



What is MLA Format?

MLA style is used primarily in the liberal arts and humanities. MLA style provides writers with a system for referencing their sources through parenthetical documentation and on a Works Cited page. This handout is a brief guide to citing the most common types of sources—for a complete guide to MLA style, please reference the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 7th edition.

General Guidelines

- Double-space the text of your paper, and use a legible font like Times New Roman or Ariel.
- Set the margins of your document to 1 inch on all sides. Indent the first line of a paragraph one half-inch from the left margin (press tab once).
- Use italics throughout your essay for titles of longer works.

Formatting the First Page of Your Paper

- Do not make a title page for your paper unless specifically requested.
- In the upper left-hand corner of the first page, list your name, your instructor's name, the course, and the date. Again, be sure to use double-spaced text.
- Double space and center the title. Don't underline your title or put it in quotation marks.
- Double space between the title and the first line of the text.
- Create a header in the upper right-hand corner that includes your last name, followed by a space with a page number; number all pages consecutively with Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3, 4, etc.). (Note: Your instructor or other readers may ask that you omit last name/page number header on your first page. Always follow their guidelines.)

Formatting Your Works Cited Page

- Begin your Works Cited list on a separate page from the text of the essay. Like your essay, the Works Cited page(s) should be paginated. For example, if your essay ends on page 10, the Works Cited list will begin on page 11.
- Center the words Works Cited at the top of the page. Do not underline, italicize, or enclose in quotation marks.
- Double space all entries and do not skip spaces between entries.
- Use a hanging indent for all entries:
Wysocki, Anne Francis, et al. *Writing New Media: Theory and Applications for Expanding the Teaching of Composition*. Logan, UT: Utah State UP, 2004.
- Your list should be alphabetized by the author's last name. If the author's name is unknown, alphabetize by title. If you cite multiple works by the same author, cite the name once and begin following citations with three hyphens and period (—.).

Citing Book Sources

Note: As of 2009, MLA format now requires that writers distinguish the source's media type (print, web, DVD, etc.) in all citations.

Book with One Author

Author's last name, first name. *Book Title*. City: Publisher, publication year. Media type.

Tan, Amy. *The Bonesetter's Daughter*. New York: Putnam, 2001. Print.

Book by a Corporate Author

A corporate author may be a commission, a committee, or any group whose individual members are not identified on the title page.

American Allergy Association. *Allergies in Children*. New York: Random, 1998. Print.

Book with More than One Author

The first author's 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. Print.

Book with No Author

List and alphabetize by the title of the book.

Encyclopedia of Indiana. New York: Somerset, 1993. Print.

A Translated Book

Cite as you would any other book, and add "Trans." followed by the translator's/translators' name(s):

Foucault, Michel. *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*. Trans. Richard Howard. New York: Vintage-Random House, 1988. Print.

Anthology or Edited Collection

List by editor or editors, followed by a comma and "ed." or, for multiple editors, "eds."

Hill, Charles A. and Marguerite Helmers, eds. *Defining Visual Rhetorics*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2004. Print.

Peterson, Nancy J., ed. *Toni Morrison: Critical and Theoretical Approaches*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1997. Print.

Books (continued)

An Essay or Chapter in a Book

The basic form is given below:

Last name, first name. "Title of Essay." *Title of collection*. Ed. Editor's Name(s). Place of publication: Publisher, Year. Pages. Media type.

Harris, Muriel. "Talk to Me: Engaging Reluctant Writers." *A Tutor's Guide: Helping Writers One to One*. Ed. Ben Rafoth. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2000. 24-34. Print.

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.

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

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

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

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

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

An Introduction, a Preface, a Forward, or an Afterword

When citing an introduction, a preface, a forward or an afterword, write the name of the author and then give the name of the part being cited, which should not be italicized, underlined, or enclosed in quotation marks.

Farrell, Thomas B. Introduction. *Norms of Rhetorical Culture*. New Haven: UP, 1993. 1-13. Print.

If the writer of the piece is different from the author of the complete work, then write the full name or after the word "By." For example:

Duncan, Hugh Dalziel. Introduction. *Permanence and Change: An Anatomy of Purpose*. By Kenneth Burke. 1935. 3rd ed. 5-9. Berkeley: U of California P, 1984. xiii-xliv. Print.

Citing Periodicals

MLA style is slightly different for popular periodicals such as newspapers and scholarly journals, as you'll learn below. Make sure to italicize newspaper, journal and magazine titles and to use quotation marks for article titles.

An Article in a Newspaper or Magazine

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

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. Print.

An Article in a Scholarly Journal

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

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

Citing Electronic Sources

Citations of electronic sources share some traits with those of print publications, but often require additional information. In the past, it was always necessary to cite URL's for an electronic source. However, now writers are only required to give the URL when the source cannot be found without it. Otherwise, indicate that the publication accessible via the web rather than in print using the guidelines below.

A Nonperiodical Web Publication

Most works on the Web are nonperiodical—not released on a regular schedule. Websites sponsored by newspapers and magazines are generally nonperiodical. Such an entry contains most of the following components:

1. Name of the author, compiler, director, editor, narrator, performer or translator of the work.
2. Title of the work
3. Title of the overall website
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)
8. Date of access (day, month, year)

Committee on Scholarly Editions. "Guidelines for Editors of Scholarly Editions." *Modern Language Association*. MLA, 25 Sept. 2007. Web. 15 May 2008.

Citing Electronic Sources (Cont'd)

Eaves, Morris, Robert Essick, and Joseph Viscomi, eds. *The William Blake Archive*. Lib. Of Congress, 8 May 2008. Web. 15 May 2008.

“The Scientists Speak.” Editorial. *New York Times*. New York Times, 20 Nov. 2007. Web. 15 May 2008.

A Work on the Web Cited with Print Publication Data

A book that was scanned for access in a database typically has original publication information. Thus, you might want to include that information in your citation. Cite as you would a print document, then include the following information:

1. Title of the database or Web site (italicized)
2. Medium of publication consulted (Web)
3. Date of access (day, month, year)

Whittier, John. G. “A Prayer.” The Freedman’s Book. Ed. L. Maria Child. Boston, 1866. 178. *Google Book Search*. Web. 1 May 2008.

A Scholarly Journal on the Web

Begin the entry by following the format of print scholarly journals. Note that some online materials do not include page numbers. In that case, add “n. pag.” in place of page numbers. Then add:

1. Medium of publication consulted (Web)
2. Date of access (day, month, year)

Landauer, Michelle. “Images of Virtue: Reading, Reformation and the Visualization of Culture in Rousseau’s *La Nouvelle Heloise*.” *Romanticism on the Net* 46 (2007): n. pag. Web. 8 Nov. 2007.

Ouellette, Marc. “Theories, Memories, Bodies, and Artists.” Editorial. *Reconstruction* 7.4 (2007): n. pag. Web. 5 June 2008.

A Periodical Publication in an Online Database

Oftentimes periodicals are accessible to researchers via online databases. Begin the entry by citing as you would a print periodical, but change the medium from Print to Web. If pagination is not available, use “n. pag.” Conclude the entry with the following items:

1. Title of database.
2. Medium of publication consulted
3. Date of access.

Chan, Evans. “Postmodernism and Hong Kong Cinema.” *Postmodern Culture* 10.3 (2000): n. pag. *Project Muse*. Web. 5 June 2008.

Additional Sources

An Interview

Begin with the name of the person interviewed. If the interview was part of a publication, recording, or program, enclose the title, if any, in quotation marks; if the interview was published independently, italicize the title. If the interview is untitled, use the descriptive label "Interview," neither italicized or in quotation marks.

Blanchett, Cate. "In Character with: Cate Blanchett." *Notes on a Scandal*. Dir. Richard Eyre. Fox Searchlite, 2006. DVD.

Gordimer, Nadine. Interview. *New York Times* 10 Oct. 1991, late ed.: C25. Print.

To cite *an interview you conducted*, give the name of the person interviewed, the kind of interview (personal, telephone) and the date.

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

Parenthetical Citations

- In MLA style, you are required to acknowledge your sources with brief parenthetical citations.

These citations include the **author's last name** and the **page number**. No comma is necessary to separate these two elements. For example:

Ancient writers attributed the invention of the monochord to Pythagoras, who lived in the sixth century BC (Marcuse 197).

This tells us that the information came from page 197 in a work by an author named Marcuse. If a reader wanted more information about the source, a complete bibliographical entry would be found in the Works Cited.

- A citation in MLA style contains only enough information to enable readers to find the source in the Works Cited list.

If the author's name is included in the text, only the page number appears in the citation: (197). If more than one work by the author is in the list of Works Cited, give a shortened version of the title: (Marcuse, *Survey* 197). If no page numbers are given (as in some electronic sources, number by paragraph: (Marcuse par. 2).

- Citations should appear at the end of a sentence and at the end of a quote, if used. The final quotation mark and first parentheses should have one space between them. Finally, the sentence period should appear after the citation:

According to Marcuse, "Ancient writers attributed the invention of the monochord to Pythagoras" (197).

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