

Texas Woman's University | Graduate School

MLA 9 Made Easy

A Resource for Thesis/Dissertation Students

Thesis & Dissertation Resources

- **Formatting Video Series:** Step-by-step instruction on how to format your document to meet Graduate School guidelines
- **Technical Manual:** Contains Graduate School guidelines and formatting example
- **Write Site:** The TWU writing center offers online and in-person writing tutoring.
- **Style Guide:** In addition to this guide, the library has a physical copy of the manual and access to the style guide's website.
- **CRDA:** The Center for Research Design and Analysis offers research support for qualitative and quantitative research

At a Glance

This resource covers basic MLA 9 guidelines and some of the most common errors we see students make when using this style guide. If you are not using MLA 9, please refer to the correct style guide resource.

This should not be used as a replacement to the MLA 9 manual. It's a supplemental source that should be used along with the APA manual.

The TWU Library has a physical copy of the MLA 9 manual and the MLA website contains a good portion of the manual for free.

Reminder! Only use one style guide throughout your entire document!

MLA 9 Headings

What is a heading?

A heading identifies different sections within your paper. A level 1 heading introduces a new topic, and levels 2-5 are subtopics that fall under the umbrella of the level 1 heading. Your chapter should always start with a level 1 heading.

If you were writing a paper about dogs, a level 1 heading might be **dog breeds**. After including a paragraph or two on breeds, you might focus on a specific breed. A level 2 heading could be **poodles**. This falls under the category of dog breeds, but it is a more specific category. Next, you might want to write about a poodle trait. A level 3 heading could be **hypoallergenic**. If you switch topics away from dog breeds (maybe you have a paragraph on dog health), you would want to use a level 1 heading because it no longer falls under the dog breed umbrella.

MLA 9 Headings

Formatting Examples

1	Flush Left, Bold, All Caps	
2	Flush Left, Title Case	
3	<i>Flush left, Italic, Title Case</i>	

Number Rules

MLA 9 uses the written number for:

- Numbers less than 10: **nine books**
- Numbers at the beginning of the sentence: **Twelve participants joined the study.**
- When few numbers appear

MLA 9 uses the numeral for:

- When more than two words are needed: **1,275**
- Items in a numbered series: **page 27**
- Large numbers: **8 million**
- Decimals and fractions: **5.6**

MLA 9 Tips & Reminders

- If a source has more than two authors, only the first author should be listed followed by et al. within the works cited list
- Back-to-back parentheses should be avoided by separating the information with a semicolon.

(color vs colour; Jones 208)

- MLA citations use page numbers rather than years

(Arnolds 15)

- Emphasis within a quote is assumed to be original, unless otherwise specified

References & Citations

et al.

MLA 9 uses et al. (which stands for "and others") within in-text citations and the works cited list for 3 or more authors. et al. is not italicized unless it is referred to as a term

Works Cited

The Technical Manual has examples of the three most common MLA 9 references. The MLA 9 website also includes citations examples categorized by type.

Double check that each citation has a corresponding reference and that each reference has a corresponding citation. The citation should contain the first thing listed in the reference. The spelling of authors' names and the year of publication should match!

Citation Generators

While generators are convenient when working with a long reference list, they are usually incorrect. If you use a generator, double check that the generator has pulled the correct information and in the right format.