

COMPARING CITATION STYLES MLA, APA, and Chicago

Comparison Table

	MLA	APA	Chicago
Access date required for online sources	yes	no	yes
URL or DOI required	no	yes	yes
URL or DOI format	<whole url>.	homepage url [no period at end]	url.
Database name required if utilized	yes	no	yes
Citation date format	1 Jan. 2000	2000, January 1	January 1, 2000
Spell out numbers (many exceptions)	0-100	0-10	0-100
All digits required in page range: 123-124	no	yes	no
“p.” or “pp.” precedes page number	no	yes	no
Secondary sources	Original source in signal phrase (qtd. in Smith 10).	Original source in signal phrase (as cited in Smith, 2008, p. 10).	1. Original author, source, page, quoted in secondary author, source, page.
Rules for headings	none	specific	flexible guidelines
Periods in state abbreviations, incl. DC	no	no	no
Article titles in quotation marks	yes	no	yes
Most words in book and article titles capitalized	yes	no	yes
Journal titles italicized and most words capitalized	yes	yes	yes

Modern Language Association (MLA)

The Modern Language Association (MLA) style guidelines presented here have been adapted from the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 7th ed., 2009. MLA style is often used in the humanities. In an MLA-style paper, the writer identifies the author and page of each source in parentheses after every reference. That information then directs the reader to more detailed entries on a Works Cited list at the end of the paper.

In-text Citation

Doris Graber suggests that “media are most influential in areas in which the audience knows least” (210).

- Both direct quotations and paraphrases need a page number, but no “p.” abbreviation precedes it (171).

Alice Park reports that “the U.S. currently enjoys the highest immunization rate ever.”

- Discussion of citing sources without page numbers is on p. 221, which says “do not count unnumbered paragraphs.” Indicating a section, if possible, is appropriate.

Works Cited

Graber, Doris A. *Mass Media & American Politics*. Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2002. Print.

- Basic entry for a book is on p. 149.
- Most title words are capitalized; book titles are italicized (86-88).
- No periods with abbreviations of “state” names, including DC (237).
- Remember to include the word “Print.”

Park, Alice. “How Safe Are Vaccines?” *Time*. Time Magazine, 21 May 2008. Web. 18 March 2011.

- Basic entry for an online magazine article is on p. 184.
- Most title words are capitalized; magazine titles are italicized and article titles are in quotation marks (86-89).
- URL or DOI usually **not** required; access date required (p. 182).
- Remember to include the word “Web.”

American Psychological Association (APA)

The American Psychological Association style guidelines presented here have been adapted from the 2009 *APA Manual of Style*, 6th edition, second printing. APA style is widely used in the social sciences. In an APA-style paper, the writer identifies the author and year of each source in parentheses after every reference. That information then directs the reader to more detailed entries on a Reference List at the end of the paper.

In-text Citation

Graber (2002) suggests that “media are most influential in areas in which the audience knows least” (p. 210).

- Direct quotations need “p.” or “pp.” and page number (171).

Park (2008) reported that “the U.S. currently enjoys the highest immunization rate ever” (para. 2).

- Discussion of citing online source without pages is on p. 172.
- Other people’s works are ordinarily presented in the past tense (78).

References

Graber, D.A. (2002). *Mass media & American politics*. Washington, DC: CQ Press.

- Basic entry for a book is on p. 202.
- Only first words and proper nouns are capitalized in a book title in a reference list (journal titles are different). Book titles are italicized. Other rules apply to titles appearing in the body of a paper: see p. 101.
- No periods with abbreviations of “state” names, including DC (p. 88).

Park, A. (2008, May 21). How safe are vaccines? *Time*. Retrieved from <http://www.time.com>

- Basic entry for an online magazine article is #8 on p. 200. In this case, though, *Time* does not offer volume and issue numbers.
- Only first words and proper nouns are capitalized in an article title in a reference list—journal titles are different. Article titles are not italicized or placed in quotations. Different rules apply to titles appearing in the body of a paper (p. 101).
- URL or DOI required; access date usually **not** required. No period after url (p. 192).

Chicago

The Chicago style guidelines presented here have been adapted from the Chicago Manual of Style, 16th edition, 2010. The Chicago style is used in some of the humanities and social sciences and is often used outside the university. In it, the writer directs the reader to entries in a bibliography or reference list by using one of two basic forms of documentation: notes and author/date. This handout describes the note system, which has been widely used for many decades.

In-text Citation

Doris Graber suggests that “media are most influential in areas in which the audience knows least.”¹

Alice Park reports that “the U.S. currently enjoys the highest immunization rate ever.”²

- Superscript numeral sends reader to citation in footnote or endnote—author’s choice (660).

Notes

1. Doris A. Graber, *Mass Media & American Politics*, 6th ed. (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2002), 210.

- Only the first line of a note is indented, and the author's first and last names are not reversed (695).
- Elements of notes are separated by commas (,).
- A book's publication information is placed in parentheses (695).
- No periods with abbreviations of "state" names, including DC (489).

2. Alice Park, "How Safe Are Vaccines?" *Time*, May 21, 2008, accessed March 18, 2011, <http://www.time.com/time/health/article/0,8599,1808438,00.html>.

- Elements of notes are separated by commas (,).
- Access dates required for students and appear before the URL or DOI (658 and 734).
- URL or DOI required as well as facts of publication (657).
- Dates of journal articles are placed in parentheses (732), but dates of magazine articles are not (738).
- Discussion of citing sources without page numbers is on pp. 661-2. It does not require counting unnumbered paragraphs but encourages reference to section or chapter headings in longer unpaginated works.

Bibliography

Graber, Doris A. *Mass Media & American Politics*. Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2002. Print.

- Basic entry for a book is on p. 695.
- Sources are alphabetized in hanging indent form.
- Elements of bibliographic entries are separated by periods.
- Most title words are capitalized; book titles are italicized (702).
- No periods with abbreviations of "state" names, including DC (489).

2. Park, Alice. "How Safe Are Vaccines?" *Time*, May 21, 2008. Accessed March 18, 2011. <http://www.time.com/time/health/article/0,8599,1808438,00.html>.

- Basic entry for an online magazine article is on p. 184. There is no model for an online magazine article with access dates, so this example is compiled from 14.185 on p. 734 and the examples on p. 739.
- Most title words are capitalized; magazine titles are italicized and article titles are in quotation marks (738).
- If you have to break a URL, do so before a single slash or similar punctuation (659).
- URL or DOI **and** access date usually required of students. (p. 182).
- URL or DOI ends with period.