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:
**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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>1980</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>% Change</th>
<th>% Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Biological Sciences</td>
<td>3,636</td>
<td>4,867</td>
<td>33.9</td>
<td>44.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Science &amp; Engineering*</td>
<td>2,747</td>
<td>6,167</td>
<td>55.5</td>
<td>84.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>7,314</td>
<td>8,830</td>
<td>-6.6</td>
<td>35.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language &amp; Literature*</td>
<td>2,049</td>
<td>2,543</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>41.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics &amp; Natural Science</td>
<td>3,852</td>
<td>5,124</td>
<td>33.0</td>
<td>74.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*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.