

## FORM AND STYLE IN WRITING A RESEARCH

### 1 The Organization of a Research

Again, please remember that we are here dealing with a generic scientific paper. Therefore, the mode of organization presented here is applicable in most cases, but not necessarily all cases. Regardless the mode of organization, organization is very important to convey your 'idea' in a comprehensive and meaningful way.

Perhaps more frequently with undergraduate students than seasoned scientists, you will have a set of things you want to say and feel compelled to say it somewhere in the paper ... which may not necessarily be the most suitable place. A hotchpotch of information is not the aim of writing a scientific report. Due emphasis should be given to how the flow of information is organized to attain a fluidity and cohesiveness to the reader. Remember you are writing to provide a scientific service to the reader, not to unload all that you know onto a white sheet of paper.

The organization of the paper refers to the structure, *i.e.* the sequence in which you present each type of information. The scientific report should have distinctive and clearly evident component parts. It is always desirable for you to create an outline of the paper based on the component parts and filling in the major points you want to cover in each part. This will organize your thoughts and will make the writing process less painful.

Below you will find the list of the parts of a typical scientific report:

- ❖ Title
- ❖ Acknowledgement
- ❖ Abstract
- ❖ Introduction
- ❖ Materials and methods
- ❖ Results
- ❖ Discussion/Conclusion
- ❖ References
- ❖ Appendices, where applicable

**Working with Quotations:** - Quotations that constitute fewer than five lines in your paper should be set off with quotation marks [“ ”] and be incorporated within the normal flow of your text. For material exceeding that length, omit the quotation marks and indent the quoted language one inch from your left-hand margin. If an indented quotation is taken entirely from one paragraph, the first line should be even with all the other lines in that quotation; however, if an indented quotation comes from two or more paragraphs, indent the first line of each paragraph an additional one-quarter inch. If quotation marks appear within the text of a quotation that already has the usual double-quote marks [ “ ” ] around it (a quote-within-a-quote), set off that inner quotation with single-quote marks [ ‘ ’ ] . Such a quote-within-a-quote within an indented quotation is marked with double-quote marks.

**Paper:** Use white, twenty-pound, 8 1/2- by 11-inch paper. Erasable paper tends to smudge and should be avoided for a final draft. If you prefer to use erasable paper in the preparation of your paper, submit a good photocopy to your instructor.

**Margins:** Except for page numbers (see below), leave one-inch margins all around the text of your paper -- left side, right side, and top and bottom. Paragraphs should be indented half an inch; set-off quotations should be indented an inch from the left margin (five spaces and ten spaces, respectively, on standard typewriters).

**Spacing:** The *MLA Guide* says that "the research paper must be double-spaced," including quotations, notes, and the list of works cited.

**Page Numbers:** Number your pages consecutively throughout the manuscript (including the first page) in the upper right-hand corner of each page, one-half inch from the top. Type your last name before the page number. Most word processing programs provide for a "running head," which you can set up as you create the format for the paper, at the same time you are establishing things like the one-inch margins and the double-spacing. This feature makes the appearance and consistency of the page numbering a great convenience. Make sure the page-number is always an inch from the right-hand edge of the paper (flush with the right-hand margin of your text) and that there is a double-space between the page number and the top line of text. Do not use the abbreviation *p.* or any other mark before the page number.

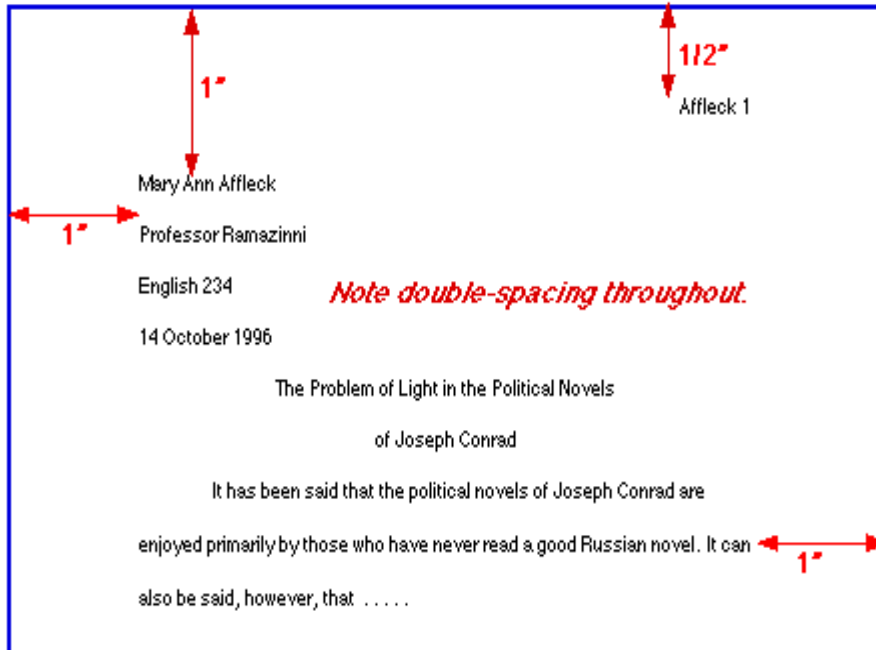


Figure .1 Illustration of Spacing

**Tables and Figures:** Tables should be labeled "Table," given an Arabic numeral, and captioned (with those words flush to the left-hand margin). Other material such as photographs, images, charts, and line-drawings should be labeled "Figure" and be properly numbered and captioned. **Article titles:** -The title of an article should be based on the [Article titles](#) policy. The principal criteria are that a title be recognizable (as a name or description of the topic), natural, sufficiently precise, concise, and consistent with the titles of related articles. If these criteria are in conflict, they need to be balanced against one another. For formatting guidance, see [Article title format](#). The following points are critical:

- Use "sentence case", not "title case"; that is, the initial letter of a title is capitalized (except in rare cases, such as eBay). Otherwise, capital letters are used only where they would be used in a normal sentence (Funding of UNESCO projects, not Funding of UNESCO Projects).
- To italicize a title, add the template `{{italic title}}` near the top of the article.
- Do not use A, An, or The as the first word (Economy of the Second Empire, not The economy of the Second Empire), unless by convention it is an inseparable part of a name (The Hague) or it is part of the title of a work (*A Clockwork Orange*, *The Tonight Show with Conan O'Brien*).

- Titles should normally be [nouns](#) or [noun phrases](#): Early life, not In early life.
- The final visible character should not be a punctuation mark unless it is part of a name ([Saint-Louis-du-Ha! Ha!](#)) or an abbreviation ([Inverness City F.C.](#)), or a closing round bracket or quotation mark is required ([John Palmer \(schooner\)](#)).

### 3 Section Headings

*Dear learner!*

What is Section heading?

Equal signs are used to mark the enclosed text as a section heading: ==Title== for a primary section; ===Title=== for the next level (a subsection); and so on to the lowest-level subsection, with =====Title=====.

(The highest heading level technically possible is =Title=; but do not use it in articles, because it is reserved for the automatically generated top-level heading at the top of the page containing the title of the whole article.) Spaces between the equal signs and the heading text are optional, and will not affect the way the heading is displayed. The heading must be typed on a separate line. Include one blank line above the heading, and optionally one blank line below it, for readability in the edit window. (Only two or more consecutive blank lines will add more white space in the public appearance of the page.) Your research paper does not need a title page. At the top of the first page, at the left-hand margin, type your name, your instructor's name, the course name and number, and the date -- all on separate, double-spaced lines. Then double-space again and center the title above your text. (If your title requires more than one line, double-space between the lines.) Double-space again before beginning your text. The title should be neither underlined nor written in all capital letters. Capitalize only the first, last, and principal words of the title. Titles might end with a question mark or an exclamation mark if that is appropriate, but not in a period. Titles written in other languages are capitalized and punctuated according to different rules, and writers should consult the *MLA Guide* or their instructors. The following points apply specifically to section headings:

- Headings should not refer redundantly to the subject of the article, or to higher-level headings, unless doing so is shorter or clearer. (Early life is

preferable to His early life when *his* refers to the subject of the article; headings can be assumed to be about the subject unless otherwise indicated.)

- Headings should not normally contain links, especially where only part of a heading is linked.
- Section and subsection headings should preferably be unique within a page; otherwise section links may lead to the wrong place, and automatic edit summaries can be ambiguous.
- Citations should not be placed within or on the same line as section and subsection headings.
- Headings should not contain images, including flag icons.
- Headings should not contain questions.

#### 4 Documentation in Research Paper

**Binders:** - Generally, the simpler the better. Why spend money on gimmicky, unwieldy, slippery binders, when instructors prefer nice, flat stacks of papers they can stuff into their briefcases and backpacks? A simple staple in the upper left-hand corner of your paper should suffice, although the *MLA Guide* suggests that a paper clip can be removed and this facilitates reading (which suggests to us that it's been a long time since the people at MLA have had to deal with stacks of student papers). Your instructors or their departments may have their own rules about binders, and you should consult with them about this matter. Like the *MLA Style Manual*, the *MLA Handbook* is an [academic style guide](#) widely used in the [United States](#), [Canada](#), and other countries, providing guidelines for writing and documentation of research in the [humanities](#), such as [English studies](#) (including the [English language](#), [writing](#), and [literature](#) written in English); the study of other [modern languages](#) and [literatures](#), including [comparative literature](#); [literary criticism](#); [media studies](#); [cultural studies](#); and related disciplines ("What Is MLA Style?"). Released in March 2009, the seventh edition of the *MLA Handbook* (like its previous editions) is addressed primarily to secondary-school and undergraduate college and university teachers and students ("What Is MLA Style?"). According to the MLA, "For over half a century, the *MLA Handbook* is the guide millions of writers have relied on," and "It provides an authoritative presentation of MLA documentation style for use in student writing."

### ***Catalogue Description***

According to the MLA book catalogue description and other information accessible from its website: Widely adopted by universities, colleges, and secondary schools, the MLA Handbook gives step-by-step advice on every aspect of writing research papers, from selecting a topic to submitting the completed paper.

The seventh edition is a comprehensive, up-to-date guide to research and writing in the online environment. It provides an authoritative update of MLA documentation style for use in student writing, including simplified guidelines for citing works published on the [Web](#) and new recommendations for citing several kinds of works, such as digital files and graphic narratives. Every copy of the seventh edition of the *MLA Handbook* comes with a code for accessing the accompanying Web site ([www.mlahandbook.org](http://www.mlahandbook.org)).

### **5 Notes, Bibliography, References and Literature Cited**

Footnotes (including citations at the bottom of each page) have not gone entirely the way of the dinosaurs. In fact it is ironic that footnotes were declared outmoded just before the era of the word-processors which make using footnotes so much easier. Still, because of its relative ease in both writing and reading, parenthetical documentation is greatly preferred by most instructors.

Endnotes (gathering citations and reference lists at the end of each chapter or at the end of the paper) have enjoyed popularity among academic writers, primarily because they make the transition from a submitted manuscript to published resource so much easier. Even so, parenthetical documentation has supplanted both footnotes and endnotes in most academic disciplines. For writers in some disciplines, however — most notably in some of the humanities disciplines such as music, art, religion, theology, and even (sometimes) history — footnotes are still widely in use. A wise student will check with his or her instructor to make sure that parenthetical documentation is an acceptable method of citing resources.

Using either footnotes or endnotes, writers refer their readers to citations and reference lists by means of a number at the end of a sentence, phrase or clause

containing the language or idea requiring citation. The number appears as a superscript. No space appears between the period and the superscript number. There should be four spaces between the last line of text and the first footnote on each page. Footnotes should be first-line indented and single-spaced with a double-space between each footnote. If necessary, a footnote can be carried into a subsequent page. In that event, on the second page, create a solid line two spaces below the last line of text, include another double-space and then finish the footnote. Double-space before the next footnote. Footnotes and endnotes appear with their corresponding superscript number and are written with the first line indented. The author's name will appear in normal order (not reversed), separated from the other information with a comma. Publication data (City: Press, year) appears in parentheses, and no period is used until the very end of the citation.

**In-text citations** In-text citations can vary depending on how many sources were used in the body of text. For example, if multiple sources are used in the paragraph, brief "Author-title" [parenthetical citations](#), including the name or names of author(s) and/or short titles (as needed) and numbers of pages (as applicable), are used within the text. These are keyed to and direct readers to a work or works by author(s) or editor(s) and sometimes titles (if the works are anonymous), as they are presented on the list of works cited (in alphabetical order), and the page(s) of the item where the information is located (e.g. (Smith 107) refers the reader to page 107 of the cited work by an author whose surname is Smith). If there are more than one author of the same name and/or more than one title of works by that author or authors being cited, then a first name or initial and/or titles or short titles are also used within the text's parenthetical references to avoid ambiguity. (No "p." or "pp." prefaces the page numbers and main words in titles appear in capital letters, following MLA style guidelines.). However, if the entire paragraph is using only one source, the full citation of the source may be listed at the conclusion of the paragraph. There is no need for a complete bibliography at the end if this method is used. If multiple sources are cited within the paragraph, the full citations must be included in the list of "Works Cited." Once you have found the sources you intend to use, you will need to identify them for your reader. For each BOOK you use, write a separate listing (on an index card or in some handy format available in your laptop computer or your notebook — whatever is convenient and cannot be lost), giving:

1. the name of the author or authors;
2. title;
3. editor, translator, compiler, if any;
4. Edition, if it is not the first (i.e., 2nd ed., rev. ed.);
5. place and date of the book's publication; and
6. The name of the book's publisher.

Write a separate listing for each article from a magazine or journal. Include

1. the name(s) of the author(s);
2. the title of the article;
3. the title of the periodical;
4. the date of the issue in which the article appears;
5. And the pages on which the article you are referring to appears.

You might also use reference books, newspapers, electronic resources, audio-visual materials, and other sources of information. In preparing listings for those sources, refer to *The Writer's Practical Guide to Documentation* in this document to see the kinds of facts you should record for each.

### 6 Style in Writing

A more detailed discussion on what each component constitutes and an effective way to determine what type of information is included in each component is presented.

**Alphabetical Order:** - When there is no author listed for a work, you still have to list that work alphabetically in your Works Cited page by using the first significant word of the title. Generally, that means ignoring *a*, *an*, and *the*. *The Encyclopedia of Bioethics* would thus be alphabetized by the word *Encyclopedia*. Putting people's names in alphabetical order is done on a letter-by-letter basis. Omit titles (such as *Lady*, *Sir*, *Sister*), degrees (*M.D.*, *Ph.D.*), etc., that precede or follow names. A suffix that is an essential part of the name — such as *Jr.*, *Sr.*, or a roman numeral — appears after the given name, preceded by a comma. (Ford, Henry J., III or Pepin, Theophilus, Jr.) The following names are in alphabetical order (based on the *MLA Handbook*):



**Capital letters:** - Sentence case rather than title case is used in Wikipedia article titles and section headings; see [Article titles](#) and [Section headings](#) above. For capitalization of list items, see [Bulleted and numbered lists](#). Other points concerning capitalization are summarized below; full information can be found at the MoS page on [capital letters](#).

- Do not use capital letters for emphasis; where wording alone cannot provide the emphasis, use italics.
- The English-language titles of compositions (books and other print works, songs and other audio works, films and other visual media works, paintings and other artworks, etc.)
- Titles of people in generic use, apply lower case for words such as *president*, *king*, and *emperor* (De Gaulle was a French president; Louis XVI was a French king; Three prime ministers attended the conference).
- Religions, deities, philosophies, doctrines Religions, sects, and churches and their followers (in noun or adjective form) start with a capital letter. Generally, "the" is not capitalized before such names (the Shī'a, not The Shī'a).
- Calendar items Months, days of the week, and holidays start with a capital letter (June, Monday; the Fourth of July refers only to the US Independence Day—otherwise July 4 or 4 July).
- Seasons are in lower case (her last summer; the winter solstice; spring fever), except in personifications or in proper names for periods or events (Old Man Winter; the team had great success on the Spring Circuit).
- When an abbreviation is to be used in an article, give the expression in full at first, followed immediately by the abbreviation in parentheses (round brackets). In the rest of the article the abbreviation can then be used by itself:
- Do not apply initial capitals in a full version simply because capitals are used in the abbreviation.
- If the full version is already in round brackets, use a comma and *or* to indicate the abbreviation.

**Scientific names** Use italics for the scientific names of plants, animals and other organisms at the genus level and below (italicize *Panthera leo* but not Felidae). The

hybrid sign is not italicized (*Rosa ×damascena*), nor is the "connecting term" required in three-part botanical names (*Rosa gallica* subsp. *officinalis*).

- For month and year, write June 1921, with no comma.
- Abbreviations for months, such as Feb. in the United States or Feb in most other countries, are used only where space is extremely limited.
- Avoid ambiguous references to seasons (seasons are opposite in the southern and northern hemispheres).
- Do not use *the year* before the digits (1995, not the year 1995), unless the meaning would otherwise be unclear.
- Decades are written in the format the 1980s, with no apostrophe. Use the two-digit form ('80s) only with an established social or cultural meaning. Avoid forms such as the 1700s that could refer to 10 or 100 years.
- Years are denoted by [AD and BC](#) or, equivalently, [CE and BCE](#). Use only one system within an article, and do not change from one system to the other without good reason. The abbreviations are written without periods, and with a [non-breaking space](#), as in 5 BC. Omit AD or CE unless this would cause ambiguity.

### **Grammar**

**Possessives** For the apostrophe character, see [#Apostrophes](#) above. For thorough treatment of the English possessive see [Apostrophe](#).

**Singular nouns** For the possessive of most singular nouns, add 's (my daughter's achievement, my niece's wedding, Cortez's men, the boss's wife, Glass's books, Illinois's largest employer, Descartes's philosophy, Verreaux's eagle). Exception: abstract nouns ending with an /s/ sound, when followed by *sake* (for goodness' sake, for his conscience' sake).

- For the possessive of singular nouns ending with just one s (sounded as /s/ or /z/), there are three practices:
- Apply just *one* of these three practices consistently within an article. If the third practice is used and there is disagreement over the pronunciation of a possessive, the choice should be discussed and then that possessive

adopted consistently in an article. (Possessives of certain classical and biblical names have traditional pronunciations that may be deemed to take precedence: Jesus' answer and Xerxes' expeditions, but Zeus's anger; and in some cases—particularly possessives of inanimate objects—rewording may be an option: the location of Vilnius, the old bus route, the moons of Mars.)

**Plural nouns** For a normal plural noun, ending with a pronounced *s*, form the possessive by adding just an apostrophe (my sons' wives, my nieces' weddings). for a plural noun *not* ending with a pronounced *s*, add 's (women's careers, people's habits, the mice's whiskers; The two Dumas's careers were controversial, but where rewording is an option, this may be better: The career of each Dumas was controversial).

**Pronouns** The possessive *its* (the dog chased its tail) has no apostrophe. (It's is the short form of it is or it has: it's a nice day, it's been a nice day.) Hers, ours, yours, theirs, and who's likewise lack apostrophes. Possessives of non-personal pronouns such as everyone are formed as if they were nouns (everyone's mother, nobody's hat, anyone else's opinion, the others' husbands).