

Research Report

MLA Formatting and Style Guide

MLA (Modern Language Association) style is most commonly used to write papers and cite sources within the liberal arts and humanities. This style will be used almost exclusively in high school and college courses.

YOU MUST FOLLOW THESE GUIDELINES FOR YOUR PAPER TO BE ACCEPTED!

General Guidelines

MLA style specifies guidelines for formatting manuscripts and using the English language in writing. MLA style also provides writers with a system for referencing their sources through parenthetical citation in their essays and Works Cited pages.

Writers who properly use MLA also build their credibility by demonstrating accountability to their source material. Most importantly, the use of MLA style can protect writers from accusations of plagiarism, which is the purposeful or accidental uncredited use of source material by other writers.

Note - All research reports may be submitted to *TURNITIN.COM* to verify the use of original material. All high schools in the Edmonds School District use this source to test for originality and prevent plagiarism.

- Type your paper on a computer and print it out on standard, white 8.5 x 11-inch paper.
- Double-space the text of your paper, and use a legible font - Times New Roman, Courier, Tahoma, Garamond, or Book Antiqua. Font must be 12 pt.
- Leave only one space after periods or other punctuation marks.
- Use standard *Word* margins for your document. Indent the first line of a paragraph one half-inch (five spaces or press tab once) from the left margin.
- Create a header that numbers all pages consecutively in the upper right-hand corner, one-half inch from the top and flush with the right margin.
- Use either italics or underlining throughout your essay for the titles of longer works and, only when absolutely necessary, providing emphasis.

Formatting the First Page of Your Paper

- Do not make a title page for your paper.
- In the upper left-hand corner of the first page, list your full name, your period, the course, and the date. Again, be sure to use double-spaced text.
- Create a header for all other pages with the page number in the top right corner.

- Double space again and center the title. Don't underline your title or put it in quotation marks; write the title in Title Case, not in all capital letters. Title should be no larger than 22 pt.
- Use quotation marks and underlining or italics when referring to other works in your title, just as you would in your text, e.g.,
 - *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* as Morality Play
 - Human Weariness in "After Apple Picking"
- Double space between the title and the first line of the text.

Here is a sample first page of an essay in MLA style:

Teddy Roosevelt

5th Period

Social Studies

September 24, 2007

The Immigration Experience

They are our grandparents, our relatives, our friends. They are the immigrants. They came from all over the world for many reasons, such as, religious persecution and racial tension, but the largest reason for coming to America was for freedom. They wanted the freedom to live without fear, to own property, to take part in the government and most importantly, the freedom to be treated like a human being (Harvey 13).

Coming over was extremely difficult. For some, there were good, seaworthy boats, but most boats were overcrowded, dirty, and disgusting. For Jews, the passage was extremely

In-Text Citations: The Basics

In MLA style, referring to the works of others in your text is done by using what's known as parenthetical citation. Immediately following a quotation from a source or a paraphrase of a source's ideas, you place the author's name followed by a space and the relevant page number(s).

Human beings have been described as "symbol-using animals"

(Burke 3).

When a source has no known author, use a shortened title of the work instead of an author name. Place the title in quotation marks if it's a short work, or italicize or underline it if it's a longer work.

Your in-text citation will correspond with an entry in your Works Cited page, which, for the Burke citation above, will look something like this:

Burke, Kenneth. *Language as Symbolic Action: Essays on Life, Literature, and Method*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1966.

We'll learn how to make a Works Cited page in a bit, but right now it's important to know that parenthetical citations and Works Cited pages allow readers to know which sources you consulted in writing your essay, so that they can either verify your interpretation of the sources or use them in their own scholarly work.

Multiple Citations

To cite multiple sources in the same parenthetical reference, separate the citations by a semi-colon:

...as has been discussed elsewhere (Burke 3; Dewey 21).

When Citation Is Not Needed

Common sense and ethics should determine your need for documenting sources. You do not need to give sources for familiar proverbs, well-known quotations or common knowledge.

Quotations

When you directly quote the works of others in your paper, you will format quotations differently depending on their length. Below are some basic guidelines for putting quotations into your paper.

Short Quotations

To indicate short quotations (fewer than four typed lines of prose or three lines of verse) in your text, enclose the quotation within double quotation marks. Provide the author and specific page citation in the text, and include a complete reference on the Works Cited page. Punctuation marks such as periods, commas, and semicolons should appear after the parenthetical citation. Question marks and exclamation points should appear within the quotation marks if they are a part of the quoted passage but after the parenthetical citation if they are a part of your text. For example:

According to some, dreams express "profound aspects of personality" (Foulkes 184), though others disagree.

According to Foulkes's study, dreams may express "profound aspects of personality" (184).

Is it possible that dreams may express "profound aspects of personality" (Foulkes 184)?

Mark breaks in short quotations of verse with a slash, /, at the end of each line of verse:

Cullen concludes, "Of all the things that happened there/ That's all I remember" (11-12).

Long Quotations

Place quotations longer than four typed lines in a free-standing block of text, and omit quotation marks. Start the quotation on a new line, with the entire quote indented five spaces or one tab from the left margin; maintain double-spacing. Only indent the first line of the quotation by a half inch if you are citing multiple paragraphs. Your parenthetical citation should come **after** the closing punctuation mark. When quoting verse, maintain original line breaks. (You should maintain double-spacing throughout your essay.) For example:

Nelly Dean treats Heathcliff poorly and dehumanizes him throughout her narration:

They entirely refused to have it in bed with them, or even in their room, and I had no more sense, so, I put it on the landing of the stairs, hoping it would be gone on the morrow. By chance, or else attracted by hearing his voice, it crept to Mr. Earnshaw's door, and there he found it on quitting his chamber. Inquiries were made as to how it got there; I was obliged to confess, and in recompense for my cowardice and inhumanity was sent out of the house. (Bronte 78)

Adding Or Omitting Words In Quotations

If you add a word or words in a quotation, you should put brackets around the words to indicate that they are not part of the original text.

Jan Harold Brunvand, in an essay on urban legends, states: "some individuals [who retell urban legends] make a point of learning every rumor or tale" (78).

If you omit a word or words from a quotation, you should indicate the deleted word or word by using ellipsis marks, which are three periods (...) preceded and followed by a space. For example:

In an essay on urban legends, Jan Harold Brunvand notes that "some individuals make a point of learning every recent rumor or tale ... and in a short time a lively exchange of details occurs" (78).

Works Cited Page: Basic Format

According to MLA style, you must have a Works Cited page at the end of your research paper. All entries in the Works Cited page must correspond to the works cited in your main text.

Basic Rules

- Begin your Works Cited page on a separate page at the end of your research paper. It should have the same standard Word format as the rest of the research paper.
- Label the page Works Cited (do not underline the words Works Cited or put them in quotation marks) and center the words Works Cited at the top of the page. Use Times New Roman (or equivalent). Title should be no larger than 22 pt.
- Double space all citations, but do not skip spaces between entries.
- All entries must be in alphabetical order by the author's last name.
- List page numbers of sources efficiently, when needed. If you refer to a journal article that appeared on pages 225 through 250, list the page numbers on your Works Cited page as 225-250.
- The first line of each entry is flush to the margin; all consequent lines within the entry must be indented five spaces.

Capitalization and Punctuation

- Capitalize each word in the titles of articles, books, etc, but do not capitalize articles, short prepositions, or conjunctions unless one is the first word of the title or subtitle: *Gone with the Wind*, *The Art of War*, *There Is Nothing Left to Lose*
- Use italics or underlining for titles of larger works (books, magazines) and quotation marks for titles of shorter works (poems, articles)

Works Cited: Books

First or single author's name is written last name, first name. The basic form for a book citation is:

Last name, First name. *Title of Book*. Place of Publication:

Publisher, Year of Publication.

Book with One Author

Gleick, James. *Chaos: Making a New Science*. New York: Penguin Books, 1987.

Henley, Patricia. *The Hummingbird House*. Denver: MacMurray, 1999.

Book with More Than One Author

First author name is written last name first; subsequent author names are written first name, last name.

Gillespie, Paula, and Neal Lerner. *The Allyn and Bacon Guide to Peer Tutoring*. Boston: Allyn, 2000.

If there are more than three authors, you may list only the first author followed by the phrase et al. (the abbreviation for the Latin phrase "and others"; no period after "et") in place of the other authors' names, or you may list all the authors in the order in which their names appear on the title page.

Wysocki, Anne Frances, et al. *Writing New Media: Theory and Applications for Expanding the Teaching of Composition*. Logan, UT: Utah State UP, 2004.

or

Wysocki, Anne Frances, Johndan Johnson-Eilola, Cynthia L. Selfe, and Geoffrey Sirc. *Writing New Media: Theory and Applications for Expanding the Teaching of Composition*. Logan, UT: Utah State UP, 2004.

Two or More Books by the Same Author

After the first listing of the author's name, use three hyphens and a period instead of the author's name. List books alphabetically by title.

Palmer, William J. *Dickens and New Historicism*. New York: St. Martin's, 1997.

---. *The Films of the Eighties: A Social History*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 1993.

Book with No Author

List and alphabetize by the title of the book.

Encyclopedia of Indiana. New York: Somerset, 1993.

For parenthetical citations of sources with no author named, use a shortened version of the title instead of an author's name. Use quotation marks and underlining as appropriate. For example, parenthetical citations of the source above would appear as follows: (Encyclopedia 235).

Approaches. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1997.

A Multivolume Work

When citing only one volume of a multivolume work, include the volume number after the work's title, or after the work's editor or translator.

Quintilian. *Institutio Oratoria*. Trans. H. E. Butler. Vol. 2. Cambridge: Loeb-Harvard UP, 1980.

When citing more than one volume of a multivolume work, cite the total number of volumes in the work.

Quintilian. *Institutio Oratoria*. Trans. H. E. Butler. 4 vols. Cambridge: Loeb-Harvard UP, 1980.

When citing multivolume works in your text, always include the volume number followed by a colon, then the page number(s):

...as Quintilian wrote in *Institutio Oratoria* (1:14-17).

Works Cited: Periodicals

MLA style is slightly different for popular periodicals, like newspapers, and scholarly journals, as you'll learn below.

An Article in a Newspaper or Magazine

Basic format:

Author(s). "Title of Article." *Title of Periodical* Day Month
Year: pages.

When writing the date, list day before month; use a three-letter abbreviation of the month (e.g., Jan., Mar., Aug.). If there is more than one edition available for that date (as in an early and late edition of a newspaper), identify the edition following the date (e.g., 17 May 1987, late ed.).

Poniewozik, James. "TV Makes a Too-Close Call." *Time* 20 Nov.
2000: 70-71.

Trembacki, Paul. "Brees Hopes to Win Heisman for Team." *Purdue
Exponent* 5 Dec. 2000: 20.

An Article in a Scholarly Journal

Author(s). "Title of Article." *Title of Journal* Volume.Issue
(Year): pages.

Actual example:

Bagchi, Alaknanda. "Conflicting Nationalisms: The voice of the Subaltern in Mahasweta Devi's Bashai Tudu." *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* 15.1 (1996): 41-50.

Works Cited: Electronic Sources

Some Tips on Handling Electronic Sources

It is always a good idea to maintain personal copies of electronic information, when possible. It is good practice to print or save Web pages or, better, using a program like Adobe Acrobat, to keep your own copies for future reference. Most Web browsers will include URL/electronic address information when you print, which makes later reference easy. Also learn to use the Bookmark function in your Web browser.

Basic Style for Citations of Electronic Sources

Here are some common features you should try and find before citing electronic sources in MLA style. Always include as much information as is available/applicable:

- Author and/or editor names
- Name of the database, or title of project, book, article
- Any version numbers available
- Date of version, revision, or posting
- Publisher information
- Date you accessed the material
- Electronic address, printed between carets (<, >).

Web Sources

Web sites (in MLA style, the "W" in Web is capitalized, and "Web site" or "Web sites" are written as two words) and Web pages are arguably the most commonly cited form of electronic resource today. Below are a variety of Web sites and pages you might need to cite.

An Entire Web Site

Basic format:

Name of Site. Date of Posting/Revision. Name of institution/organization affiliated with the site (sometimes found in copyright statements). Date you accessed the site <electronic address>.

It is necessary to list your date of access because web postings are often updated, and information available on one date may no longer be available later. Be sure to include the complete address for the site. Here are some examples:

The Purdue OWL Family of Sites. 26 Aug. 2005. The Writing Lab and OWL at Purdue and Purdue University. 23 April 2006 <<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>>.

Felluga, Dino. *Guide to Literary and Critical Theory*. 28 Nov. 2003. Purdue University. 10 May 2006 <<http://www.cla.purdue.edu/english/theory/>>.

Treat entire Weblogs or "blogs" just as you would a Web site. For single-author blogs, include the author name (or screen name or alias, as a last resort); blogs with many authors, or an anonymous author, should be listed by the title of the blog itself:

Design Observer. 25 Apr. 2006. 10 May 2006. <<http://www.designobserver.com/>>.

Ratliff, Clancy. *CultureCat: Rhetoric and Feminism*. 7 May 2006.

11 May 2006. <<http://culturecat.net>>.

Long URLs

URLs that won't fit on one line of your Works Cited list should be broken at slashes, when possible.

Some Web sites have unusually long URLs that would be virtually impossible to retype; others use frames, so the URL appears the same for each page. To address this problem, either refer to a site's search URL, or provide the path to the resource from an entry page with an easier URL. Begin the path with the word Path followed by a colon, followed by the name of each link, separated by a semicolon. For example, the Amazon.com URL for customer privacy and security information is <<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/tg/browse/-/551434/104-0801289-6225502>>, so we'd need to simplify the citation:

Amazon.com. "Privacy and Security." 22 May 2006

<<http://www.amazon.com/>>. Path: Help; Privacy & Security.

A Page on a Web Site

For an individual page on a Web site, list the author or alias if known, followed by the information covered above for entire Web sites. Make sure the URL points to the exact page you are referring to, or the entry or home page for a collection of pages you're referring to:

"Caret." *Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia*. 28 April 2006. 10 May 2006 <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caret>>.

"How to Make Vegetarian Chili." *eHow.com*. 10 May 2006

<<http://www.ehow.com/>

[how_10727_make-vegetarian-chili.html](http://www.ehow.com/how_10727_make-vegetarian-chili.html)>.

Stolley, Karl. "MLA Formatting and Style Guide." *The OWL at*

Purdue. 10 May 2006. Purdue University Writing Lab. 12 May

2006 <<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/557/01/>>.

An Image, Including a Painting, Sculpture, or Photograph

For works housed outside of an online home, include the artist's name, the year the work was created, and the institution (e.g., a gallery or museum) that houses it (if applicable), followed by the city where it is located. Include the complete information for the site where you found the image, including the date of access. In this first example, the image was found on the Web site belonging to the work's home museum:

Goya, Francisco. *The Family of Charles IV*. 1800. Museo del Prado, Madrid. 22 May 2006
 <<http://museoprado.mcu.es/i64a.html>>.

In this next example, the owner of the online site for the image is different than the image's home museum:

Klee, Paul. *Twittering Machine*. 1922. Museum of Modern Art, New York. *The Artchive*. "Klee: Twittering Machine." 22 May 2006
 <http://artchive.com/artchive/K/klee/twittering_machine.jpg.html>.

For other images, cite as you would any other Web page, but make sure you're crediting the original creator of the image. Here's an example from Webshots.com, an online photo-sharing site ("brandychloe" is a username):

brandychloe. *Great Horned Owl Family*. 22 May 2006
 <http://image46.webshots.com/47/7/17/41/347171741bgVWdN_fs.jpg>.

The above example links directly to the image; but we could also provide the user's profile URL, and give the path for reaching the image, e.g.

brandychloe. *Great Horned Owl Family*. 22 May 2006
 <<http://community.webshots.com/user/brandychloe>>. Path:
 Albums; birds; great horned owl family.

Doing so helps others verify information about the images creator, where as linking directly to an image file, like a JPEG (.jpg) may make verification difficult or impossible.

An Article in a Web Magazine

Author(s). "Title of Article." *Title of Online Publication*. Date of Publication. Date of Access <electronic address>.

For example:

Bernstein, Mark. "10 Tips on Writing The Living Web." *A List Apart: For People Who Make Websites*. No. 149 (16 Aug. 2002).
4 May 2006 <<http://alistapart.com/articles/writeliving>>.

An Article or Publication in Print and Electronic Form

If you're citing an article or a publication that was originally issued in print form but that you retrieved from an online database that your library subscribes to, you should provide enough information so that the reader can locate the article either in its original print form or retrieve it from the online database (if they have access).

Provide the following information in your citation:

- Author's name (if not available, use the article title as the first part of the citation)
- Article Title
- Periodical Name
- Publication Date
- Page Number/Range
- Database Name
- Service Name
- Name of the library where or through which the service was accessed
- Name of the town/city where service was accessed
- Date of Access
- URL of the service (but not the whole URL for the article, since those are usually very long and won't be easily re-used by someone trying to retrieve the information)

The generic citation form would look like this:

Author. "Title of Article." *Periodical Name* Volume Number (if necessary) Publication Date: page number-page number. Database name. Service name. Library Name, City, State. Date of access <electronic address of the database>.

Here's an example:

Smith, Martin. "World Domination for Dummies." *Journal of Despotry* Feb. 2000: 66-72. Expanded Academic ASAP. Gale Group Databases. Purdue University Libraries, West Lafayette, IN. 19 February 2003 <<http://www.infotracc.galegroup.com>>.

Works Cited: Other Non-Print Sources

Below you will find MLA style guidance for other non-print sources.

A Personal Interview

Listed by the name of the person you have interviewed.

Purdue, Pete. Personal Interview. 1 Dec. 2000.

A Lecture or Speech

Include speaker name, title of the speech (if any) in quotes, details about the meeting or event where the speech was given, including its location and date of delivery. In lieu of a title, label the speech according to its type, e.g., Guest Lecture, Keynote Address, State of the Union Address.

Stein, Bob. Keynote Address. Computers and Writing Conference. Union Club Hotel, Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN. 23 May 2003.

Advertisement

List the company, business, or organization; the publication, broadcast network, or Web address where the advertisement appeared:

Lufthansa. Advertisement. *Time* 20 Nov. 2000: 151.

Staples. Advertisement. CBS. 3 Dec. 2000.

A Painting, Sculpture, or Photograph

Include the artist's name, the year the work was created, and the institution (e.g., a gallery or museum) that houses it, followed by the city where it is located.

Goya, Francisco. *The Family of Charles IV*. 1800. Museo del Prado, Madrid.

If you're referring to a photographic reproduction, include the information as above, but also include the bibliographic information for the source in which the photograph appears, including a page or other reference number (plate, figure, etc.). For example:

Goya, Francisco. *The Family of Charles IV*. 1800. Museo del Prado, Madrid. *Gardener's Art Through the Ages*. 10th ed. By Richard G. Tansey and Fred S. Kleiner. Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace. 939.

Broadcast Television or Radio Program

Put the name of the episode in quotation marks, and the name of the series or single program underlined or in italics. Include the network, followed by the station, city, and date of broadcast.

"The Blessing Way." *The X-Files*. Fox. WXIA, Atlanta. 19 Jul. 1998.

Recorded Television Shows

Include information about original broadcast, plus medium of recording. When the title of the collection of recordings is different than the original series (e.g., the show *Friends* is in DVD release under the title *Friends: The Complete Sixth Season*), list the title that would help researchers locate the recording.

"The One Where Chandler Can't Cry." *Friends: The Complete Sixth Season*. Writ. Andrew Reich and Ted Cohen. Dir. Kevin Bright. NBC. 10 Feb. 2000. DVD. Warner Brothers, 2004.

Sound Recordings

Sound recordings list album title, label and year of release (for re-releases, it's good to offer either the original recording date, or original release date, when known). You only need to indicate the medium if you are **not** referring to a compact disc (CD), e.g., Audiocassette or LP (for long-playing record). See section about online music below.

Entire Albums

List by name of group or artist (individual artists are listed last name first). Album title underlined or in italics, followed by label and year.

Foo Fighters. *In Your Honor*. RCA, 2005.

Waits, Tom. *Blue Valentine*. 1978. Elektra/Wea, 1990.

Individual Songs

Place the names of individual songs in quotation marks.

Nirvana. "Smells Like Teen Spirit." *Nevermind*. Geffen, 1991.

Spoken Word Albums

Treat spoken-word albums the same as musical albums.

Hedberg, Mitch. *Strategic Grill Locations*. Comedy Central, 2003.

Films and Movies

List films by their title, and include the name of the director, the film studio or distributor and its release year. If other information, like names of performers, is relevant to how the film is referred to in your paper, include that as well.

Movies in Theaters

The Usual Suspects. Dir. Bryan Singer. Perf. Kevin Spacey, Gabriel Byrne, Chazz Palminteri, Stephen Baldwin, and Benecio del Toro. Polygram, 1995.

If you refer to the film in terms of the role or contribution of a director, writer, or performer, begin the entry with that person's name, last name first, followed by role.

Lucas, George, dir. *Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope*. 1977.
Twentieth Century Fox, 1997.

Recorded Movies

Include format names; "Videocassette" for VHS or Betamax, DVD for Digital Video Disc. Also list original release year after director, performers, etc.

Ed Wood. Dir. Tim Burton. Perf. Johnny Depp, Martin Landau, Sarah Jessica Parker, Patricia Arquette. 1994. DVD.
Touchstone, 2004.

For more information on the MLA format, consult the Writers Inc student handbook in the language arts room. A sample essay and more examples of works-cited entries are available in the handbook.

This MLA Guide was adapted from The Owl At Purdue

Written by **Jennifer Liethen Kunka and Joe Barbato**; additional revision by **Dave Neyhart and Erin E. Karper**.

Last full revision by **Karl Stolley**.

Last edited by Karl Stolley on January 18th 2007 at 2:20PM