

Introduction

This manual is a handy, quick, yet comprehensive student guide to writing. It provides guidelines on formatting and documentation for essays and research papers as well as basic punctuation and usage rules for common errors. As a student in the Tolleson Union High School District, you are expected to refer to this manual in class and/or at home when writing for any subject.

The state of Arizona has adopted the Six Trait Writing Model. This model delineates the writing characteristics that students will be expected to master in class and in order to pass the AIMS test. Following this introduction, you will find an overview of the Six Traits and of the Five Paragraph Essay Format.

In addition to the Six Trait Writing Model and the Five Paragraph Essay Format, the Tolleson Union High School District has adopted the Modern Language Association (MLA) format for written work. This reference manual provides guidelines to be used when writing essays, reports, and/or research papers that utilize resources (such as other people, books, magazines, newspapers, Internet, etc.). There are several different styles of documentation (APA/American Psychological Association, CBE/Council of Biology, and The Chicago Manual of Style); however, while attending school in the Tolleson District, MLA is the standard. If you continue on to college, you should always ask your professor which style he/she prefers. Your teacher/professor has the final say, and you should always follow his/her guidelines.

Academic work requires documentation for several reasons:

1. Documenting sources allows readers to locate the publication information on source material. This is of value to researchers who may want to locate your sources for their own research. Teachers use this information to check on the accuracy of your work.
2. The proper use of documentation shows the credibility of the writer.
3. Most importantly for a student, the use of MLA documentation protects you from accusations of plagiarism—the purposeful or accidental use of source material by other writers without giving appropriate credit.

Please note that all documentation styles change over time. The material provided here was the most accurate available at the time of preparation and was taken from the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* (7th edition) and The OWL at Purdue University. As a student, you are responsible for continually checking the timeliness of your resources. While in high school, your teacher will keep you updated; in college, check on line or at the bookstore for newer editions of the handbook.

Remember, this reference manual is a guide. No one expects you to memorize the material provided; teachers do, however, expect you to check this book frequently and follow these guidelines closely when writing for class.