inch from the left margin.
- Citation information comes after the closing punctuation. No punctuation follows the citation.

Reference List vs. Works Cited

- An APA paper contains a Reference List at the end of the essay, documenting all work and research you used and referenced within your paper.
- A Works Cited list comes at the end of your MLA essay, documenting all outside sources you cited in your paper.
- Both begin on a new page that is numbered following your conclusion paragraph.
- Both should be labeled clearly with either Reference List or Works Cited centered at the top of the page, no underlining or bold print.
- Both are listed alphabetical by Author's last name.
- Both present the author's name as inverted (last name first).
 - However in APA format only the last name is spelled out fully; first and middle names are given initials.
 - In MLA you write out both the last. and first name completely

Documentation

- APA focuses more on scientific journal and periodical articles.
- Last Name, A. A. (Year). Title of article. *Title of Periodical*, volume number(issue number), pages.
- Notice that in the title of the article, only the first word is capitalized.
- Article titles are not put in quotation marks.
- MLA focuses more on Books and scholarly articles.
- For a book:
 - Last Name, First Name. *Title of Book*. City of Publication: Publisher, Year of Publication. Print.
- For an article:
 - Last Name, First Name. “Article Title.” *Title of Journal* Volume.Issue (Year): Pages. Print.

Online Sources

- Articles found online have one change in their APA documentation:
 - Author. (Year). Title [Electronic Version]. Journal name, Issue, Pages.
 - You do not include a URL for journals.
- With the new 7th Edition of the *MLA Handbook*, online journal articles no longer need a URL.
 - Author. "Title." *Journal*. Vol. Pages. *Database*. Date Accessed.

Final Differences

- In APA documentation, article titles are not put in quotation marks like they are in MLA. Only the first word of the Article is capitalized with the rest of the article is given lowercase.
 - This lowercase rule applies to book titles as well in APA. Only Journal/Periodical titles are given with every major word capitalized.

Activites

- Identify the following sources as either APA or MLA Documentation:
 - Doe, John. “Stuff about English.” *Nerdwater Scholastics* 1.2 (2009): 1-999. Print.
 - Doe, Jane and James Farnzworth. *Informational Things*. New York: Imaginary P, 1985. Print
 - Smithee, A.(1999). Are you really reading this. *Boring Stuff Quarterly*, 10, 100-102.

Answers

- 1: MLA style print journal article.
- 2: MLA style book with two authors.
- 3 APA style journal article.

All Information Obtained From:

MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers. 6th ed.

Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association 5th ed.

PRAIRIE VIEW A&M UNIVERSITY

The Writing Center Contact Info

Prairie View A&M Writing Center
Hilliard Hall, Room 118

<http://www.pvamu.edu/pages/4399.asp>

(936)261-3724

WritingCenter@pvamu.edu

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