

# MLA (Modern Language Association) Documentation and Style



Based on the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 8<sup>th</sup> edition, 2016.  
Prepared by the Southeastern Writing Center.  
Last updated in Spring 2019.

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.
- 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 3-4 of the *MLA Handbook*, 8<sup>th</sup> 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. (“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*, 8<sup>th</sup> 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*, 8<sup>th</sup> 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).

### 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 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).

### Three 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 required to use the abbreviation "et al." for all but the first author.  
(Holman et al. 204-5).

### Multiple works by the same author

To distinguish between two or more sources by a single author, place a comma after the author's surname and a shortened version of the title.  
(Austen, *Emma* 55).  
(Austen, *Pride* 34).

### Two authors with the same last name

For two sources by authors with the same last name, include the author's first initial in the parenthetical citation.  
(T. Smith 19-23).  
(R. Smith 12-15).

### Source by a group, corporation, or agency

For sources where no individual authorship is indicated, but where a group, corporation, or agency can be assigned collective authorial credit, use that group, corporation, or agency as the author.  
(Center for Disease Control 12).

### No author indicated

For sources where no individual or collective authorship can be determined, use a shortened form of the source's title.  
("Eating Healthy" 2).  
("Justice," def. 2b).

### Religious Works

When quoting passages from the Bible, provide the book, chapter, and verse in the parenthetical reference. The titles of the books of the Bible are often abbreviated. For a list of acceptable abbreviations, refer to chapter 7.7.1 in the *MLA Handbook*, 7<sup>th</sup> edition.  
(*New Jerusalem Bible*, Ezek. 1.5-10)

### 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 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).

### Indirect sources

To cite a source indirectly (that is, you did not read the original itself), indicate both the original author and the source through which that author was accessed.  
(qtd. in Safire 4).

### 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*, 8<sup>th</sup> edition.

## Works Cited for Books

Notice these new changes for MLA 8:

- Commas are used instead of periods between Publisher, Publication Date, and Pagination.
- Medium (print/web) is no longer necessary.
- Containers are now a part of the MLA process, in light of technology. Periods should be used between Containers.
- DOIs should be used instead of URLs when available (electronic sources).
- Use the phrase, "Accessed" instead of listing the date or the abbreviation, "n.d."

### One author

Frye, Northrop. *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays*. Princeton UP, 1957.

### Citing a foreword, introduction, preface, or afterword

Tanner, Tony. Introduction. *Mansfield Park*. By Jane Austen. Penguin, 1966, pp. 7-36.

### Two authors or editors

Lifton, Robert Jay, and Greg Mitchell. *Who Owns Death: Capital Punishment, the American Conscience, and the End of Executions*. William Morrow, 2000.

### Work of more than one volume

Nell, S. J. *Andrea del Sarto*. Harvard UP, 1977. 2 vols.

### Three or more authors or editors

Hurt, Walter, et al., eds. *Teaching Shakespeare*. Princeton UP, 1977.

### Translation, book identified by title, author, or translator

Freire, Paulo. *Learning to Question: A Pedagogy of Liberation*. Trans. Tony Coates. Continuum, 1989.  
*Beowulf*. Swanton, Michael, trans. Barnes, 1978.

### Book with no author

*Illustrated Atlas of the World*. Rand, 1985.

### A reader or anthology

Turner, Josue, editor. *Textual Strategies*. Cornell UP, 1976.

### Corporate author

National Institute for Dispute Resolution. *Dispute Resolution Resource Directory*. Natl. Inst. for Dispute Res., 1984.

### Article or selection from a reader or anthology

Vale, Phyllis. "Images of Women in the Old Testament." *Religion and Sexism*. Edited by Rosemary Radford Ruether. Simon and Schuster, 1974, pp. 41-88.

### Multiple works by the same author

Borrof, Marie. *Language and the Past: Verbal Artistry in Frost, Stevens, and Moore*. U of Chicago P, 1979.  
---*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. Norton, 1967.

### Reference work from an encyclopedia or dictionary

Vans, John S., Jr. "Nuclear Weapons." *Encyclopedia Americana*. 1981 ed.  
"Justice." Entry 2b. *The Concise Oxford Dictionary*. 10th ed. 1999.

### An edition

Bondanella, Peter. *Italian Cinema: From Neorealism to the Present*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Continuum, 2001.

### ***Crosscurrents in Composition Custom Edition***

Author. "Title." Southeastern Louisiana University Department of English. *Crosscurrents in Composition*. Pearson, 2017, pp. 20-22.

### ***Crosscurrents in Composition Custom Edition when using two or more works from same anthology***

Author. "Title." Southeastern Louisiana University Department of English. pp. 30-45.

Refer to page 665 in LB for this specific type of citation

## **Works Cited for Articles and Periodicals**

### **Article in a scholarly journal**

Bharati, Agehananda. "Pilgrimage in the Indian Tradition." *History of Religions*, vol. 3, no. 4, 1982, pp. 135-67.

### **Article in a popular magazine**

Amelar, Sarah. "Restoration on 42<sup>nd</sup> Street." *Architecture*, Mar. 1998, pp. 146-50.

### **Article in a newspaper**

Crossette, Barbara. "India Lodges First Charges in Arms Scandal." *The New York Times*, 23 Jan. 1990, p. A4.

### **Editorial**

Gergen, David. "A Question of Values." Editorial. *US News and World Report*, 11 Feb. 2002, p. 72.

### **Letter to the Editor**

Safer, Morley. Letter. *New York Times*, 31 Oct. 1993, late ed., sec. 2, p. 4.

### **Book Review—titled or untitled**

Keen, Maurice. "The Knight of Knights." Rev. of *William Marshall: The Flower of Chivalry*, by Georges Duby. *New York Review of Books*, 1 Jan. 1986, pp. 39-40.

## ***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. Instead of a Web URL, try to locate a DOI instead. Notice that the medium (Web) is no longer used. Date of access is not required, but is recommended for efficient usage.

### **Nonperiodical article from a Web site**

It is a good idea to list your date of access because web postings are often updated, and information available on one date may no longer be available later. When using the URL, be sure to include the complete address for the site except for the https://.

Editor, author. *Name of Site*. Version number, Name of institution/organization affiliated with the site (sponsor or publisher), date of resource creation (if available), URL. Date of access (if applicable).

*The Purdue OWL Family of Sites*. The Writing Lab and OWL at Purdue and Purdue U, 2008, owl.english.purdue.edu/owl. Accessed 23 Apr. 2008.

Felluga, Dino. *Guide to Literary and Critical Theory*. Purdue U, 28 Nov. 2003, www.cla.purdue.edu/english/theory/. Accessed 10 May 2006.

### **E-Book**

Last name, First name. *Title of the Book*. Publisher. Year of publication. *Database*, website. Accessed DD Month abbreviated. Year.

Cohen, Daniel. *Our Modern Times: The New Nature of Capitalism in the Information Age*. MIT Press, 2013. *eBook Collection (EBSCOhost)*. <https://akin.css.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login>. =site. Accessed 11 Jan. 2016.

### **Scholarly article from an online database**

Cite articles from online databases (e.g. LexisNexis, ProQuest, JSTOR,) and provide the title of the database italicized before the DOI or URL.

Alonso, Alvaro, and Julio A. Camargo. "Toxicity of Nitrite to Three Species of Freshwater Invertebrates." *Environmental Toxicology*, vol. 21, no. 1, 3 Feb. 2006, pp. 90-94. *Wiley Online Library*, doi:10.1002/tox.20155.

Langhamer, Claire. "Love and Courtship in Mid-Twentieth-Century England." *Historical Journal*, vol. 50, no. 1, 2007, pp. 173-96. *ProQuest*, doi:10.1017/S0018246X06005966. Accessed 27 May 2009.

### **A Page on a Web Site**

List the author if known, followed by the information covered above for entire Web sites. If the publisher is the same as the website name, only list it once.

"Athlete's Foot - Topic Overview." *WebMD*, 25 Sept. 2014, www.webmd.com/skin-problems-and-treatments/tc/athletes-foot-topic-overview.

Lundman, Susan. "How to Make Vegetarian Chili." *eHow*, www.ehow.com/how\_10727\_make-vegetarian-chili.html. Accessed 6 July 2015.

### **Personal Interview**

Smith, Tom. Personal interview. 12 Aug. 2005.

### **Published Interviews (Print or Broadcast)**

List the interview by the full name of the interviewee. If the name of the interview is part of a larger work like a book, a television program, or a film series, place the title of the interview in quotation marks. Place the title of the larger work in italics. If the interview appears as an independent title, italicize it. For books, include the author or editor name after the book title.

Note: If the interview from which you quote does not feature a title, add the descriptor, *Interview by* (unformatted) after the interviewee's name and before the interviewer's name.

Gaitskill, Mary. Interview with Charles Bock. *Mississippi Review*, vol. 27, no. 3, 1999, pp. 129-50.

Amis, Kingsley. "Mimic and Moralist." *Interviews with Britain's Angry Young Men*, By Dale Salwak, Borgo P, 1984.

### **Film or Movie**

List films by their title. Include the name of the director; if relevant, list performer names after the director's name. State the film studio or distributor, and the release year.

*The Usual Suspects*. Directed by Bryan Singer, performances by Kevin Spacey, Gabriel Byrne, Chazz Palminteri, Stephen Baldwin, and Benecio del Toro, Polygram, 1995.

### **Online-only Published Interviews**

List the interview by the name of the interviewee. If it has a title, place it in quotation marks. Cite the remainder of the entry as you would other exclusive web content. Place the name of the website in italics, give the publisher name (or sponsor), the publication date, and the URL.

Zinkievich, Craig. Interview by Gareth Von Kallenbach. *Skewed & Reviewed*, 27 Apr. 2009, www.arcgames.com/en/games/star-trek-online/news/detail/1056940-skewed-%2526-reviewed-interviews-craig. Accessed 15 Mar. 2009.

### **An Article in a Web Magazine**

Provide the author name, article name in quotation marks, title of the web magazine in italics, publisher name, publication date, URL, and the date of access.

Bernstein, Mark. "10 Tips on Writing the Living Web." *A List Apart: For People Who Make Websites*, 16 Aug. 2002, alistapart.com/article/writeliving. Accessed 4 May 2009.

### **Broadcast TV or Radio Program**

Begin with the title of the episode in quotation marks. Provide the name of the series/program in italics. Also include the network name, call letters of the station followed by the date of broadcast and city.

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

### **Netflix, Hulu, Google Play**

"94 Meetings." *Parks and Recreation*, season 2, episode 21, NBC, 29 Apr. 2010. *Netflix*, www.netflix.com/watch/70152031?trackId=200256157&tctx=0%2C20%2C0974d361-27cd-44de-9c2a-2d9d868b9f64-12120962.

### **Work of Art (Painting, Sculpture, or Photograph)**

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

### **E-mail**

Neyhart, David. "Re: Online Tutoring." Received by Joe Barbato, 1 Dec. 2016.<sup>1</sup>

Wiemelt 1

Jeffrey Wiemelt  
Professor Louth  
English 445-01  
24 August 2017

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

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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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Works Cited

Gibaldi, Joseph. *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 4th ed. MLA, 1995.  
Westling, L., et. al., eds. *The World of Literature*.  
Prentice Hall, 1999, pp. 45-7.

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