

## College of Visual Arts MLA Style Guide

This guide is the standard for official college communications and correspondence. It corresponds to the Modern Language Association (MLA) style.

### Abbreviations

- In the text, generally use full words rather than abbreviations, even for our city name. One exception is to use the state abbreviation.
- e.g. Use Saint Paul, MN instead of St. Paul, MN

### Academic departments and offices

- Lowercase, unless you are using the department or office's proper name.
- e.g. fine arts department, admissions office, English department  
but . . .  
Uppercase when you are referring to the official, formal name
- e.g. CVA Registrar's office, the College of Visual Arts Office of Admissions

### Alumni

- alumni: plural, gender neutral  
alumnus: masculine singular  
alumna: feminine singular  
alumnae: feminine plural
- e.g. He is an alumnus. She is an alumna. Her sisters are alumnae. They are all alumni.
- CVA alumni should be listed with their name, a space, ', and a 2 digit class year
- e.g. Frank Munoz '87

### Artwork

- Names of works of art are treated the same as a book, so should be in italics.
- e.g. Jasper Johns, *Flag Piece No. 4*, 1969, mixed media, 32 x 48".  
Mary Franks, untitled, 1986, photograph, 8 x 10".  
The *Mona Lisa* is in the Louvre.

### Buildings

- Capitalize the full official names of buildings
- e.g. One strength is that the College of Visual Arts Library has a wonderful collection.  
The gallery is located in the Western building.

### College

- Capitalize the official title of the college
- e.g. The citations acknowledged the College of Visual Arts.  
Do not capitalize the word "college" when it modifies something else.
- e.g. The college campus is made up of five buildings.  
Do not capitalize "college" when it is used as a general noun, without the full title.
- e.g. The college has a research library.

### Commas

- Use commas to separate items in a series with a comma after each item except the last.
- e.g. Apples, oranges, and pears are out of season.

**Dash**

- Calendar entries use an en dash (-) between dates and numbers to show continuation.
- e.g. July 1-4  
For times, however, use “to” instead of a dash in text.
- e.g. 7 to 9 p.m.  
Use an em dash (—) in indicate a sudden break in the sentence for an interjection.
- e.g. The CVA Gallery — located in the Western building — will host the event.

**Dates and times**

- Dates**  
Use numerals, and not letters, when writing dates
- e.g. July 25 not July 25th
- In text, use “through” when dates run into the following month.
- e.g. The show will be up June 8 through August 3.
- Times**  
Always use lowercase letters with periods to denote morning or afternoon, with a space between the numeral and letter. (a.m. and p.m.)
- e.g. 11 a.m. – 3 p.m. (en dash)  
7 – 9 p.m.
- Include a colon and minutes with lowercase a.m. or p.m.
- e.g. 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m., 9:30 – 10:45 p.m.,  
In running text, use “to” instead of the dash.
- e.g. 9:30 to 10:45 p.m.
- Refer to time periods in upper case with no punctuation.
- e.g. AD 765 (or 765 CE, for common era)  
19 BC (or 19 BCE, for before the common era)

**Degrees**

- Spell out Bachelor of Fine Arts only when referring to our program in the initial reference. Subsequent references use capitalized abbreviations with no periods.
- e.g. The Bachelor of Fine Arts curriculum at CVA offers various programs.  
John Smith, BFA  
Jane Doe, MFA  
Sally Jones, PhD

**Department names**

- Capitalize official department names and office names in running text. References using shortened or unofficial names should be lowercase.
- e.g. Faculty members from the fine arts department are working on the project.  
At CVA, the Department of Visual Communications publishes a newsletter.

**e-mail**

This reference is lowercase and includes a hyphen.

**Exhibitions**

Use the word “exhibition” to describe large-scale public showings of art objects, not exhibit. The word “exhibit” has several meanings and can refer to individual items on exhibit. It also can be used as a verb: The artist exhibited widely.

**Font, official**

Times (or Times New Roman) 10 pt

**Hyphen**

Use a hyphen when a noun is modified by a preceding adverb and adjective, but not when the modifiers follow the noun.

e.g. She was a part-time student. Bob went to school full time.

**Internet**

Internet is capitalized, but intranet is not.

**Invitations**

Invitations should answer: who, what, where, when, why

They should include an “rsvp by” date and contact info (phone number and email.)

**Magazines / Newspapers**

Magazines and newspapers are always capitalized

e.g. *The New York Times*, *Star Tribune*, the St. Paul *Pioneer Press*

If the article is included in the name, capitalize it, too

e.g. *The New York Times*

unless several newspapers are named

e.g. the *Wall Street Journal*, the *Chicago Sun-Times* and the *New York Times*

Capitalize the word “magazine” only if it is part of the formal title

e.g. *Harper’s Magazine* but *The New Yorker* magazine

**Mailings**

All mailings must include CVA’s address, and the URL for the web site:

College of Visual Arts

344 Summit Avenue

Saint Paul, MN 55102

www.cva.edu

**Numbers**

Do not begin a sentence with a number.

e.g. One hundred twenty-one students registered (not “121 students registered.”)

Spell out numbers represented by one or two words.

e.g. Twenty-one days off is better than two days.

Use numerals for numbers that would be represented with more than two words.

e.g. We were happy to see that 121 students registered today.

**Phone numbers**

Use periods between area codes and the other numbers.

e.g. 651.224.3416

**Quotation Marks and Punctuation**

Periods and commas always go inside the quotation marks.

Question marks and exclamation marks go inside the quotation marks if part of the quote; otherwise they go outside as part of the entire sentence.

e.g. Oscar Wilde said that “We might be in the gutter, but we’re looking at the stars!” (36).

Did he attack “taxation without representation”?

**Reply cards**

Cards should include a form for the important contact information:

Name  
Address  
City, State, Zip  
Phone  
Email

**Titles of works**

Use *italics* for

Works of art  
Published books, magazines, newsletters, brochures, pamphlets and journals  
Published dissertations and theses  
Newspapers  
Collections of poems, plays or short stories  
Plays  
Operas and long musical compositions  
Albums or compact discs

Use “quotation marks” around the titles of:

Art exhibitions  
Articles in periodicals or newspapers  
Chapters of books  
Television and radio programs  
Songs and short musical compositions  
Conferences and symposia

**Titles of positions**

Capitalize titles only when they immediately precede the individual’s name or when they are specially named positions or honorary titles.

e.g. President George Washington did not live in the White House.  
The president, George Washington, took the oath of office on a warm day.  
Bob Smith is the Davidson Professor of Painting.  
Susan Johns was the Artist-in-Residence this summer.

**Web site**

The term “web site” consists of two words, like web page

e.g. CVA’s web site, [www.cva.edu](http://www.cva.edu), should appear on all external materials.