Basics of APA v.s. MLA – The Ultimate Showdown

APA	MLA	Both
Page number goes in the right upper hand corner.	Page number and last name of paper's author go in the upper right hand corner.	Margin should be .5" from the top for the page number et al.
Reference page should not include full first names, just first (and when applicable middle) initials.	Works cited page must have the author's full first name for each entry when applicable.	Both should be double spaced, alphabetized, and each entry should have every line after the first indented once.
Title page for a student paper should include a centered title of the paper, followed by author's name (first, middle initial, last/family name), followed by the author's university affiliation, followed by the course number and name, followed by the professor's name, ending with the assignment's due date.	There is no title page for MLA student papers. Instead, the heading should be on the first page only underneath the last name and page number. It should include your name; on the next line, your professor's name; followed on the next line the course's title; and on the last line the date the paper is due (written # month year).	Both end with the date the assignment is due, not the date you write the paper. Both the title page and the first page of MLA have the page number in the top right corner. (In MLA, it also includes the author of the paper's last/ family name).
The title should be to-the-point and address precisely the paper's focus. It should be written with only the first word capitalized.	The title can be creative, and should not just read "Essay 1."	Neither title is bolded, underlined, italicized, etc. in any way.
In-text citations include the author(s) last name(s)/ family name(s), the year, and the pg. or paragraph #s (when applicable). If a year isn't provided, n.d. should be used.	In-text citations should include the author(s) last names and the page number. There are very rarely commas in MLA in-text citations. (Generally, only if multiple page numbers or authors are involved). MLA does not include date information in-text.	If more than three authors are going to be cited in-text, the first author's last name plus "et. al" (Latin abbreviation of "and the rest") should be used.

Please note, this breakdown is meant to provide a *general overview* for someone encountering MLA or APA for the first time. **You should always speak with your professor to learn their specific requirements as there are variations on each citation style.** For example, APA has a student and professional version for their audiences.

For more citation information on each style, we recommend the following:

- Visiting our librarians
- Getting support from our Writing Center | Tutoring Services
- Looking up each style (MLA and APA) on the OWL at Purdue for sample papers and comprehensive details