

MLA Publication Style Guide

The Medical Library Association (MLA) Style Guide presents guidelines for all MLA publications, print and electronic, including but not limited to the *Journal of Medical Library Association*, *MLAConnect*, MLANET, annual meeting publications, and brochures. This version of the style guide will reflect issues of inclusivity in both scope and attribution. As such, the work on maintaining the timeliness of the style guide will never be finished and the style guide will be examined and updated periodically.

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Publication Style

MLA publication style is based on *The Chicago Manual of Style*, seventeenth edition (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press; 2017), and *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, eleventh edition (Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster; 2003). MLA publication style is used as the primary style guide for a given document's text. Please refer to "[References](#)" section for guidance on citations.

References/Bibliography Style

MLA reference style is based on the [Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals](#) and the National Library of Medicine's (NLM's) *Citing Medicine: The NLM Style Guide for Authors, Editors, and Publishers*. All in-text citations, reference lists, and/or bibliographies must use this style. For guidance on document text and formatting, please refer to "Publication Style."

Style Guide Discrepancies

This style guide is designed to guide MLA's writers and editors on questions of style that are not addressed by *The Chicago Manual of Style 17* (CMS17) or *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary 11th edition* (MW11), or on which MLA differs from these two authorities. When a question arises, individuals working on MLA publications should consult this guide first, then defer to *MW11* for

spelling and hyphenation and *CMS17* for style and usage if the issue is not discussed here. Examples that are given to help clarify the issue are indented. Writers may also consult back issues of MLA publications for samples. Writers for the *Journal of the Medical Library Association (JMLA)* should also consult the “[Author Guidelines](#)” on *JMLA*’s site.

2022 Style Guide Revisions

In 2022, the *MLA Style Guide* Working Group was established to review and edit the style guide. The purpose of this revision was to comprehensively examine the content and organization of the style guide and make edits for accuracy, timeliness, and inclusivity. The working group sought input from MLA authors, editors, publishing groups, and other relevant key stakeholders to identify gaps in content since it was last revised in 2019. The goal was to revise and update the guide to make it more accessible, easier to use, and accurately represent relevant and current publication styles. The 2022 *MLA Style Guide* Working Group members and staff included contributions from:

- Ellen M. Aaronson, AHIP
- Katelyn Arnold
- Skye Bickett, AHIP
- Jamie Birkner
- Charlene Dundek
- Michelle Kraft, AHIP, FMLA
- Jenessa M. McElfresh, AHIP
- Beverly Murphy, AHIP, FMLA

Updates to the MLA Style Guide

The *MLA Style Guide* will be reviewed periodically to ensure accuracy, timeliness, and inclusivity. *MLA Style Guide* users with questions or suggestions should contact katie.arnold@mlahq.org.

Acknowledgments

The *Bulletin of the Medical Library Association* style manual, upon which this manual is based, was originally compiled by Susan Y. Crawford, AHIP, FMLA, *Bulletin* editor from 1983–1988 and 1992–1993; and Kate Williams, copy editor, Washington University School of Medicine, St. Louis, MO. Segments of the introduction were condensed from “CE 06: Writing for Publication: The Professional Journal Article” by Dottie Eakin, FMLA, and Pat L. Walter, AHIP, FMLA.

Additional revisions have been made by the following editors, publications liaisons, and assistants: Ellen M. Aaronson, AHIP; Katelyn Arnold; Katherine G. Akers; Helen Bagdoyen; Aimee Baldrige; Skye Bickett, AHIP; Jamie Birkner; Naomi C. Broering, AHIP, FMLA; Bleu Caldwell; I. Diane Cooper, AHIP; Kate Corcoran; Jean Demas; Melissa De Santis, AHIP; Charlene Dundek; Lynanne Feilen; Scott Garrison; Nunzia B. Giuse, AHIP, FMLA; Beryl Glitz, FMLA; Elizabeth Gunter; Jane Hardick; J. Michael Homan, AHIP, FMLA; Rebecca N. Jerome; Sioux Johannsen; Linda M. G. Katz, AHIP; Taneya Koonce; Michelle Kraft, AHIP, FMLA; Trudy K. Landwirth; Martha Lara; Elizabeth Lund;

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Revised September 2024.

Abbreviations

abbreviations: when to use them

In general, avoid using abbreviations in running text. Many acceptable abbreviations and initialisms and their usage are specified throughout this manual and its appendixes. Check the word or topic in question. See also “[initialisms and acronyms](#)” in this section.

There are some abbreviations that are permitted in *MLAConnect* and other MLA publications, but not in the *Journal of the Medical Library Association (JMLA)*. These include state names (use two-letter postal abbreviations); ordinal numbers greater than nine (such as 17th, 50th); and elements of addresses such as “street,” “building,” and “suite.”

Use the following common abbreviations in references only:

p.=page

no.=number

suppl.=supplement

v.=volume

Spell these words out in text.

Chapter 10, “Abbreviations,” of *The Chicago Manual of Style* contains useful lists of abbreviations organized by subject matter and offers additional usage guidelines.

academic and professional degrees

In running text, do not use degrees following a person’s name, except for bylines and acknowledgments in *JMLA*. See also “[bylines](#)” in the [JMLA Submission Components](#) section.

When setting a person’s academic degrees in initials in a byline, set them close without periods. The highest degree should be listed first.

PhD

MLS

BA

Spell out the word when speaking of academic degrees and use lowercase:

a master’s degree in library science

doctor of philosophy

corporation names

In general, omit “Co.,” “Corp.,” “Inc.,” and “Ltd.” from running text. If they must be included in text, spell them out (“Company,” “Corporation,” “Incorporated,” “Limited”). Always delete them from references.

In a directory or list whose main purpose is to help the reader contact a firm or to highlight MLA sponsors or contributors, the above abbreviations or their spelled-out names should be retained; follow the individual company’s preference. Otherwise, treat corporation names as trade names; that is, spell them as the corporation spells them, regardless of conformity to MLA style (e.g., retain ampersands and British spellings, do not add serial commas or other internal punctuation)

credentials

Credentials such as “AHIP” should be set off by commas after a person’s name and should not include periods. Credentials are placed after academic and professional degrees. The names of all members of the Academy of Health Information Professionals should be followed by “AHIP,” and the names of all MLA Fellows should be followed by “FMLA.”

Jane Doe, PhD, MLS, AHIP, FMLA

fellowship

[MLA Fellows](#) use the designation “FMLA” following their names, other degrees, and other credentials.

individual names (includes honorifics, initials, and personal names with “Jr.” and “Sr.”)

honorifics

Honorifics should not be used in MLA publications. Upon first introduction, use the individual’s first and last name. Use just the individual’s last name after the first time a name is used and when the name is repeated within three paragraphs or fewer.

initials

Leave a space between two initials in a person’s name.

B. B. Dyer

W. E. B. Du Bois

If the author of an article uses initials, follow the author’s preference for how their name should appear.

personal names with “Jr.” (Junior) and “Sr.” (Senior)

Do not use a comma between the name and “Jr.” or “Sr.,” but do use a comma between these abbreviations and any degrees or titles that follow in *JMLA* bylines. Do not use a comma to separate a name from the titles “II,” “III,” or “IV.”

John Smith Jr.

Frederick Henderson III, MLS

initialisms and acronyms

Some abbreviations of trade names, organizations, or innovations function as initialisms or acronyms (e.g., UMLS, NLM, TQM), using the initial capital letters or parts of individual elements of the name as a shortened version of the name itself. See [Appendix B](#) for a list of abbreviations, initialisms, and acronyms common to MLA publications.

In text, spell out most initialisms and acronyms the first time they appear, followed by the initialism or acronym in parentheses; use the initialism or acronym alone thereafter. If no second reference appears, spell out the full name only and do not provide the acronym or initialism.

If the first occurrence of an acronym or initialism is in the headline of an *MLAConnect* article, it does not need to be spelled out. It should still be spelled out in the text of the article.

MLA

Do not use “the” in front of the initialism MLA, unless MLA is an adjective. Use “the” with the full name, Medical Library Association.

MLA has members around the world.

The Medical Library Association has members around the world.

The MLA Board of Directors meets three times a year.

plural abbreviations and initialisms

Use the singular form for most common abbreviations even when they refer to more than one item (e.g., “p. 5–10,” “v. 1 and 2”).

Plurals of initialisms and acronyms are formed by adding an “s” (without an apostrophe):

FTEs

RMLs

MDs

Names, Terms, and Titles

affiliations

When an MLA member's name appears in an *MLAConnect* article, the annual meeting proceedings, or an annual meeting program, list the member's MLA credentials (AHIP, FMLA). If the member is acting on behalf of an MLA committee, section, or chapter, list the member's position on the committee, chapter, or section followed by the name of the committee, section, or chapter. If an article contains a list of all members of a committee, task force, chapter or section unit, or any similar list, use the members' names only.

See “individual names” under the [Abbreviations](#) section.

alphabetizing names

Alphabetize hyphenated names by the name before the hyphen. If there is no hyphen, alphabetize by the name that appears last. Last names that begin with De, de, Mac, Mc, Van, van, etc., alphabetize by the entire last name, whether there is a space or not.

Concettina D'Aversa

Andre de Oliveira

Juan Martin Garcia

Marta Jorda-Oliver

Barry Lundquist

Gloria McNeil

John Smith

Paula von Isenburg

Peter VanHorn

Academy of Health Information Professionals (AHIP)

MLA's [peer-reviewed credentialing and accreditation program for librarians](#). Use the full name the first time it appears in text; use “the academy” or “AHIP” thereafter. Do **not** use “the Academy” or “AHIP” as a shortened title of this program on first reference.

accessibility/disability terms

When discussing accessibility and disability issues, it's important to choose between people-first language (e.g., “person with a disability”) and disability-first language (e.g., “disabled person”) based on personal preference, and to use the chosen approach consistently. This consistency helps maintain clarity and respect for individuals' identities. For information on accessibility/disability terms, visit <https://ncdj.org/style-guide/>.

annual conference

Use “annual conference” as of 2020 to reflect the inclusivity of all meetings (virtual and/or in-person). Formerly, it was referred to as the MLA annual meeting.

Use capital letters for the full name of a particular [MLA annual conference or meeting](#).

One Hundred Twentieth Annual Conference

MLA '20 vConference

MLA's 1991 Annual Meeting

Ninety-First Annual Meeting

Beginning with the 1998 meeting, the preferred name for the annual meeting is MLA followed by the year (“MLA '24”) for *MLAConnect*, for MLANET, in monographs, and other publications. When referring to the MLA annual conference/meeting generally, do not capitalize.

The annual conference/meeting has been held in Washington, DC, twice in the past five years.

In *JMLA* articles that have been presented at an annual conference, set an asterisk at the end of the title, and insert the following footnote: “Presented at MLA [year], the [spelled-out ordinal number if less than 100] Annual Conference of the Medical Library Association, [city], [state]; [month] [date], [year].” Follow this style for other meetings at which a *JMLA* article has been presented. See also “footnotes” in the [JMLA Submission Components](#) section.

capitalizing MLA items

Capitalize titles of papers; discussions; continuing education courses; established MLA programs; webinars; vConnections; and the full names of all association units, including committees, task forces, sections, chapters, councils, and special interest groups. In running text, lowercase shortened names, titles that appear after the office-holder's name (except in bylines or lists of contacts), and shortened titles.

MLA Board of Directors

the board

Continuing Education Committee

the Membership and Bylaws Committees

the committee

an MLA committee

committees

Social Justice Caucus

the Research and Dental Caucuses

the caucus

an MLA caucus

MLA caucuses

Chapter Council Chair Donna R. Berryman AHIP

Donna R. Berryman, AHIP, Chapter Council chair

chapter chairs

the chair

incoming chairs

Executive Director Kevin Baliozian

Kevin Baliozian, MLA executive director

the MLA executive director

Capitalize MLA and academy membership categories and classes and the term “member” when it is preceded by a category. However, lowercase the word “membership” if it follows a membership category.

Fifty Voting Members cast ballots.

He is a Distinguished Member of the Academy of Health Information Professionals.

Capitalize the term “Fellow” when MLA fellowship is meant. Lowercase “fellowship.”

Check also the specific item in question in the appendices to this manual ([Appendix A](#), [Appendix B](#), [Appendix C](#)).

capitalizing and treatment of race, ethnicity, and religious terms

See “[race, ethnicity, and religious terms](#)” section. If the author feels strongly, defer to the author’s choice, especially with regards to authenticity.

capitalizing LGBTQIA+ and gender-specific terms

Refer to the [resources compiled by the LGBTQIA+ Caucus](#) for guidance on preferred terms and capitalization.

capitalizing names and titles

Full, official names are capitalized; shortened or generic versions of a name are not:

Medical Library Association

the association

UCLA Biomedical Library

the library

Titles of officers are capitalized only when they precede a personal name:

President Brenda Linares, AHIP

President-Elect Holmes

the MLA president-elect

She becomes president-elect in 2022.

President Joe Biden

President Biden

the president

Joe Biden, the president of the United States

See also “[gender, occupational titles](#)” in this section.

capitalizing titles of works

Capitalize the second element of hyphenated terms.

Twentieth-Century Literature

Tool-Maker

Non-English-Speaking Peoples

Evidence-Based Medicine

Capitalize the following: first and last words, nouns and pronouns (including “it”), adjectives and adverbs, verbs, and subordinate conjunctions. Lowercase the following: articles, coordinate conjunctions, and prepositions. Capitalize the first word after the colon in a subtitle, except if the title is on two lines, add a colon if needed:

Browning’s Roman Murder Story: A Reading of the Text, with Commentary

Not applicable to *JMLA* articles: lowercase the first word after a colon unless it’s a proper noun. *JMLA* articles use sentence case (eg, Diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives in the Medical Library Association: a look back at the last twenty-five years”).

MLANET items use title case (eg, “Amplify Your Voice: Submit to *MLAConnect* Today”).

computer programs, web page titles, and databases

See [Appendix B](#) for initialisms, acronyms, and abbreviations common to MLA publications. In general, spell and capitalize names of computer programs and databases as they appear on a screen when accessed.

email addresses

Use lower-case letters for email addresses:

gender, animal pronouns

When the animal's sex is known (cow/bull; goose/gander) or the animal has a name, use masculine or feminine pronouns as appropriate. When the animal's sex is unknown, use "it."

gender, human pronouns

Avoid specifying a person's gender unless the context calls for it. Most occupations are not gender defined, and most contexts will not require that the reader knows the gender of the subject.

Avoid gender-specific pronouns following nouns that could refer to a member of either sex. Usually this can be done by changing the pronoun to an article adjective, recasting the sentence to make the pronoun plural, or using "they" singular.

Rather than:

The librarian should plan his schedule to allow time for writing.

Preferred:

The librarian should plan a schedule that allows time for writing.

The librarian's schedule should allow time for writing.

Librarians should plan their schedules to allow time for writing.

"Everyone," "anyone," "someone," "no one," and other indefinite singular pronouns may be followed by the singular "they." Recasting the sentence to the plural is preferred.

gender, "man" words

Although many words that include the syllable "man" are intended to include women, substituting a neutral term is preferred.

Term	Preferred Term
Englishmen	the English
layman	nonprofessionals, the lay public
manhours	staff hours
mankind	humanity, humankind
manmade	artificial, synthetic

manpower staff, work force, personnel, employees

to man to staff, to cover, to work at, to operate

gender, woman-specific descriptors

When discussing experiences or nouns that certain groups (often women) may be associated with, consider how trans and non-binary people fit into this.

Term	Preferred Term
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pregnant women	pregnant people
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women's health rights	reproductive rights
-----------------------	---------------------

gender, object pronouns

Although countries, ships, cars, and hurricanes have sometimes been referred to as feminine, "it" is preferred.

gender, occupational titles

Use an inclusive term rather than a gender-specific one for jobs that can be held by both men and women.

Term	Preferred Term
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chairman	chair
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fireman	firefighter
---------	-------------

mailman	mail carrier
---------	--------------

policeman	police officer
-----------	----------------

poetess	poet
---------	------

web master	web manager, web coordinator
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If no neutral term is available and a specific person is meant, use the suffix "-man" or "-woman," as appropriate. Avoid the suffix "-person." Anyone who heads an MLA committee or task force is referred to as "chair" according to the Bylaws of the association. Use any formal titles conferred by

other organizations discussed in the text. If there is no formal title, follow the office-holder's preference. Generally, editors will assume that the term the author has chosen is the proper one.

Journal of the Medical Library Association

The short name for the *Journal of the Medical Library Association* should be *JMLA* rather than the *Journal*. Previously known as the *Bulletin of the Medical Library (BMLA)*, any *JMLA* references to articles residing in the *BMLA* should be referenced as such with the original name and information as shown in PubMed.

racial, ethnic, and religious terms

In order to preserve an author's authentic voice and viewpoint, editors should defer to the author's preference in how racial, ethnic, and religious terms are handled. Internal consistency should be maintained within a manuscript. When in doubt, query the author on how a term should be handled.

For guidance on the use and treatment of terms, we recommend the guidelines laid out in [The Reporting of Race and Ethnicity in Medical and Science Journals](#) from the JAMA Network. Among other advice, the guide recommends that "the names of races, ethnicities, and tribes should be capitalized, such as *Black*, *African American*, *White*, *Hispanic*, *Latino*, *Asian*, *American Indian*, *Alaska Native*, and *The Gond*." There may be sociopolitical instances in which context may merit exception to this guidance, for example, in an opinion piece for which capitalization could be perceived as inflammatory or inappropriate (eg, "white supremacy"). When used colloquially in an opinion piece, the term brown does not need initial capitalization; however, if used with other racial categories (eg, Black), it may need to be capitalized.

- **Do not use statements referring to ethnic backgrounds or racial identities unless pertinent**
 - When an acknowledgment is needed, learn the most appropriate specific terminology or use the term preferred by the person or group concerned. Also, remember to mention the race or color of white people as well. [Progressive Style Guide](#).
- **Avoid use of color to convey positive or negative qualities**
 - Avoid assigning good and bad values to colors (for example, *blacklist*, *white paper*, *white hat hacker*, or *red team hacker*) or using colors as metaphors to convey larger concepts. Use colors only to describe actual colors (for example, *black text on a white background*, *the white point of a display*). [Apple Style Guide](#).

References that can help: [The JAMA Network](#), [Progressive Style Guide](#), and [The Chicago Manual of Style](#).

speeches, titles of

Set titles of unpublished speeches in quotation marks. See "capitalizing titles of works" in this section.

symposia

Put the title of a symposium in quotation marks when it is mentioned in running text; see "capitalizing titles of works" in this section.

titles

Use italics for books and journals cited in running text. Use quotation marks for journal articles and electronic documents cited in running text. Web page titles and sections of chapters are capitalized, but do not use quotation marks or italics.

See also “[capitalizing names and titles](#)” and “[capitalizing MLA items](#)” in this section.

trademarks

Although owners of trademarked names may suggest otherwise, publishers are not obligated to denote the trademark status of a name when that name is mentioned in text. Authors representing trademark owners frequently feel obligated to use the trademark or registered trademark symbol (™ or ®) after the first mention of their product names but often do not use these symbols consistently to indicate the trademark status of other names not owned by their particular sponsor or employer.

Because the fair and consistent use of these symbols (or of footnotes denoting the trademark owners) requires exhaustive verification and vigilance on the part of the editor and because the use of these symbols (or footnotes) is not required by law, do not add trademark symbols, registered-trademark symbols, or trademark-denoting footnotes to trade names in MLA publications. In the interest of consistency, editors should also delete such references when inserted by authors.

At the same time, MLA recognizes that authors are often supported and encouraged by their institutions or other funders and that this support may be what enables an author to produce any written work at all. MLA editors are therefore advised to consider carefully an author’s express request that trademark status of particular names be denoted (merely including symbols or footnotes in the submitted manuscript does not constitute an “express request”).

If trademark status is denoted in a particular case, these guidelines should be used:

- Use the trademark or registered trademark symbol, not a footnote.
- The author must specify which words should be denoted and with which symbol (™ and ® are not interchangeable). Trade names not specified by the author should not be cited with these symbols.
- Use the symbol no more than four times in one article for each trade name: the first mention in the article’s title, the first mention in the running head, the first mention in the abstract, and the first mention in the article’s text.
- If the article is part of a *JMLA* symposium, add symbols to the trade names in question in all other articles in the symposium for consistency.

In all cases, whether trademarks are denoted or not, the proper spelling and capitalization of trade names should always be verified and consistent. See [Appendix C](#) for a list of trade names common to MLA publications and their proper spelling.

web addresses or uniform resource locators (URLs)

In references, cite the full address including internet protocol ([http://](#), [ftp://](#), etc.). Use a solidus at the end of a subdirectory.

<https://www.mlanet.org>

<https://www.mlanet.org/communities/chapters/>

In text, an `http://` Internet protocol is usually not necessary, because most addresses will refer to web addresses. An `ftp://` or other Internet protocol is necessary. The Internet protocol is included in codes for linked pages on MLANET.

words in other languages

Check the word or phrase in question in this manual and its appendixes. If it is not here but appears in the English-language section of *MW11* (not the “Foreign Words and Phrases” section), set in plain type and do not append the English translation. Otherwise, see pages 618–21 of *CMS17* (11.1–11.8) for a discussion of how to treat isolated unfamiliar words or phrases in other languages in type.

Punctuation

apostrophe

Never use an apostrophe after years to indicate a decade:

“The film was made in the 1970s.”

Do use an apostrophe before the years if only the decade is cited.

“Librarianship in the '90s was a completely different field.”

dashes and hyphens

In typographical terms, the em dash (—) is a unit of measurement exactly as wide and high as the point size being set. So named because the letter “M” in early fonts was usually cast on a square body. The en dash (–) is one-half the width of an em.

Em dashes are used to set off elements of text with internal punctuation and should not have any spaces around them. Use en dashes to indicate a numerical range or hyphenate an open compound:

The library is organized so that any question—whether technical, reference, or circulation—can be answered by staff.

1986–1998

University of Illinois–based

See also “[dates](#)” in the [Numbers and Dates](#) section.

In MLA publications, en dashes are also used with institutional names that take the following form:

University of Wisconsin–Madison

In general, MLA style does not use hyphens after “non,” “co,” “pre,” and other prefixes and “off,” “on,” and other prepositions when forming a compound word.

nonmember, coworker, prearrange, coauthor, coeditor

offsite, onsite, overhead

When deciding whether or not to hyphenate a compound word, follow the above guidelines or see 7.89 on pages 445–89 of *CMS17*, “Hyphenation Guide,” for guidelines. A general principle is that two words forming an adjective before a noun use a hyphen, while two words forming an adjective after a noun do not. See also “[word division](#)” in this section.

full-text electronic article

The electronic article was presented in full text.

ellipses

Ellipses are used to signal the omission of words from a quote. The ellipsis consists of three periods with spaces and must appear on the same line.

In his speech, he said that “PubMed is crucial . . . it’s important to know how to use.”

parentheses

Within parentheses, use brackets. For overlapping parenthetical elements, combine parentheses with em dashes.

Jones collected aggregate data (how they compare to data [over time]) for his report.

Jones then compared the aggregate data (over time—as his mentor recommended) to discover subscription changes: those journals renewed, canceled, or ordered.

quotations

Begin the first word of a quotation with a lowercase letter if it syntactically completes an author’s sentence, even if the word in the original quotation began a sentence:

Smith completed his argument by noting that “this is a difficult question to examine in depth.”

Quotations that are longer than a sentence or thirty words, whichever is longer, should be set apart from the text as block quotations; do not use quotation marks.

quotation marks

Place periods and commas within quotation marks; place semicolons and colons outside them.

The search term “cancer,” which was popular, was not used.

Use the search term “cancer”; it is the most popular term.

Place quotation marks around the names of groups in surveys.

the “very satisfied” group

the group that was very satisfied

solidus, slash mark

A slash mark, virgule, or diagonal (/). Avoid using this mark in running text as a symbol for “or,” “and,” or “per.”

Do not use “and/or” in formal writing, as it can be interpreted in different ways. Instead, write clearly what you mean:

Indexing or abstracting

Indexing or abstracting, or both

The names of some computer files or procedures, however, do require this symbol.

Use a forward slash at the end of URLs that refer only to subdirectories.

<https://www.mlanet.org/communities/chapters/>

word division

Consult *Merriam-Webster*. In general, run a solitary vowel into the first line:

valuable consti-
tuency

References

MLA reference style is based on the “Recommendations for the Conduct, Reporting, Editing, and Publication of Scholarly Work in Medical Journals” (which describe what is often referred to as “Vancouver style”), of which MLA is a signatory.

The purpose of a reference is to enable a reader to find the same original material; therefore, the information should be complete and in detail. Reference should be made to the version, electronic or print, that was actually referenced.

This section contains examples of the most common reference types. For further examples, visit the [NLM’s list](#).

reference style

References are to appear in list form in the “References” section at the end of the manuscript before the author affiliation block. References must be cited in numerical order in the text (i.e., the text should cite reference 1, 2, 3, etc. and not 1, 42, 17, etc.). References should reside in brackets.

Titles of books and journals should be given in italics. Titles of book chapters, journal articles, and electronic documents should be in plain type, enclosed in quotation marks. Web page titles and sections of chapters are capitalized but do not use italics or quotation marks.

Reference call outs should appear at the end of sentences unless there is a need to distinguish different sources within a single sentence. For quotes, the reference call out should appear outside the quote marks.

Turner notes that . . . [1].

Authors such as Turner [1], Smith [2], and Robert [3] note that . . .

Robert wrote that this database “was the most efficient for searches” [3].

In the *Journal of the Medical Library Association (JMLA)*, if an author mentions a website in the text but has not cited specific content that would warrant a reference, the uniform resource locator (URL) for the website is placed in angle brackets following the relevant text.

reference citations

Reference citations should appear at the end of sentences unless there is a need to distinguish different sources within a single sentence.

Turner notes that it “was the preferred database” when compared to the others [1].

Smith asked, “Are authors aware of the time burden for systematic reviews?” [2].

Authors such as Turner [1], Smith [2], and Robert [3] note that time was a significant concern.

general reference notes

- List the names of all authors.

- For journal abbreviations, check the [PubMed journal list](#).
- Dates should be listed Day Month Year (e.g., 25 Feb 2022).
- Delete “Ltd.,” “Co.,” and corporate indications from names of publishers.
- Use two-letter postal abbreviations for [states](#) and for [countries](#).
- Set journal titles and book titles in plain type (i.e., do not use italics in the reference list).
- Repeat a reference number in the text that has already been used (i.e., cite [1] each time you use that reference, rather than creating a new reference for it each time).
- If an author repeatedly cites a work, usually a book, but cites specific pages of it, rather than give the full Vancouver reference version of the work, section 14.29 of *CMS17* can be followed for such references by using a new reference number with the primary author’s last name and a shortened title of the work followed by the specific page numbers.

blog post

Author AB. Title of post. Publication date [cited date]. In: Blog title [Internet]. Place of publication: Publisher; blog publication date. Available from: URL.

Minter C. A case study on anti-Black publishing practices. 11 Dec 2020 [cited 20 Mar 2021]. In: Christian I.J. Minter, MSLIS [Internet]. Available from: <https://christianminter.com/2020/12/11/a-case-study-on-anti-black-publishing-practices/>.

book

Author AB, Author CD. Title of the book. Edition number. Volume number. City of publication, State abbreviation: Publisher; year. Number of pages.

Knox E. Document delivery and interlibrary loan on a shoestring. New York, NY: Neal-Schuman Publishers; 2010.

Editor AB, Editor CD, Editor EF, eds. Title of the book. Edition number. Volume number. City of publication, State abbreviation: Publisher; year. Number of pages.

Huber JT, Boorkman JA, Blackwell J, eds. Introduction to reference sources in the health sciences. 5th ed. New York, NY: Medical Library Association and Neal-Schuman; 2008.

book chapter

Author AB. Title of the chapter. In: Editor AB, Editor, CD, eds. Title of the book. Edition number. Volume number. City of publication, State abbreviation: Publisher; year. Number of pages.

Meltzer PS, Kallioniemi A, Trent JM. Chromosome alterations in human solid tumors. In: Vogelstein B, Kinzler KW, editors. The genetic basis of human cancer. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill; 2002. p. 93-113.

electronic document

Author AB. Title of document [Internet]. Edition or version statement. In: Publication title. Place of publication: Publisher; date of original publication [date of last revision; date of citation]. URL.

Carlson R. RTI Research Spotlight: Optimal Strategies for IPE Literature Searching [Internet]. In: MLAConnect. Chicago, IL: Medical Library Association; 14 Mar 2024.

<https://www.mlanet.org/article/rti-research-spotlight-optimal-strategies-for-ipe-literature-searching/>.

email

Emails and other personal communications are considered unpublished and should not be included in the reference list. Instead, an in-text citation with name, type of communication, and date should be listed in the body of the text.

She noted that it was “a huge boost to patron satisfaction” [personal communication from A. Smith to B. Author, 25 Feb 2022].

journal article

Author AB, Author CD, Author EF. Title of article. Journal Abbreviation. Year:Volume(Issue):page range. DOI: <https://doi.org/xxxxxx>.

Gutzman KE, Bales ME, Belter CW, Chambers T, Chan L, Holmes KL, Lu YL, Palmer LA, Reznik-Zellen RC, Sarli CC, Suiter AM, Wheeler TR. Research evaluation support services in biomedical libraries. *J Med Libr Assoc*. 2018 Jan;106(1):1–14. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5195/jmla.2018.205>.

Marshall, JG. The impact of the hospital library on clinical decision making: the Rochester study. *Bull Med Libr Assoc* 1992;80(2):169-78.

See also “*Journal of the Medical Library Association*” under [Names, Terms, and Titles](#) section.

illustrations, figures, and tables

Follow [The Chicago Manual of Style](#) for format of illustrations, figures, and tables. See also [JMLA guidelines](#) as needed.

preprint

Author AB, Author CD. Title. Publication [Preprint]. Date [cited date]. Available from: URL.

Bar DZ, Atkatsch K, Tavaréz U, Erdos MR, Gruenbaum Y, Collins FS. Biotinylation by antibody recognition- A novel method for proximity labeling. *BioRxiv* 069187 [Preprint]. 2016 [cited 12 Jan 2017]. Available from: <https://www.biorxiv.org/content/10.1101/069187v1>.

social media

Includes all media sites such as Twitter, Facebook, TikTok, YouTube, Vimeo, podcasts, and all other electronic media. For reference format, please refer to [NLM](#).

software

Author AB, Author CD. Title of software. Version [software]. Place of publication: publisher. Date [cited date]. Available from: URL.

Golda TG, Hough PD, Gay G. APPSPACK (Asynchronous Parallel Pattern Search). Version 5.0.1 [software]. Sandia National Laboratories. 16 Feb 2007 [cited 4 Apr 2016]. Available from: <https://dakota.sandia.gov/packages/hopspack>.

website

Author AB. Title of website [Internet]. Place of publication: Publisher; publication date [revision date; cited date]. URL.

Medical Library Association. MLANET [Internet]. Chicago, IL: The Association [rev. 1 Jan 2008; cited 9 Sept 2024]. <https://www.mlanet.org>.

page of a website

Author AB. Title of page [Internet]. In: Website title. Place of publication: Publisher; publication date [revision date; cited date]. URL.

Medical Library Association. Professional Development: Career Resources [Internet]. In: MLANET. Chicago, IL: The Association [cited 24 Aug 2024]. <https://www.mlanet.org/resources/career-development-resources/>.

Book and resource review formatting

book review

Author, John D. **Title set in boldface**. Edition. Edited by Jane Doe. City, State: Publisher; Year. (Series information.) Number of pages: Price. ISBN: XXXX. Acid-free paper symbol (if applicable)

Burke, John J. **Makerspaces: A Practical Guide for Librarians**. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield; 2014. (Practical Guide for Librarians no. 8.) 183 p. illus. \$65.00. ISBN: 978-1-4422-2967-9.

Collaborative Caring: Stories and Reflections on Teamwork in Health Care. Edited by Suzanne Gordon, David Feldman, and Michael Leonard. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press; 2014. 286 p. \$27.95. ISBN: 978-0-8014-5339-7.

NOTE: Names are set as follows:

One author: Smith, John A.

Two authors: Smith, John A., and Jones, Casey Q.

Three authors: Smith, John A., Jones, Casey Q., and Johnson, Lyndon B.

resource review citations

Title in boldface. Subtitle, Producer, Address, City, State; URL; Other contact information; Price.

Macprofessionals Public Library iPad Checkout Solution. Macprofessionals, 30275 Hudson Drive, Novi, MI 48377; <http://www.macprofessionals.com>; contact vendor for pricing.

Evernote. Evernote Corporation, 305 Walnut Street, Redwood City, CA 94063;
<http://www.evernote.com>; basic version: free; premium version: \$5 per month or \$45 per
year.

Numbers and Dates

dates

Dates in text should have a number rather than an ordinal.

April 6 (not April 6th)

Punctuate common forms of dates as follows:

April 1967 (no comma)

April 6, 1967 (comma after day of month; insert comma after year as well in running text)

1968–1972 (en dash)

May–June 1967 (en dash)

1965– (en dash for open-ended date)

fiscal year 1958/59 (eliminate century in the second year if it is the same)

school year 2004/05 (same as fiscal year)

association year 2004/05 (same as fiscal year)

1970s (no apostrophe)

the '70s (apostrophe before year)

For months, use the following forms **in references** in all publications; do not follow with a period.

Jan

Feb

Mar

Apr

May

Jun

Jul

Aug

Sep

Oct

Nov

Dec

On MLANET use month/date/year (mm/dd/yyyy) format with numerals.

Use numerals, unless the year is at the beginning of a sentence. When referring to a decade, never use an apostrophe before the “s.”

1980s

enumerations

Numerical lists imply rank or temporal order (first 1, then 2, or 1 is more important than 2). Do not number if no such order is intended. In lists that are run together in the text and number more than three, use numbered phrases. Set numbers in parentheses without periods.

(1) etc., (2) etc., (3) etc., and (4) etc. then

(a) etc., (b) etc., (c) etc., and (d) etc.

When items are indented without numbers, begin each new entry with a bullet, set flush left. When they are indented with numbers, the list is laid out the same way, but the bullet is replaced with a numeral and period.

1. etc.;

2. etc.;

3. etc.; and

4. etc.

Double-check alphabetical lists for correct order.

fractions and ratios

Hyphenate fractions:

A one-third share is sufficient.

She filed one-third of the cards.

Ratios may be given with numerals and a colon:

a 1:2 ratio

inclusive number ranges

Use the en dash when indicating a range of numbers.

Please refer to pages 75–110.

To abbreviate or condense number ranges, follow the guidelines in 9.61 in *CMS17*.

mathematical symbols

Close up spaces around mathematical symbols such as equal signs and less than or greater than symbols.

n=243

p<0.05

measurements and dimensions

Spelling out measurements is preferred; when abbreviations are necessary, set them without periods.

20 km

30 ft

Spell out whole numbers. Use numerals with a multiplication symbol (×) in fractions.

three-by-five cards

2½ × 6-inch cards

money

Use the numeric form. For updated format and information on currencies, see *The Chicago Manual of Style*.

For currencies other than the US dollar, use the following formats.

\$36.50 CAD for Canadian dollars (spell out “Canadian dollars (CAD)” the first time it appears)

£37.50 for British pounds

€42.75 for euros

other well-known currencies

37.50 Sw. fr. (figure followed by appropriate abbreviation)

lesser-known currencies

95 Haitian gourdes (figure followed by full name of currency)

n

Use (n=) with the “n” lowercase.

numbers

Use a comma in numbers higher than 999, with the exception of page numbers and years. Abbreviate “number” as “no.” when necessary or permitted. Always use the numeric form of numbers with decimal places. For numbers less than one, use a zero preceding the decimal point.

0.58

In the *Journal of the Medical Library Association (JMLA)*, formerly the *Bulletin of the Medical Library Association*, text, spell out ordinal numbers less than 100:

third

tenth

forty-second

103rd

1,912th

In the text of *MLAConnect* articles, on MLANET, in monographs, and in other publications, abbreviate cardinals greater than nine. Spell out whole numbers in all publications' text through ninety-nine:

one through 999,999

one million

101 million

In MLANET "Find a Job" ads, all numbers are represented in numeric form.

Spell out and hyphenate fractions.

If any number in a paragraph requires numerals rather than spelled out numbers, (higher than one hundred, decimal, percentage, money, etc., excepting dates), set all the numbers in numerals.

The library in Johnson City received 124 loan requests during a 1-year period. The library in Smithfield, however, received 19 loan requests, and the library in Morgantown only 12.

Do not begin a sentence with a numeral. Write out the number in full or recast the sentence.

Provide both numbers (n) and percentages where applicable when reporting data.

(n=74, 56%)

If the denominator changes frequently, it is useful to present numbers as n=74/258; 29% unless the denominator is noted in the text.

Of 258 respondents, 74 (29%) indicated...

See also "[abbreviations: when to use them](#)" in the [Abbreviations](#) section.

percentages

In text, use numerals and "%." Spell out the numeral and the word only if they begin the sentence. Where the percentage is less than 1%, add a decimal point and a zero.

89%

One hundred percent of the students were in attendance.

0.7%

statistics

The following are a few common statistical terms; set them as indicated. Text should be used rather than symbols, except for statistics or formulas.

Term	Preferred Term
------	----------------

χ^2 test, $\chi=4.321$	set a Greek chi (χ); set the “2” superscript
<i>t</i> test	“ <i>t</i> ” is italicized
<i>p</i> value, $p=0.05$	“ <i>p</i> ” is italicized; report the exact <i>p</i> value when possible
<i>df</i>	indicates “degrees of freedom”; set in italics
SEM	indicates “standard error of the mean”; set in plain type
SD	indicates “standard deviation”; set in plain type

tables

Do not use ditto marks (“”) for repeated items; supply the numbers. Provide numbers (n), with percentages (where applicable) in the next column in parentheses. Use an em dash to indicate entries that are not supplied or are irrelevant; use a zero to indicate that a particular universe has none of the items in question. Do not use “0%”; that is mathematically impossible. If both real numbers and percentages happen to be zero, give just the real number and no percentage.

In running text, refer to each table by Arabic numeral. Do not use “see”:

Students preferred electronic reserves to print reserves (Table 1).

See also “[figures \(illustrations\)](#)” in the [JMLA Submission Components](#) section.

telephone numbers

Use the following format:

312.419.9094 x743

time

Spell out the time of day in text for *JMLA*.

At seven o’clock, the webinar began.

If an exact moment is emphasized, use numerals.

At 7:35 a.m., the webinar began late.

Always use numerals when a.m. or p.m. are used.

At 7:00 a.m., the webinar began.

Always spell out noon in text.

At noon, the webinar began.

Set a.m. and p.m. close, with periods. Use time zones following a comma, lowercase. Spell out time zones after numerals.

The chapter meeting will begin at 9:00 a.m., central time.

JMLA Submission Components

For *JMLA* submission categories and format guidelines or submission requirements, please refer to the [JMLA Author Guidelines](#).

abstract

The submission categories below include an abstract of up to 250 words.

Knowledge Synthesis: Reviews employing a systematic literature search have a structured abstract (Objective, Methods, Results, Conclusions). See Original Investigation below for reference. Reviews not employing a systematic literature search have an unstructured abstract.

Original Investigation: Abstracts for OI papers in *JMLA* should be structured to include objectives, methods, results, and conclusions and be 250 words or less. For help on how to write a structured research abstract, please visit <https://www.mlanet.org/resources/how-to-write-a-structured-abstract/>.

Case Report: Abstract is structured into background, case presentation, and conclusions.

Commentary, History Matters, Special Paper, and Association Record: All of these submission categories should include an unstructured abstract.

acknowledgements

Contributors not meeting the authorship criteria as specified by [ICMJE](#) should not be included in the Author Contributions Statement but can be acknowledged in a separate Acknowledgements section at the end of the main text. If submitting to a peer-reviewed article category, contributor names should be redacted from the statement until the peer review process is complete. For examples, visit the [JMLA Author Guidelines](#).

author contributions statement

Knowledge Synthesis, Original Investigation, Case Report, Special Paper, and Virtual Projects manuscripts must include an Author Contributions Statement at the end of the main text that uses the [CRediT taxonomy](#) to specify the role(s) played by each author. For examples, visit the [JMLA Author Guidelines](#).

appendices

Appendices always appear at the end of an article, after the references, or online only in the online version of a *JMLA* paper. Please rename all appendices to include a letter in their titles and index them alphabetically:

Appendix A: Data Report

Appendix B: Complete Survey

Appendix C: Search Analysis

bylines

In the *Journal of the Medical Library Association (JMLA)* peer-reviewed articles, the byline appears after the title and before the abstract with author names and AHIP or FMLA status only. Full affiliation information appears at the end of the article. The order of the authors' names should reflect their contribution to the work in descending order.

The authors' affiliation entry should list each author's name; highest earned degree; email address; job title; library (if applicable), institution; and city, state (and country, if outside the United States). Do not abbreviate any of these elements except the states using [post-office abbreviations](#). Do not include "and" between authors' names. Follow the information that was provided in the submission.

In nonpeer-reviewed *JMLA* articles, list the author's name, library and institution (if applicable), city, and state (and country, if outside the United States) following the article text. Do not use "by."

In *MLAConnect*, the first author's name should be preceded by the phrase "Submitted by." Include the authors' names, AHIP if they are members of the Academy of Health Information Professionals, and FMLA if they have been granted fellowship status in the association. When authors hold an MLA office and are writing the article from that perspective, use their MLA offices. Use "and" between two authors' names or before the last author's name if there are more than two. See also "[affiliations](#)" in [Names, Terms, and Titles](#) section.

[contracts and grants](#)

In *JMLA* articles that summarize results of research supported by contracts or grants, such as the [National Library of Medicine](#) the National Science Foundation, IMLS, private companies, universities, etc. Use the following wording and include the title of the article:

This research was supported by National Institutes of Health contract no. N01-LM-4-3511 from the National Library of Medicine.

[credit line](#)

Credit for a photograph or illustration may be included in a note below the figure; for example, "Photograph by John Smith." A tabular arrangement of data drawn from another source may be acknowledged in a footnote to the table. Illustrations or tables made by the author need no credit lines.

[data availability statement](#)

Original Investigation, Case Reports, and Special Paper manuscripts must include a Data Availability Statement at the end of the main text describing where and how the data can be accessed in accordance with the [JMLA Data Sharing Policy](#). For examples, visit the [JMLA Author Guidelines](#).

[errata](#)

Corrections to previously published articles should be referred to as errata. The title for the erratum should be "Erratum to: [article reference]." Look for previously published errata in the journal for guidance on formatting and what needs to be included.

[figures \(illustrations\)](#)

Never use “Figure 1, below.” Refer to each figure by its order in the text, not by position. If a figure is not referenced in the text, insert a citation: “(Figure 1).” Do not use “see.”

Students preferred electronic reserves to print reserves (Figure 1).

Figures in *JMLA* should use the [Color Blind 10 scale](#) (orange, blue, and gray) or grayscale, especially figures that use colors to differentiate bar graphs, pie charts, etc.

footnotes

Footnote indicators should come in the following order: asterisk (*), dagger (†), double dagger (‡), section mark (§); then two asterisks (**), two daggers (††), two double daggers (‡‡) two section marks (§§), etc. *JMLA* uses footnotes for brief explanations related to titles of papers, author affiliations, and similar information in the main text and tables but not for lengthy parenthetical information, which should either be included in the main text or omitted if not critical. References are to appear in list form at the end of a manuscript (see the “References” section). Monograph, MLANET, and *MLAConnect* authors should avoid using footnotes.

Janet Doe Lecture

This lecture is published annually, usually in the January issue of *JMLA*. Footnote the article’s title with “Janet Doe Lecture in History or Philosophy of Medical Librarianship, presented at the [spelled-out ordinal number if less than 100] Annual Meeting of the Medical Library Association, [city], [state], [month] [date], [year].”

Joseph Leiter NLM/MLA Lecture

This lecture is published irregularly in *JMLA*, presented every other year at the MLA annual meeting and at NLM in alternate years. Footnote the article’s title with “Joseph Leiter Lecture, presented at the [spelled-out ordinal number if less than 100] Annual Meeting of the Medical Library Association, [city], [state], [month] [date], [year]” or “Joseph Leiter Lecture, presented at the National Library of Medicine, Bethesda, MD, [month] [date], [year].”

Letters to the editor

Do not use the salutation “To the Editor.” Assign an indexable title. See also “bylines” in the [Names and Terms](#) section.

In Memoriam

In the heading of a *JMLA* In Memoriam article, give the name of the person being eulogized, followed by a comma and the birth and death years. An additional title may follow. When a photograph of the person accompanies the obituary, no caption is required. See also “bylines” in the [Names and Terms](#) section.

oral speeches and debates

Altering quoted spoken remarks is acceptable in two cases: the meaning conveyed by the quoted words is clearly different from what the speaker meant to say, or the text of what was actually said would embarrass the speaker for its incoherence.

Transcripts can and should be edited for capitalization, punctuation, and spelling considerations that do not alter what the speaker is reported as saying.

received/accepted statement

Set the received/accepted statements in *JMLA* after the author affiliation block in italics, flush left:

Received December 2023; accepted August 2024

running heads

Each running head should be no longer than fifty characters. The left running head in *JMLA* is the author or authors' names as follows below. The right running head gives a shortened version of the paper's title.

Smith (for one author)

Smith and Jones (for two authors)

Smith et al. (for three or more authors)