When you write a paper containing information drawn from published sources, you need to document or acknowledge the sources of the information you borrow. Documenting your sources is not just fair academic practice (failure to document is plagiarism, a very serious offense), but it also allows your readers to evaluate the originality of your work, the quality of any research you have done, and the relevance, currency, and reliability of the information you are using. Modern Language Association (MLA) style is used primarily in literary disciplines. This handout describes the main MLA documentation requirements, as well as several useful MLA stylistic guidelines for formatting your papers. To answer additional questions, please refer directly to the *MLA Handbook* or ask one of our staff at The Southeastern Writing Center, 210 D Vickers.

**Principles of MLA Editorial Style**

The following are a few of the basic formatting guidelines used in MLA documentation:

- 1-inch margins on the top, bottom, and both sides
- Header on every page with student’s last name and page number (Smith 1). The header is flush with the right margin.
- All text is double-spaced
- 11 or 12 point standard font (Times New Roman)
- The first line of all paragraphs is to be right indented ½-inch from the left margin
- Indent block quotes for prose and verse 1-inch from left margin
- Paper title: Capitalize all main words. Titles should not be in quotes, underlined, italicized, or in all capital letters.
- Titles in text:
  - **Italicize** titles of books, plays, poems published as books, periodicals (newspapers, magazines, and journals), Web sites, online databases, films, television broadcasts, and long musical compositions
  - **Quotation marks** are used with titles of works that are published within larger works (such as titles of articles, essays, short stories, short poems, chapters of books, pages in Web sites, individual episodes of television and radio programs, and short musical compositions).
- Numbers: Write out numbers that can be written in one or two words. Use numerals for words that cannot be written out in one or two words, as well as numbers that appear with abbreviations or symbols, in addresses, in dates, in decimals, and in page numbers.

*For more information of the principles and guidelines of MLA editorial style, please refer to chapters 3 and 4 of the *MLA Handbook*, 7th edition.*

**In-Text (Parenthetical) Documentation**

MLA style requires you to document your use of sources by placing the author’s last name and, for direct quotes or when citing specific passages, the page number at appropriate points in your text. This in-text citation method documents your work, briefly identifies the source for readers, and enables them to locate the source of information in the alphabetical list of Works Cited at the end of your paper. All in-text citations must refer to a corresponding entry in the Works Cited list.

Each of the following common uses of source materials requires documentation:

- direct quotations
- paraphrases and summaries
- information and ideas that are not common knowledge or are not available in a standard reference work
- any borrowed material that might appear to be your own if there were no citation
Formatting Guidelines for In-Text Parenthetical Citation

- Place citations within sentences and paragraphs so that it is clear which material has come from which source. Use pronouns and transitions to help you indicate whether several sentences contain material from the same source or from different sources (e.g., Holman and Holman define. . . . In addition, these authors offer examples. . . .).
- Within sentences, always place parenthetical citations after quotation marks (when they are used), but before periods. For example: Holman defines this problem as “an epidemic for the American way of life” (26).
- Incorporate prose quotations of no more than four lines into the text in quotation marks.
- For block quotations (quotations of more than four lines), place parenthetical citations one space following the final period of the quote. Block quotes are not enclosed in quotation marks. A colon generally introduces a long quote. For example:

> When the next generation, with its more modern ideas, became mayors and aldermen, this arrangement created some little dissatisfaction. On the first of the year they mailed her a tax notice. February came, and there was no reply. They wrote her a formal letter, asking her to call at the sheriff’s office at her convenience. A week later the mayor wrote her himself, offering to call or to send his car for her, and received in reply a note on paper of an archaic shape, in a thin, flowing calligraphy in faded ink, to the effect that she no longer went out at all. (Faulkner, “A Rose for Emily” 346)

- Incorporate verse quotations of no more than three lines into the text in quotation marks. Each line of the poem is separated by a slash (/) with a space on each side.
- Verse quotations of more than three lines should begin on a new line. Each line of the poem should be indented ten spaces (1 inch) and be double-spaced.
- Use abbreviations for common reference words (e.g., “bk.” for “book”), publishers’ names (e.g. Oxford UP for Oxford University Press), and famous literary and religious works (e.g., Gen. for Genesis). See chapter 6 of the MLA Handbook, 7th edition, for lists of common abbreviations.
- For the Word and Image Second Edition, the in-text parenthetical citation use (Southeastern pg. #) for information that is coming out of the introductory parts that does not have an author.

*For more information on in-text parenthetical citations, please refer to chapter 6 of the MLA Handbook, 7th edition.

Sample In-Text Parenthetical Citations

Author’s name given in quote or paraphrase
If you indicate the author’s name in the text, do not repeat it in your parenthetical citation.
Bird develops this argument (84-8).

Author’s name not given in quote or paraphrase
If the author’s name is not indicated in the text, include the author’s last name and the page number(s) in the parenthetical citation.
This point has already been argued (Tannen 178-9).

Two or three authors in reference
For sources with two or three authors, give their names in the same order as on the title page—not necessarily in alphabetical order.
(Howe and Trott 134).

Multiple but continuous page references
For citations of multiple, but continuous pages, separate the first page and the last page with a hyphen.
(Bird 84-8).

Discontinuous page reference
For citations of multiple, but discontinuous pages from a single source, separate the page references with a comma.
(Smith 12-14, 47).

Multi-volume work
For multi-volume works, cite the volume number and the page reference. Separate the volume number and page number(s) with a colon.
(Freedberg 1:98).
Four or more authors in reference
For sources listing multiple authors, list all of the authors’ names. For entries with more than three authors, it is permissible to substitute the abbreviation “et al.” for all but the first author.

(Holman et al. 204-5).

Classic and literary works
For citations of classic prose works, give the page number of the edition, add a semicolon, and then give other identifying information such as chapter or book number.

(Faulkner, Sanctuary 1-3; ch. 1).

Act, scene, and line number
When citing plays and poems, omit page numbers and use division (act, scene, canto, book, part) and line number. Separate the various numbers with a period.

(Hamlet 1.1.14-16).

Two authors with the same last name
For citations that include multiple sources, list the sources in alphabetical order and separate each with a semicolon.

(Bird 45; Bharati 142).

Act, scene, and line number
When citing plays and poems, omit page numbers and use division (act, scene, canto, book, part) and line number. Separate the various numbers with a period.

(Hamlet 1.1.14-16).

Two or more works cited
For citations that include multiple sources, list the sources in alphabetical order and separate each with a semicolon.

(Bird 45; Bharati 142).

Source using paragraph numbers
For sources with explicit paragraph numbers rather than page numbers, provide the paragraph number preceded by the abbreviation par. or pars. to take the place of traditional page numbers in the citation.

(Watson, par. 8).

Source with no page number(s) or other reference marker(s)
If a source does not have page numbers or any other kind of reference numbers, no number is given the parenthetical reference. Include in the text, rather than in the parenthetical reference, the name of the person(s) or title of the work that begins the corresponding entry in the works-cited list.

But Katie Trumpener has offered another view.
This point has already been argued (Trumpener).

Works Cited
A list of all sources cited comes at the end of your paper (following the last page of text or content notes, if used) on a new numbered page headed Works Cited. All in-text citations must be matched to a corresponding item in the Works Cited list. Likewise, all publications appearing in your Works Cited list must have been cited in the text.

Formatting Guidelines for Works Cited
- **Double-space** within and between all entries.
- Begin the first line of each entry at the left margin, but indent all remaining lines five spaces, or one-half inch. This format is called hanging indentation.
- Capitalize all major words (excluding articles, conjunctions, prepositions) of titles.
- Italicize all book titles; article titles appear in quotation marks.
- Abbreviate the publisher’s name (e.g., Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. → Knopf; Oxford University Publishers → Oxford UP).
List reference items alphabetically by the author’s surname, followed by first name and middle names as they appear in the published text.

Alphabetize sources without authors by the first main word of the title.

*For more information of formatting and citations on the Works Cited page, please refer chapter 5 of the MLA Handbook, 7th edition.

Works Cited for Books

One author

Two or three authors or editors

Four or more authors or editors

Book with no author

Corporate author

Multiple works by the same author


An edition

Citing a foreword, introduction, preface, or afterword

Work of more than one volume

Translation, book identified by title, author, or translator


A reader or anthology

Article or selection from a reader or anthology

Reference work from an encyclopedia or dictionary


Word and Image Second Edition


Works Cited for Articles and Periodicals

Article in a scholarly Journal

Article in a popular magazine

Article in a newspaper

Editorial
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<th><strong>Letter to the Editor</strong></th>
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**Works Cited for Electronic Publications and Other Non-print Sources**

For electronic sources, all of the source information may not be available. Try to include as much information as possible, so the reader will be able to locate the source. Each type of electronic citation will require different types and amounts of information. For online books, journals, magazines, and newspapers, the citation format will be similar to the format used for the printed version. You should include a URL as supplementary information only when the reader probably cannot locate the source without it or when your instructor requires it. Please refer to chapter 5 of the *MLA Handbook*, 7th edition, for additional information on electronic citations.

**E-Book**


**Scholarly article from an online database**


**Online popular magazine**


**Online newspaper**


**Nonperiodical from a Web site**

An entry for a nonperiodical publication on the Web usually contains most of the following components, in sequence:

1. Name of the author, compiler, director, editor, narrator, performer, or translator of the work.
2. Title of the work (italicized if the work is independent; in quotation marks if the work is part of a larger work)
3. Title of the overall Web site (italicized)
4. Version or edition used
5. Publisher or sponsor of the site; if not available use *N.p.*
6. Date of publication (day, month, and year, as available); if nothing is available use *n.d.*
7. Medium of publication (Web)

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**Jeffrey Wiemelt**

Professor Louth

English 445-01

7 May 2014

*A Workshop on MLA Style*

As indicated, the title page of an MLA paper displays at upper left your name, the name of your teacher, the course name and number, and the date. The title of your paper appears next, centered and in upper and lower case text with no additional formatting. Like each page, a page header with your last name and page number appears at upper right (½” from the top margin). Pages are numbered consecutively from title page to the last page of your Works Cited list (Gibaldi 132-4). The main text of your paper also begins on the title page in indented paragraph form.

All text should be double-spaced, unjustified, and in twelve point Times New Roman standard font. All text, excluding page headers, is formatted to use one inch margins all around. Paragraphs are right-indented one-half inch, and block quotes are indented one inch.

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