How to Format Graphs, Charts & Figures in MLA

NOTE: This is a basic guide to formatting charts, graphs, and figures in MLA. You should **always** follow your professor's instructions about layout, style and citations and consult this guide as a reference.

How to Insert a Graph or Chart on Your Computer

- Click on the insert tab at the top of Microsoft Word.
- Choose the preferred graph for the data.
- Insert data and format graph.

MLA Graphs, Charts, & Figures

Titling & Labeling

All visuals/illustrations that are not tables or musical score examples are labeled figure or fig. The visual/illustration is labeled with an Arabic numeral (e.g. 1, 2) that corresponds to the figure.

Below the figure, provide a label name and its corresponding Arabic numeral (no bold or italics), followed by a period (e.g. Fig. 1.). Figure and Fig. are capitalized in the label of the figure. Include a title and/or caption as well as relevant source information in note form. If you provide source information with your illustrations, you do not need to provide this information on the Works Cited page.

Text

The text in a figure should be consistent with the font in the rest of your paper. The font size should be between eight and fourteen point.

Alignment

MLA does not require a specific alignment for figures. All figures must be placed near the text that references them and referred to as "figure." Do not capitalize "figure" in the text.

NOTE: These rules apply to figures ONLY. Tables have rules for alignment. See below.
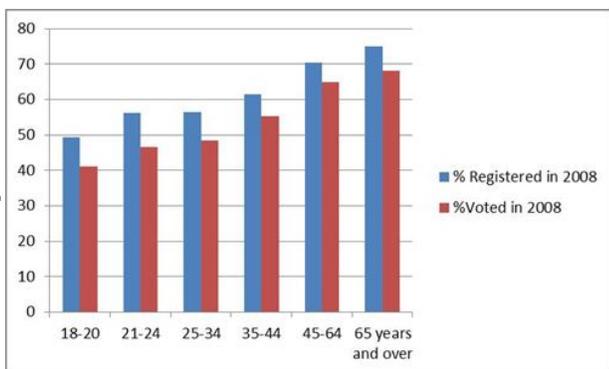
For example:

Figure 3. Number of Registered Voters for the US Presidential Election in 2008 by age. Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2011 Statistical Abstract. Table 416. "Voting-Age Population--Reported Registration and Voting by Selected Characteristics: 1996 to 2008."¶

MLA Tables

Titling & Labeling

All visuals/illustrations that are not tables or musical score examples are labeled figure or fig. The visual/illustration is labeled with an Arabic numeral (e.g. 1, 2) that corresponds to the figure.

Above the table, provide a label name and its corresponding Arabic numeral (no bold or italics), followed by a period (e.g. Fig. 1.). Table is capitalized in the label of the figure. Include a title and/or caption on the line below the label.

Relevant source information is included in note form below the table, using the format "Source: ". If you provide source information with your illustrations, you do not need to provide this information on the Works Cited page.

Text

The text in a figure should be consistent with the font in the rest of your paper. The font size should be between eight and fourteen point.

Alignment

MLA requires tables to be aligned to the left margin. All tables must be placed near the text that references them and referred to as "table." Do not capitalize "table" in the text.

For example:

Tables, like everything else in MLA *Handbook* style, are double-spaced.

Table 1

Doctorate Degrees Conferred in Selected Fields: United States 1980-2000

Field	1980	2000	% Change	% Male
Biological Sciences	3,636	4,867	33.9	44.7
Computer Science & Engineering*	2,747	6,167	55.5	84.4
Education	7,314	6,830	-6.6	35.4
Language & Literature*	2,049	2,543	24.1	41.2
Mathematics & Natural Science	3,852	5,124	33.0	74.6

Source: Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2002*
(Washington: GPO, 2003) table 280.
*English language, literature, and modern languages.
*Computer science and all engineering disciplines.

REMEMBER:

This page is for a quick reference that includes the basics of MLA formatting for charts, graphs, and images. For more detailed information see *The MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* (available in the LINK). Always follow your professor's instructions.