

Citation Style Comparison Quick Reference

Side-by-Side Comparison

Element	APA	MLA	Chicago
Used For	Social sciences, psychology, education	Literature, humanities, arts	History, theology, arts
In-Text Format	(Author, Year)	(Author Page)	Footnotes ¹
Example	(Smith, 2023)	(Smith 45)	¹ Smith, Title, 45.
Date Emphasis	Yes - in citation	No - only in references	Optional
Page Numbers	Only for quotes	Always included	In footnote

Reference List Formats

Journal Article Example

APA:
Smith, J. (2023). Article title. *Journal Name*, 15(3), 45-67. <https://doi.org/xxx>

MLA:
Smith, John. "Article Title." *Journal Name*, vol. 15, no. 3, 2023, pp. 45-67.

Chicago:
Smith, John. "Article Title." *Journal Name* 15, no. 3 (2023): 45-67.

Book Example

APA:
Smith, J. (2023). *Book title*. Publisher Name.

MLA:
Smith, John. *Book Title*. Publisher Name, 2023.

Chicago:
Smith, John. *Book Title*. City: Publisher Name, 2023.

Website Example

APA:
Smith, J. (2023, May 15). Page title. *Site Name*. <https://www.example.com>

MLA:
Smith, John. "Page Title." *Site Name*, 15 May 2023, www.example.com.

Chicago:
Smith, John. "Page Title." *Site Name*. May 15, 2023. <https://www.example.com>.

Quick Differences

Title Capitalization

- **APA:** Sentence case (Only first word capitalized)
- **MLA:** Title Case (All Major Words Capitalized)
- **Chicago:** Title Case (All Major Words Capitalized)

Author Names

- **APA:** Last name, First initial. (Smith, J.)
- **MLA:** Last name, First name. (Smith, John)
- **Chicago:** Last name, First name. (Smith, John)

List Name

- **APA:** References
- **MLA:** Works Cited
- **Chicago:** Bibliography (or References)

Alphabetization

- **All styles:** Alphabetize by author's last name
 - **All styles:** Use hanging indent (second line indented)
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Special Cases

No Author

- **APA:** Start with title, use (Title, Year)
- **MLA:** Start with title, use ("Title")
- **Chicago:** Start with title in footnote

No Date

- **APA:** (Author, n.d.)
- **MLA:** Omit date from citation
- **Chicago:** Use "n.d." in footnote

Multiple Authors

- **APA:** & between authors (Smith & Jones, 2023)
 - **MLA:** "and" between authors (Smith and Jones)
 - **Chicago:** "and" in footnotes
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Engineering & Tech Styles

IEEE Format

- **In-text:** Numbered [1], [2]
- **Use for:** Engineering, computer science, electronics
- **References:** [1] J. Smith, "Article title," *Journal*, vol. 5, pp. 10-20, 2023.

ASA Format

- **In-text:** (Smith 2023) - similar to APA
- **Use for:** Sociology papers
- **References:** Smith, John. 2023. "Article Title." *Journal* 15:45-67.

Need detailed examples? Visit our complete citation style guides for templates, formatting rules, and more examples.

