

Master the Word and Ye Shall Master Your World

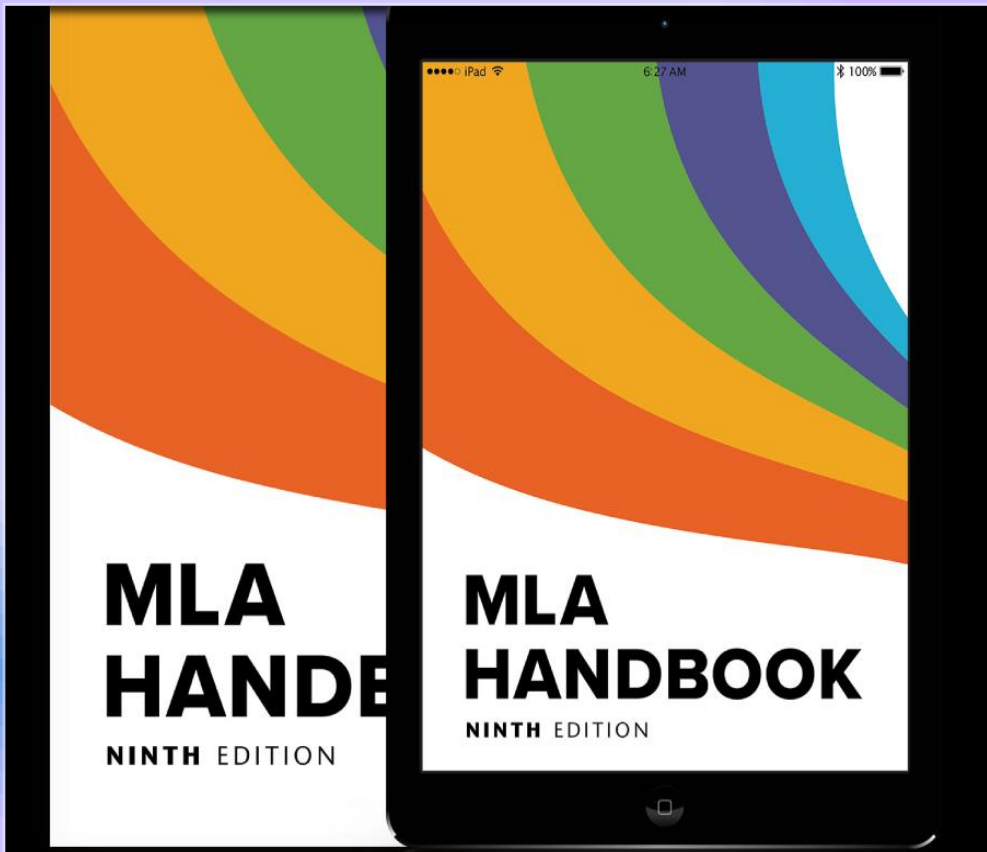
The Northwest Vista College English Writing Center



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**YES!
IT'S TRUE!**

THE NEW MLA 9 IS HERE!
(WE KNEW YOU'D BE EXCITED)

<https://style.mla.org/ninth-edition-whats-new/>

MLA 9th Edition Handbook

Well, it took eight years to move on from MLA 7 in 2008 to the 8th edition in 2016, primarily because of the rapid pace of changing information technology in academic study and research. However, it took only five years for the MLA 9 edition to be released and once again it addresses evolving technology, but also finally includes sections not previously addressed in prior MLA editions such as annotated bibliographies and research paper formatting guidelines for group projects, title pages, and lists.

In keeping up with our everchanging social world, this new MLA handbook includes a chapter addressing inclusive language guidelines when discussing race and ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, ability, age, and economic or social status. There is also a new chapter concerning updated guidance on plagiarism, quoting, paraphrasing, and academic sources.

Although footnotes and endnotes are not usually seen in our English composition assignments, they may be required for some literature courses and MLA 9 has updated information on their use.

Also in MLA 9

Expanded, in-depth guidance on how to use the MLA template of core elements to create works-cited-list entries that shows what each core element is, where to find it, and how to style it.

Clarification that element names are not always literal and can apply to a range of situations (*e.g., the Publisher element can refer to the publisher of a book or a sponsoring organization like the theater company that put on a play*).

A new, easy-to-follow explanation of in-text citations.

A new appendix with hundreds of sample works-cited-list entries listed by publication format, including books, databases, websites, *YouTube* videos, interviews, and more.

New expanded guidelines on spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and more.

Other changes includes the manual growing from 160 pages to 400 along with more visuals and while previously there were only 164 sample citations, now there are 333.

MLA 9 Chapter Summaries

Chapter 1: Formatting Your Research Project (pg. 1)

Covers the basics of formatting a research paper but also includes a section on **Lists (pg. 9)** that addresses: Integration into prose, vertically setting lists including those introduced with a complete sentence, and ones that continue the sentence introducing them. New guidance on group projects is also addressed.

Chapter 2: Mechanics of Prose (pg. 15)

As the title indicates, this chapter deals with composition mechanics (pg. 15) that addresses various aspects of punctuation, particularly commas such as *when a comma is necessary*, *when a comma is incorrect*, and *when a comma is optional*. It also includes an extensive section on hyphens and apostrophes. **Italics in Prose (pg. 36)** explains words and phrases referred to as words, letters referred to as letters, and foreign words in an English-language text.

Beginning on pg. 41, this chapter also addresses names and includes *Names of Persons in Prose*, *Organizations and Groups*, *Literary Periods*, and *Cultural Movements*. However, most helpful in this chapter is the section concerning titles that includes *Punctuation, Styling, Title Within Titles, Quotation Within Titles, Foreign Language Terms and Titles Within These Titles, Shortened Titles, and Translating Titles in Languages Other Than English*.

MLA 9 Chapter Summaries (cont.)

Chapter 3: Principles of Inclusive Language (pg. 89) As noted earlier, the new addition of has been added to the 9th edition in keeping with how our society is viewed and addressed in English Composition today. Here's a portion of the introduction:

Inclusive language aims to be respectful to others by treating language describing individual and group identity with sensitivity and by avoiding bias that could make someone feel excluded. Writers who strive for inclusivity in language recognize that their audience includes people who come from many different, and sometimes multiple (i.e., intersectional), backgrounds and experiences.

The introduction also notes the guidelines are necessarily generalized and that writers are to use their judgement when using inclusive language along with being aware of a particular context and audience they are writing for. Here is a breakdown of the sections:

[3.1] Make References to Identity Relevant – Consider whether terms that specify a subject's ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability, age, or economic or social status are meaningful to the context because including such information may imply that this characteristic places the subject outside the norm. Ex., *African American congresswoman, female conductor, and transgender actor*. Solution? Many gender-specific terms can be reworded for gender neutrality such as *human-made* can be used in place of *man-made* so stop using *man* to mean *human beings, humankind, humanity, or people*.

MLA 9 Chapter Summaries (cont.)

[3.1] Make References to Identity Relevant – (cont.)

Gender-specific terms that refer to persons of known gender may be appropriate.

Example: An individual might identify as Latino or Latina – but a nonspecific term, such as *Latinx* is a more inclusive way to describe a person of unknown gender or a population of mixed genders. Avoid using gender-specific terms such as *poetess* and *policeman* when referring to people.

[3.2] **Be Precise** – Broad terms applied to diverse populations may require more specificity such as *the Muslim community* and *Native American language* incorrectly conflate diverse populations and traditions; be specific and, if possible, use the subject's preferred term such *Sunni Muslims in India* and *Chinookan languages*.

Avoid perpetuating stereotypes by refraining from generalizing about group identities and try recasting a statement such as *Jews believe . . .* to *A Jewish belief is . . .* Or specify the Jewish community being referred to. Avoid generalizations, too, that assume readers share your understanding of what concepts or texts are referred to by religious terms such as *God, scripture, etc.*

MLA 9 Chapter Summaries (cont.)

[3.3] Choose Terms of Identity That Respect Your Subject – When you use people-first language such as *a person with diabetes, a person on probation, or a person with autism*, the subject is not defined first by a single aspect of their experience. When you use identity-first language such as *a queer person, an autistic person*, the identity is the focus.

Identity-first language is preferred by some individuals or groups opting to claim or choose the identity. Both people-first language and identity-first language are generally considered valid approaches, but your choices should always reflect the expressed preferences of individuals or groups when those preferences are known.

[3.4] Be Thoughtful About Capitalization and Styling – The dictionary includes many terms that denote identity, generally capitalizing them only if they derive from proper nouns such as Egyptian or Mormon but not *bisexual or retiree*. When the dictionary gives both the capitalized and lowercased form as acceptable options choose one and be consistent. Always follow the subject's preference such as *Deaf* to refer to the *Deaf community and culture* but *deaf* when referring to hearing loss.

[3.5] Minimize Pronouns That Exclude – Writers wishing to use inclusive pronouns sometimes use both feminine and masculine pronouns, use only feminine pronouns, or alternate between feminine and masculine pronouns. A revision that recasts the subject as plural or that eliminates the pronoun is often the best solution for expressing an idea or action in which sex or gender is not relevant or for avoiding the assumption that all individuals identify as male or female.

MLA 9 Chapter Summaries (cont.)

[3.5] Minimize Pronouns That Exclude (cont.) – Again, this is called gender-neutral and an example is when a writer uses, *he* or *she* it should be referenced as *they*. In formal writing, the use of singular *they* has been considered a less desirable option than revising to plural constructions or rephrasing without pronouns. But it has emerged as a tool for making language more inclusive because it helps writers avoid making or enabling assumptions about gender.

Be wary of making assumptions about your audience and do not assume they share your own identity, background, geographic location, culture or beliefs. Consider avoiding the first-person plural (*we* and *our*) in your writing.

[3.6] Avoid Negatively Judging Other's Experiences – When writing about a person who has a disability or health condition or who has experienced trauma, avoid descriptions like *suffers from*, *afflicted with*, *prisoner of*, or *victim of*. Although appropriate in some contexts, such language can evoke emotions or imagery that may not be accurate.

Example: A person who uses a wheelchair should not be described as *wheelchair-bound* or *confined to a wheelchair* because such statements make assumptions about a person's experiences.

[3.7] Use a Dictionary to Check for Offensive Terms – Use an updated dictionary if you are unsure about using a term or consult your instructor or tutors at the JH216 Writing Center.

MLA 9 Chapter Summaries (cont.)

Chapter 4: Documenting Sources: An Overview (pg. 95)

This chapter represents a comprehensive overview of documenting sources in an MLA research paper and begins with **[4.1] Why Plagiarism is a Serious Matter** that defines and outlines forms of plagiarism. In **[4.2] Avoiding Plagiarism**, MLA 9 explains how not to plagiarize while researching for an assignment by conducting careful research and giving credit to sources used in the research.

The manual also does an excellent job of addressing paraphrasing such as *when to paraphrase*, *how to paraphrase*, and *how to paraphrase and give credit*. **[4.9] Quoting** is also addressed and notes *when to quote*, *how to quote and give credit* along with providing several examples. The chapter ends with **[4.12] When Documentation is Not Needed** and discusses *common knowledge information*, *passing mentions*, *allusions*, and *epigraphs*.

Chapter 5: The List of Works Cited (pg. 105)

Equally comprehensive is this chapter that details every aspect of citing research along with numerous examples such as *citing a billboard* or *an online popup advertisement*. For those who teach or tutor English composition, the gem here is found in the **Appendix 2: Works-Cited-List Entries by Publication Format (pg. 303)** where works cited entries are listed followed by examples. This will save time trying to wade through works cited information instruction and directly to the needed entry.

MLA 9 Chapter Summaries (cont.)

Chapter 5: The List of Works Cited (cont.) Perhaps one of the most welcomed part of MLA 9 comes at the end of this chapter and titled [5.132] **Annotated Bibliographies**. Here at last we have direction on how annotated bibs are formatted given that instructors assign a variety of them. As one will note from the following example, the format has changed. Please note MLA 9 wants the annotation indented beneath the works cited entry.

Example: Moore, Nicole. *The Censor's Library: Uncovering the Lost History of Australia's Banned Books*. U of Queensland P, 2012.

Comprehensive history of Australians print censorship, with discussion of this history's implications for questions of transnationalism and the construction of the reader.

The handbook adds that annotations should generally be no more than a paragraph, however, at NVC we have seen them as long as a page. If that is the case, here is what MLA 9 now requires:

“If, however, you need several paragraphs, indent each one but do not add and extra space between paragraphs. Follow your instructor's guidelines on the use of phrases or full sentences and the length of annotations.”

In addition to the new entry format, the annotations can use the title **Annotated Bibliography** or **Annotated List of Works Cited**.

MLA 9 Chapter Summaries (cont.)

Chapter 6: Citing Sources In the Text (pg. 227)

As with the previous chapter on works cited entries, this part of MLA 9 addresses correct and incorrect in-text citations and again provides plenty of examples. Also included are some of those quirky in-text citations such as:

[6.11] Titles in Quotation Marks That Start With a Title in Quotation Marks. In parenthetical citations, if you need to shorten a title within quotation marks that begins with a title in quotation marks, use the title within the title as the short form. Retain the single quotation marks within double quotation marks but omit the article.

In-text Citation: Karen Ford argues that Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s “The Yellow Wallpaper” is “replete with contradictions” (“Yellow Wallpaper” 311).

Works Cited: Ford, Karen. “‘The Yellow Wallpaper’ and Women’s Discourse.” *Tulsa Studies in Women’s Literature*, vol. 4, no. 2, fall 1985, pp. 309-14.

[6.5] When Author and Title Are Not Enough. If two or more works by an author have the same title or if works listed by title have the same title, additional information is needed in the citations so that the reference will lead clearly to the works-cited-list entry. Include either the first unique piece of information from the entry or the information that is most important to your discussion. This information might be the editor, translator, edition number, or publication date.

MLA 9 Chapter Summaries (cont.)

Chapter 6: Citing Sources In the Text (cont.)

Whichever piece of information you may use, use it consistently for all works in your project. Insert the information in square brackets after the title.

Citation: The dedication is preserved in only three manuscripts (Christine, *Livre* [Willard and Hicks] 3- 4).

Works cited: Christine de Pizan. *Le livre des trois vertus*. Translated by Liliane Dulac. *Voix de femmes au Moyen Age*, edited by Danielle Regnier-Bohler, Robert Laffont, 2006, pp. 543 – 698.

_____. *Le livre des trois vertus*. Edited by Charity Cannon Willard and Eric Hicks, Champion, 1989.

These are just some of the many new works cited entries in this chapter that also includes: [6.21] Commonly Cited Works, [6:30] Punctuation in the Parenthetical Citation, [6.32] Integrating Quotations into Prose, and [6.48] Punctuating with Quotations.

MLA 9 Chapter Summaries (cont.)

Chapter 7: Notes (pg. 287) This brief chapter details how notes in MLA are formatted. [7.1] **Bibliographic Notes** explains how to cite a lengthy string of sources and addresses, unusual documentation practice, and flagging editions and translations used. [7.2] **Content Notes** are also addressed as well as [7.3] **Styling of Notes** and [7.4] **Placement of Notes in the Text**.

In Closing

So, there you have it, a quick rundown of the *MLA 9 Handbook*. However, in order to fully appreciate its value as a teaching and tutoring resource you'll need to get a copy. Hopefully, for many students it will demystify the often-confusing aspect of composing an academic research paper. Sometimes, students have written a well-argued paper supported with good grammar and mechanics only to lose many points on In-text Citations and the Works Cited page.

For tutors, this new edition will make for easy access to complicated research citation information. It will also serve as a grammar, mechanics, and style handbook all at one's fingertips. Quick access to this information is critical, particularly during midterms, finals, and when the lab is full. Once you've obtained a copy of *MLA 9* there's no doubt you will also find it a most important reference book. Enjoy!

Helpful MLA 9 Online Resources

Webinar for MLA 9

<https://webinars.mla.org/webinar/whats-new-in-the-ninth-edition-of-the-mla-handbook/>

Works Cited: A Quick Guide

<https://style.mla.org/works-cited/works-cited-a-quick-guide/>

Works Cited List Entries: Citations by Format

<https://style.mla.org/works-cited/citations-by-format/>

Works Cited List Cited Interactive Practice Template

<https://style.mla.org/interactive-practice-template/>

Ask the MLA

<https://style.mla.org/sections/ask-the-mla/>