

LAKEHEAD UNIVERSITY  
STUDENT SUCCESS CENTRE

Documenting and Formatting Using the  
MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers  
**7th Edition**

The following are basic guidelines and documentation examples in the MLA format, derived from the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. Use this handout as a referencing guide; however, for further details and examples not noted here, please consult the MLA Handbook.

Gibaldi, Joseph. *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. 7<sup>th</sup> ed. New York: Modern Language Association of America, 2009.

## **A. ESSAY FORMAT** (115 - 122)

Your instructors may have specific requirements for format. Please check with them first.

1. Typing: easily readable type face (eg. Times New Roman - 12 point font)-one side only.
2. Paper: white 8 ½ x 11
3. Margins: Leave one inch margins at the top, bottom and at both sides.  
  
Indent the first word of a paragraph 5 spaces from the left margin.  
  
Indent block quotations 10 spaces from the left margin.
4. Spacing: Double space EVERYTHING---from quotations to the works cited page. Space once after periods and other concluding punctuation.
5. Heading and Title:  
  
In MLA format, the paper does not require a title page; however, your professor may prefer one. The title page should state your professor's name, the course number, the title of the essay, your name and the date.  
  
The title of your paper does not need to be underlined or italicized, put in quotation marks, or have all the letters capitalized.
6. Page Numbers: Number all pages consecutively, half an inch from the top and flush against the right margin.

MLA suggests you "type your last name before the page number, as a precaution in case of misplaced papers" (117)

7. Titles of Works in paper:

Take the title of work from the title page, not from the cover. Do not reproduce unusual type, ie. all capital letters. In both titles and subtitles, capitalize all principle words. Separate subtitles with a colon and space.

*Modernism and Negritude*

*Bernard Berenson: The Making of a Connoisseur*

*Turner's Early Sketchbooks*

***Italicized Titles*** (88 – 89)

book  
play  
long poem published as a book  
pamphlet  
newspaper  
magazine  
journal  
film  
television program  
compact disc, audiocassette, record album  
web site  
online database  
dance  
opera  
long musical composition identified by name  
painting  
sculpture  
ship  
aircraft  
spacecraft

**"Titles in Quotation Marks"**

newspaper article  
magazine article  
encyclopedia article  
essay in a book  
short story  
poem  
chapter in a book  
episode of television program  
song  
lecture

**B. DOCUMENTING SOURCES** (123 - 211)

In MLA documentation style, you must document everything that you borrow--not only direct quotations and paraphrases but also borrowed information and ideas. Negligence to do this is plagiarizing or stealing, which is a serious academic offense (Code of Students Behaviour and Disciplinary Procedures).

The acknowledgment of sources in the MLA format requires a two-part system: first, through parenthetical documentation directly within the text of your essay; and second, through a works-cited list at the end of your paper.

Parenthetical documentation means that you will indicate within parentheses ( ) the author/source of the information you have cited in your essay and the page number(s) where you found the information. Place the parenthetical reference as near as possible to the material it documents, without interrupting the flow of your writing. Further details and publication information will be given in the works-cited list.

## **EXAMPLES (216 - 232)**

### **Author's Name In Text (216)**

Tannen has argued this point (178-85).

### **Author's Name In Reference (217)**

This point has already been argued (Tannen 178-85).

### **Citing an Entire Work (219 – 220)**

Both author and book is mentioned within the text of your essay.

Fukuyama's *Our Posthuman Future* includes many examples of this trend.

### **Citing Part of a Work (220 - 221)**

Litvak calls Winters's mumbling a "labor of disarticulation" (167).

### **Citing Volume and Page Numbers of a Multivolume Work (222 - 223)**

Between 1945 and 1972, the political-party system in the United States underwent profound changes (Schlesinger, vol.4).

If the author is not mentioned in the text, use (Wellek 5: 1-10).

If you are referencing an entire volume, use (Wellek, vol. 5).

### **Citing Two or More Works by the Same Author or Authors (225)**

" . . . put a comma after the author's last name and add the title of the work (if brief) or a shortened version and the relevant page reference: . . . . If you state the author's name in the text, give only the title and the page reference in parentheses: . . . . If you include both the author's name and the title in the text, indicate only the pertinent page number or numbers in parentheses: . . ." (225 ).

For Northrop Frye, one's death is not a unique experience, for "every moment we

have lived through we have also died out of into another order"(*Double Vision* 85).

Shakespeare's *King Lear* has been called a "comedy of the grotesque" (Frye, *Anatomy* 237).

## Citing indirect sources (226)

Avoid using; it is preferable to use the PRIMARY source. However, sometimes you may be required to quote indirectly

Samuel Johnson admitted that Edmund Burke was an "extraordinary man"

(qtd. in Boswell 2: 450).

↑                    ↑                    ↙  
quoted            volume            page

In the works cited page, Boswell will be cited.

Boswell, James. *The Life of Johnson*. Ed. George Birkbeck Hill and L. F.

Powell. 6 vols. Oxford: Clarendon, 1934-50. Print.

## C. USE OF QUOTATIONS (92 - 105)

Be selective. Avoid excessive use of quotations, and be very accurate; do not change in any way.

### Prose (93 - 94)

If what you are quoting is less than four lines, put it within quotations and incorporate it into the text.

For Charles Dickens the eighteenth century was both "the best of times" and "the worst of times" (35).

"He was obeyed," writes Joseph Conrad of the company manager in *Heart of Darkness*,

"yet he inspired neither love nor fear, nor even respect" (87).

For a parenthetical reference, place the sentence period after the reference.

". . . nor even respect" (87).

More than four lines, use a block quotation: indent ten spaces from the left margin, type it double-spaced and do not add quotation marks. A colon generally introduces the block.

At the conclusion of *Lord of the Flies*, Ralph and the other boys realize the horror of their actions:

The tears began to flow and sobs shook him. He gave himself up to them now for the first time on the island; great, shuddering spasms of grief that seemed to wrench his whole body. His voice rose under the black smoke before the burning wreckage of the island; and infected by that emotion, the other little boys began to shake and sob too. (186)

**Punctuation with quotations** (102 - 104)

Shelley held a bold view: "Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the World" (794).

Shelley thought poets "the unacknowledged legislators of the World" (794).

"Poets," according to Shelley, "are the unacknowledged legislators of the World" (794).

**Poetry** (95 - 96)

If a single line of verse, or part of a line is quoted, use quotation marks within your text. If it is two or three lines, use a slash ( / ) and a space on each side to separate the lines. Verse quotes of more than three lines should be block indented (95).  
(see Prose block quotation)

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

Elizabeth Bishop's "In the Waiting Room" is rich in evocative detail:

It was winter. It got dark  
early. The waiting room  
was full of grown-up people,  
arctics and overcoats,  
lamps and magazines. (6-10)

## Citing Common Literature (226 - 229)

"In a reference to a commonly studied prose work, such as a novel or play, that is available in several editions, it is helpful to provide more information than just a page number from the edition used; a chapter number, for example, would help readers to locate a quotation in any copy of a novel. In such a reference, give the page number first, add a semi-colon, and then give other identifying information, using appropriate abbreviations: "(130; ch.9)," "(271; bk.4, ch.2)." (226).

In *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, Mary Wollstonecraft recollects many "women who, not led by degrees to proper studies, and not permitted to choose for themselves, have indeed been overgrown children" (185; ch. 13, sec. 2).

Titles of books of the Bible are abbreviated: "1 Chron. 21.8, Rev. 21.3 . . ." (228).

In one of the most vivid prophetic visions in the Bible, Ezekiel saw "what seemed to be four living creatures," each with the faces of a man, a lion, an ox, and an eagle (*New Jerusalem Bible*, Ezek. 1.5-10). John of Patmos echoes this passage when describing his vision (Rev. 4.6-8).

"In citing commonly studied verse plays and poems, omit page numbers altogether and cite by division (act, scene, canto, book, part) and line, with periods separating the various numbers--for example, "*Iliad* 9.19" refers to book 9, line 19, of Homer's *Iliad*" (226 - 228).

One Shakespearean protagonist seems resolute at first when he asserts, "Haste me to know't, that I, with wings as swift / As meditation . . . / May sweep to my revenge" (*Ham.* 1.5.35-37), but he soon has second thoughts; another tragic figure, initially described as "too full o' th' milk of human kindness" (*Mac.* 1.5.17), quickly descends into horrific slaughter. (228)

In this example, 1.5 refers to Act 1, Scene 5.

**Ellipsis (97 - 101)**

Ellipsis points are spaced periods that indicate that you have omitted material. You are letting the reader of your paper know that your quotation does not completely reproduce the original.

"For an ellipsis within a sentence, use three periods with a space before each and a space after the last" . . . (97).

Whenever you omit material from a quoted passage, you should be guided by two principles: fairness to the author quoted and the grammatical integrity of your writing.

**Quotation with an ellipsis in the middle and a parenthetical reference (98)**

In surveying various responses to plagues in the Middle Ages, Barbara W. Tuchman writes, "Medical thinking . . . stressed air as the communicator of disease, ignoring sanitation or visible carriers" (101-02).

**Quotation omitting a line or more in the middle (100)**

Elizabeth Bishop's "In the Waiting Room" is rich in evocative detail:

In Worcester, Massachusetts,  
I went with Aunt Consuelo  
to keep her dentist's appointment  
.....  
It was winter. It got dark  
early. (1-3, 6-7)

You may also choose to place square brackets around ellipsis points.



## **Other Alterations of Sources (101)**

"Occasionally, you may decide that a quotation will be unclear or confusing to your reader unless you provide supplementary information" (101). While you may add material to a quoted source, just as you may omit it, keep such contributions to a minimum and "distinguish them from the original, usually by putting them in square brackets within the quotation" (101) or "by explaining them in parentheses after the quotation"(101).

If a pronoun seems unclear in a quotation, you may add an identification in square brackets:

In the first act he soliloquizes, "Why she would hang on him [Hamlet's father] / As if increase of appetite had grown / By what it fed on . . . ." (101).

"A comment or an explanation that immediately follows the closing quotation mark appears in parentheses"; whereas, "a comment or an explanation that goes inside the quotation must appear within square brackets, not parentheses"(101).

Lincoln specifically advocated a government "for the people" (emphasis added).

The accuracy of quotations in research writing is extremely important. You must reproduce the original exactly. Unless indicated, liberties must not be taken with the spelling or the punctuation of a source.

Sic may be added to assure readers that the quotation is accurate even though the spelling or logic might make them think otherwise.

Shaw admitted, "Nothing can extinguish my interest in Shakespear" (sic).

#### **D. PREPARING WORKS CITED LIST (123 - 211)**

This is the second part of your documentation which appears at the end of your paper on a separate page. It is most commonly titled works cited and provides more detailed information regarding your source: author, title and publication information, as well as name of editor, edition, volume or any other supplementary information that is required. The works cited page should list, in alphabetical order by author's last name, all the works that you have cited in the text of your essay.

#### **SAMPLE ENTRIES: Books**

##### **Single author (148)**

Franke, Damon. *Modernist Heresies: British Literary History. 1882-1924*. Columbus: Ohio State UP, 2008. Print.

##### **Anthology (153)**

Davis, Anita Price, comp. *North Carolina during the Great Depression: A Documentary Portrait of a Decade*. Jefferson: McFarland, 2003. Print.

##### **A work in an Anthology (157-160)**

Allende, Isabel. "Toad's Mouth." Trans. Margaret Sayers Peden. *A Hammock beneath the Mangoes: Stories from Latin America*. Ed. Thomas Colchie. New York: Plume, 1992. 83-88. Print.

##### **Two or more works by the same authors (134)**

Gilbert, Sandra M., and Susan Cubar, eds. *The Female Imagination and the Modernist Aesthetic*. New York: Gordon, 1986. Print.

---, "Sexual Linguistics: Gender, Language, Sexuality." *New Literary History* 16.3 (1985): 515-43. *JSTOR*. Web. 26 June 2007.

##### **A book by two or more authors (154-155)**

Booth, Wayne C., Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. *The Craft of Research*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2003. Print.

"If there are more than three authors, you may name only the first and add et al. ("and others"), or you may give all names in full in the order in which they appear on the title page" (155).

### **A book by a corporate author (156)**

"A corporate author may be a commission, an association, a committee, or any other group whose individual members are not identified on the title page" (156).

National Research Council. *Beyond Six Billion: Forecasting the World's Population*.

Washington: Natl. Acad., 2000. Print.

### **An anonymous book (162)**

"If a book has no author's or editor's name on the title page, begin the entry with the title" (162). Alphabetize by the title, ignoring the articles of "A, An, or The" (162).

*The Holy Bible*. Wheaton: Crossway-Good News, 2003. Print. Eng. Standard Vers.

### **A government publication (174-176)**

#### **When author is unknown:**

"In general, if you do not know the writer of the document, cite as author the government agency that issued it--that is, state the name of the government first, followed by the name of the agency, using an abbreviation if the context makes it clear" (175).

United States, Joint Committee on the Investigation of the Pearl Harbor Attack.

*Hearings*. 79<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> sess. 32 vols. Washington: GPO, 1946. Print.

#### **When author is known:**

"If known, the name of the document's author may either begin the entry or, if the agency comes first, follow the title and the word By or an abbreviation (such as Ed. Or Comp.)" (176).

Poore, Benjamin Perley, comp. *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Government Publications of the*

*United States, September 5, 1774-March 4, 1881*. US 48<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> sess. Misc. Doc. 67.

Washington: GPO, 1885. Print.

OR

United States. Cong. *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Government Publications of the United*

*States, September 5, 1774-March 4, 1881*. Comp. Benjamin Perley Poore. 48<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup>

sess. Misc. Doc. 67. Washington: GPO, 1885. Print.

**E. CITING PERIODICALS PRINT PUBLICATIONS (136 - 148)**

**An article in a scholarly journal that pages each issue separately (140)**

Barthelme, Frederick. "Architecture." *Kansas Quarterly* 13.3-4 (1981): 77-80. Print.

\* 13.3-4 signifies volume 13, issues 3 and 4.

**An article in a scholarly journal that uses only issue numbers (140)**

Kafka, Ben. "The Demon of Writing: Paperwork, Public Safety, and the Reign of Terror."

*Representations* 98 (2007): 1-24. Print.

**An article in a newspaper (141 - 142)**

Jeromack, Paul. "This Once, a David of the Art World Does Goliath a Favor."

*New York Times* 13 July 2002, late ed.: B7+. Print.

"Newspaper articles are often not printed on consecutive pages—for example, an article might begin on page 1, then skip to page 16. For such articles, write only the first page number and a plus sign . . ." (142).

**An article in a magazine (142 - 143)**

McEvoy, Dermot. "Little Books, Big Success." *Publishers Weekly* 30 Oct. 2006: 26-28. Print.

**A review (144)**

Rev. of *Oxford Bible Atlas*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed., by Adrian Curtis. *Kirkus Reviews* 1 Sept. 2007: 4. Print.

**An anonymous article (145)**

"If no author's name is given for the article you are citing, begin the entry with the title. Ignore any initial A, An, or The when you alphabetize the entry" (190).

"It Barks! It Kicks! It Scores!" *Newsweek* 30 July 2001: 12. Print.

**F. CITING ADDITIONAL COMMON SOURCES (193 – 204)**

**A film or video recording (197)**

*It's a Wonderful Life*. Dir. Frank Capra. Perf. James Stewart, Donna Reed, Lionel Barrymore, and Thomas Mitchell. RKO, 1946. Film.

**An interview (201-202)**

"For purposes of documentation, there are two kinds of interviews: those published or broadcast, and those conducted by the researcher." (201).

"Begin with the name of the person interviewed. If the interview is part of a publication, recording, or program, enclose the title of the interview . . . in quotation marks; . . . . If the interview is untitled, use the descriptive label **Interview**, neither italicized nor enclosed in quotation marks. The interviewer's name may be added if known and pertinent to your paper . . ." (201).

Lansbury, Angela. Interview. *Off-Camera: Conversations with the Makers of Prime-Time*

*Television*. By Richard Levinson and William Link. New York: Plume-NAL, 1986. 72-86. Print.

OR

Wiesel, Elie. Interview with Ted Koppel. *Nightline*. ABC. WABC, New York. 18 Apr. 2002.

Television.

"To cite an interview that you conducted, give the name of the person interviewed, the kind of interview (Personal interview, Telephone interview), and the date" (202).

Pei, I. M. Personal interview. 22 July 1993.

OR

Reed, Ishmael. Telephone interview. 10 Dec. 2007.

### **A lecture, a speech, an address, or a reading (203)**

In citing an oral presentation, " give the speaker's name; the title of the presentation (if known), in quotation marks; the meeting and the sponsoring organization (if applicable); the location; and the date. Use an appropriate descriptive label (Address, Lecture, Keynote speech, Reading), neither italicized nor enclosed in quotation marks . . ." (203).

Alter, Robert, and Marilynne Robinson. "The Psalms: A Reading and Conversation."

92<sup>nd</sup> Street Y, New York. 17 Dec. 2007. Reading.

### **A letter, a memo, or an e-mail message (204-205)**

"Treat a published letter like a work in a collection . . . adding the date of the letter and the number (if the editor assigned one)" (204).

"If you use more than one letter from a published collection, however, provide a single entry for the entire work and cite the letters individually in the text . . ." (204).

Woolf, Virginia. "To T. S. Elliot." 28 July 1920. Letter 1138 of *The Letters of Virginia Woolf*.

Ed. Nigel Nicolson and Joanne Trautmann. Vol. 2. New York: Harcourt, 1976. 437-38.

Print.

Cite a letter that you received as follows: (204)

Hatch, James C. Letter to the author. 5 Apr. 2008. TS.

\*TS. = Typescript - a work prepared by a machine.

\*MS. = Manuscript - a work written by hand.

"To cite e-mail, give the name of the writer; the title of the message (if any), . . . recipient . . . date . . . medium of delivery." (205)

Boyle, Anthony T. "Re: Utopia." Message to Daniel J. Cahill. 21 June 1997. Email

## F. CITING WEB PUBLICATIONS (181 - 192)

### An e-mail communication (204)

"To cite electronic mail, give the name of the writer; the title of the message (if any), taken from the subject line and enclosed in quotation marks; a description of the message that includes the recipient (e.g., "Message to author"); and the date of the message" (205).

Harner, James L. Messagel to the author. 20 Aug. 1998. E-Mail

### The basic entry: Work Cited on the Web (183 - 184)

Name of author, compiler, director, editor, narrator, performer, or translator. Title of work. (italicized if the work is independent; in roman type and quotation marks if the work is part of a large work. Title of overall Website (italicized). Version or edition used. Publisher or sponsor of the site. Date of publication (day, month, and year). Medium of publication (Web). Date of access (184).

Example:

Antin, David. Interview by Charles Bernstein. *Dalkey Archive Press*. Dalkey Archive P, n.d.

Web 21 Aug. 2007. (185)

### Journal (190 191)

Armstrong, Grace. Rev. of *Fortune's Faces: The Roman de la Rose and the Poetics of*

*Contingency*, by Daniel Heller-Roazen. *Bryn Mawr Review of Comparative Literature*

6.1 (2007) n. pag. Web 5 June 2008. (190)

### Book (189)

Cascardi, Anthony J. *Ideologies of History in the Spanish Golden Age*. University Park:

Pennsylvania State UP, 1997. *Penn State Romance Studies*. Web. 12 Mar. 2007. (187)

### Using URL's

"In the past, this handbook recommended including URLs of Web sources in works-cited-list entries. Inclusion of URLs has proved to have limited value, however, for they often change, can be specific to a subscriber or a session . . . . You should include a URL as supplementary information only when the reader probably cannot locate the source without it. . . ." (182).

If you must use a URL use the following format:

Eaves, Morris, Robert Essick, and Joseph Viscomi, eds. *The William Blake Archive*. Lib. Of

Cong., 28 Sept. 2007. Web. 20 Nov. 2007. <http://www.blakearchive.org/blake/>.

**Television Program (193 - 194)**

“Death and Society.” Narr. Joanne Silberner. *Weekend Edition Sunday*. Natl. Public Radio.

WUWM, Millwaukee, 25 Jan. 1998. Radio (194)

“The Phantom of Corleone.” Narr. Steve Kroft. *Sixty Minutes*. CBS. WCBS, New York, 10 Dec.

2006. Television. (194)

\*Note: If no author's name is given, begin the entry with the title of the document.