APA Style and MLA Style Reference Comparison Guide

APA STYLE

7th edition

This guide compares APA Style and MLA style references for four common sources: journal articles, books, edited book chapters, and webpages. Format varies depending on the number of authors; the templates match the examples and show variations for one, two, and three or more authors. The sentences with in-text citations are paraphrased, which is preferred in APA Style over direct quotation.

Journal Article Reference

Component	APA Style	MLA Style
Template	Surname, Initials, Surname, Initials, & Surname, Initials. (year of publication). Title of article. *Journal Title*, *Volume*(Issue), xxx–xxx. DOI	Surname, First et al. "Title of Article." *Journal Title*, vol. X, no. X, year of publication, pp. xxx–xx, DOI.
Example reference	Fried, E. I., Papanikolaou, F., & Epskamp, S. (2022). Mental health and social contact during the COVID-19 pandemic: An ecological momentary assessment study. *Clinical Psychological Science*, *10*(2), 340–354. https://doi.org/10.1177/21677026211017839	Fried, Eiko I., et al. "Mental Health and Social Contact During the COVID-19 Pandemic: An Ecological Momentary Assessment Study." *Clinical Psychological Science*, vol. 10, no. 2, 2022, pp. 340–54, https://doi.org/10.1177/21677026211017839.
Sentence with in-text citation	Lockdowns have been associated with increased symptoms of depression (Fried et al., 2022).	Lockdowns have been associated with increased symptoms of depression (Fried et al.).

Book Reference

Component	APA Style	MLA Style
Template	Surname, Initials. (year of publication). *Title of book*. Publisher.	Surname, First. *Title of Book*. Publisher, year of publication.
Example reference	Borrell, B. (2021). *The first shots: The epic rivalries and heroic science behind the race to the coronavirus vaccine*. Mariner Books.	Borrell, Brendan. *The First Shots: The Epic Rivalries and Heroic Science Behind the Race to the Coronavirus Vaccine*. Mariner Books, 2021.
Sentence with in-text citation	Borrell (2021) described the development of the coronavirus vaccine.	Borrell described the development of the coronavirus vaccine.

Edited Book Chapter Reference

Component	APA Style	MLA Style
Template	Surname, Initials, & Surname, Initials. (year of publication). Title of chapter. In E. Editor & F. Editor (Eds.), *Title of book* (pp. xxx–xxx). Publisher.	Surname, First, and First Surname. "Title of Chapter." *Title of Book*, edited by Erica Editor and Francis Editor, Publisher, year of publication, pp. xxx–xx.
Example reference	Burke, B. R., & Ločmele, L. (2021). A new era: Learning and living in difficult times. In L. Daniela & A. Visvizi (Eds.), *Remote learning in times of pandemic: Issues, Implications and best practice* (pp. 13–34). Routledge.	Burke, Barbara R., and Liene Ločmele. "A New Era: Learning and Living in Difficult Times." *Remote Learning in Times of Pandemic: Issues, Implications and Best Practice*, edited by Linda Daniela and Anna Visvizi, Routledge, 2021, pp. 13–34.
Sentence with in-text citation	Remote learning allowed students to collaborate while living in different countries (Burke & Ločmele, 2021).	Remote learning allowed students to collaborate while living in different countries (Burke and Ločmele).

Webpage Reference

Component	APA Style	MLA Style
Template	Surname, Initials. (year of publication). *Title of webpage*. Website Title. URL	Surname, First. "Title of Webpage." *Website Title*. URL.
Example reference	Rappolt-Schlichtmann, G. (n.d.). *Distance learning: 6 UDL best practices for online learning*. Understood. https://www.understood.org/en/articles/video-distance-learning-udl-best-practices	Rappolt-Schlichtmann, Gabrielle. "Distance Learning: 6 UDL Best Practices for Online Learning." *Understood*. www.understood.org/en/articles/video-distance-learning-udl-best-practices.
Sentence with in-text citation	Best practices in online learning include allowing for asynchronous learning (Rappolt-Schlichtmann, n.d.).	Best practices in online learning include allowing for asynchronous learning (Rappolt-Schlichtmann).

Key Differences

Element	APA Style	MLA Style
Author	• First names are abbreviated to initials • All author names are reversed (surname first, then initials) • Up to 20 authors included in the reference before names are omitted • Ampersand (&) before the final author name rather than "and" in the reference	• First names are spelled out • If two authors, first author name is reversed, followed by "and" and the second author name not reversed • If three or more authors, first author name is reversed and other author names are abbreviated to "et al."
Date	• Always appears in the in-text citations • If unknown, use "n.d." (which stands for "no date")	• Not typically included in the in-text citations • If unknown, omit from the reference
Title	• Capitalized in sentence case (most words lowercase) • Not in quotation marks	• Capitalized in Title Case (Most Words Capitalized) • In quotation marks
Source	• For works part of a greater whole such as articles and edited book chapters, contains information about the "whole" plus a DOI or URL • For works that stand alone such as books and webpages, contains information about the publisher or website plus a DOI or URL • Copy and paste DOIs and URLs into reference list without changes • No period after DOI or URL	• Presented in containers as needed (e.g., a journal article is contained in a journal) • Omit URL protocol ("http://" and "https://") for URLs other than DOIs • Period after DOI or URL
Order of elements	• Author, date, title, source	• Author, title, source, date
Label on references page	• References	• Works Cited
In-text citation	• Always includes author surname(s) and year of publication: (Surname, year) or Surname (year)	• Always includes author surname(s) • Does not include year of publication