

The Learning Center

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Choosing MLA or APA Handout

Documenting sources in papers: MLA or APA?

Two major styles of documentation are used at this university: MLA (Modern Language Association) style, and APA (American Psychological Association) style. Different academic areas use different styles because each is more suited to the kind of research in that discipline. For example, APA makes it easier and more understandable to cite* research from journal articles. MLA makes it easier to cite multiple quotes from a single book. Here's a sample of what departments require which style:

MLA:	APA:
Communications	Business
English	Culinary
	Education
	Political Science
	Psychology

Often, students who have to use both styles think of MLA as "author/page#" and APA as "author/date" in order to create correct in-text citations as in :

Eighty-three types of ice-cream could be made using that formula (Donovan 167). -----MLA style citation

Eighty-three types of ice-cream could be made using that formula (Donovan, 2002).----APA style citation

Both styles include an alphabetized list attached in the back on a separate sheet of paper of the works cited in the paper, not all the works read on the subject----only those cited in the paper.

MLA's list is called "Works Cited;" APA's list is called "References." Here's a sample works cited entry for each:

Author's last name, Author's first name. Title of book. Place of publication: Name of publisher, Year.-----MLA

For example: Donovan, Laurence. The History of Forest Park. New York: Norton, 1990.

Author's last name, Author's first initial. (year). Title of book. Place of publication: Name of publisher. -----APA

For example: Donovan, L. (1990).The History of Forest Park. New York: Norton, 1990.

Copy whichever style you are using exactly. In the case of missing information (such as no author) start with the next complete piece of information (such as the book or article title). In either style, a web address does not sufficiently document the source. When you do that, you are asking your readers to do your work for you. Also, any source for which it is difficult to find information is probably not a very reliable source. See The Learning Center's guides on citing electronic sources.

Always check with your instructor about the style used in a particular class. Most professors have this information on their syllabi.

For in-depth information on either, see Professor Craven's guide on the SNHU Library Web site:

http://acadweb.snhu.edu/documenting_sources

*written reference to the name of a book, article, etc.