

MLA Terminology

MLA: Modern Language Association

Header: in the “header” section of the document, upper-most, right-hand corner. Contains: your last and page number.

Heading: Placed on page 1, upper left-hand corner. Contains: your name, instructor’s name, course, and date (day month year)

A-, B-, C-level headings: used to keep organization with longer papers (6+). A-level heading is centered with standard title capitalization. B-level heading is aligned left with standard title capitalization (text begins flush to the left—no indent). C-level heading is aligned left, standard title capitalization, italicized, with a period. Text should immediately follow the period.

In-text citation: the intellectual attribution tag that follows a quote; in other words, the credit given to a source within the body of the essay. Can be the original author’s name referred to in the essay with the quote following, or, can follow a quote and be placed within parenthesis. (Note: parenthetical citations should contain page number if available).

Example:

Dr. Jones states that “53 different sets of twins followed the same pattern” (201).

OR

In a recent study it was found that “53 different sets of twins followed the same pattern” (Jones 201).

Works Cited page: The list of sources used in the essay. Each name on the Works Cited page must be directly tied to an in-text citation from the essay, i.e. if there is a parenthetical citation for “Jones” in the text, there must be a listing for “Jones” on the Works Cited.

Footnotes: Superscript number above a word or the final punctuation for a section of text.¹
The footnote indicates that more explanation can be found at the end of the paper. Generally used when the explanation has no place or purpose in the immediate text, but an explanation may be helpful for reference purposes.

Endnotes (Notes page): Comes after the essay and before the Works Cited page. Title is centered. Gives further explanation to any footnotes placed in the text. Each note is numbered according to the number that appears in the text. Each note should be indented.

Embedded quotes (weaving): Proper quote placement is referred to as embedding or weaving. This means a quote CAN ONLY follow a signal phrase or a lead-in AND the explanation of the quote usually follows (CD+CM combined). A QUOTE MUST NEVER BE PLACED ALONE IN THE ESSAY:

BAD: Dr. Jones did a study of twins. "53 different sets of twins followed the same pattern." The results were conclusive.

GOOD: In a recent study it was found that "53 different sets of twins followed the same pattern" strongly indicating that OCD is a genetic disorder and not learned behavior (Jones 201).

Block quotes: for quotes over four (4) lines long. Generally introduced with a colon (:), then begins on next line with a full one (1) inch indentation. Citation information goes outside final punctuation for section of text.

[sic]: Latin for "thus it was written"; used when the original quote has misspellings or obvious differences to from the standard—signifies to the reader the quote was purposefully written this way. Is place within the quotes Ex: The diary read: "Noone will be the viktor [sic]!"

[] Brackets: used within a quote to indicate that something in the quote has been altered. Brackets are placed around the altered letter or word only. Should not be over used (1-2 words at most or 1 single letter)

Ellipsis ... : used within a quote to indicate something has been purposely omitted. Used between parts within the quote—not needed if text is omitted from the front or end of the quote.