

MLA Documentation

MLA documentation style is used to cite sources and document sources in the Liberal Arts courses and in the Humanities. For example, English uses MLA style documentation.

Properly documenting your sources adds to the credibility of the paper you are writing. The teacher is able to see clearly the sources of your work. Remember to source all your research.

Please note: MLA documents should be **double-spaced throughout**.

General Guidelines

- 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 like Times New Roman or Courier.
- Leave only one space after periods or other punctuation marks (unless otherwise instructed by your teacher).
- Set the margins of your document to 1 inch on all sides. 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. (Note: Your teacher may ask that you omit the number on your first page. Always follow your teacher's guidelines.)
- Use either italics or underlining throughout your essay for the titles of longer works and, only when absolutely necessary, providing emphasis.
- If you have any endnotes, include them on a separate page before your Works Cited page.

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 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.

- 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.
- 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.), one-half inch from the top and flush with the right margin. (Note: Your teacher may ask that you omit last name/page number header on your first page. **Always follow the teachers' guidelines.**)

Works Cited Page: Basic Format

According to MLA style, you must have a Works Cited page at the end of your paper. Works All entries in the Works Cited page must correspond to the works cited in your main text. MLA documents should be **double-spaced throughout**.

Basic Rules

Begin your Works Cited page on a separate page at the end of your paper. It should have same one-inch margins and last name, page number header as the rest of your 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.

Double space all citations, but do not skip spaces between entries.

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 225-50.

If you're citing an article or a publication that was originally issued in print form but that you retrieved from an online database, 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).

Books

Single Author

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

Lastname, Firstname. Title of Book. Place of Publication: Publisher, Year of Publication.

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

Two Authors

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.

Work with No Known Author

Alphabetize works with no known author by their title; use a shortened version of the title in the parenthetical citations in your paper. In this case, Boring Postcards USA has no known author: Baudrillard, Jean. Simulacra and Simulations.

Boring Postcards USA.

Burke, Kenneth. A Rhetoric of Motives.

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).

Anthology or 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.

The Bible

Give the name of the specific edition, any editor(s) associated with it, followed by the publication information:

The New Jerusalem Bible. Susan Jones, gen. ed. New York: Doubleday, 1985.

JOURNALS OR PERIODICALS

Article in a Magazine

Cite by listing the article's author, putting the title of the article in quotations marks, and underlining or italicizing the periodical title. Follow with the date and remember to abbreviate the month. Basic format:

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

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

Article in a Newspaper

Cite a newspaper article as you would a magazine article, but note the different pagination in a newspaper. 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.).

Brubaker, Bill. "New Health Center Targets County's Uninsured Patients." Washington Post 24 May 2007: LZ01.

An Editorial & Letter to the Editor

Cite as you would any article in a periodical, but include the designators "Editorial" or "Letter" to identify the type of work it is.

"Of Mines and Men." Editorial. Wall Street Journal east. ed. 24 Oct. 2003: A14.

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.

ONLINE SOURCES INCLUDING DATABASES (EBSCO)

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 ([<, >]).

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].

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>>.

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/w/index.php?title=Caret&oldid=157510440>>.

E-mail or Other Personal Communication

Author. "Title of the message (if any)." E-mail to person's name. Date of the message.

This same format may be used for personal interviews or personal letters. These do not have titles, and the description should be appropriate. Instead of "Email to John Smith," you would have "Personal interview."

An Article in an Online Scholarly Journal

Online scholarly journals are treated different from online magazines. First, you must include volume and issue information, when available. Also, some electronic journals and magazines provide paragraph or page numbers; again, include them if available.

Wheelis, Mark. "Investigating Disease Outbreaks Under a Protocol to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention." Emerging Infectious Diseases 6.6 (2000): 33 pars. 8 May 2006
<<http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/eid/vol6no6/wheelis.htm>>.

Citing Personal Weblog Entries

List the author of the blog (even if there is only a screen name available), provide the name of the particular entry you are referring to, identify that it is a weblog entry and then follow the basic formatting for a website as listed above.

Last Name, First. "Title of Entry." Weblog Entry. Title of Weblog. Date Posted. Date Accessed (URL).

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 Feb. 2003 <<http://www.infotrac.galegroup.com>>.

IN-TEXT CITATION OR PARENTHETICAL REFERENCES

Basic In-Text Citation Rules

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.

Citing a Work by Multiple Authors

For a source with three or fewer authors, list the authors' last names in the text or in the parenthetical citation:

Smith, Yang, and Moore argue that tougher gun control is not needed in the United States (76).

The authors state "Tighter gun control in the United States erodes Second Amendment rights" (Smith, Yang, and Moore 76).

Citing Indirect Sources

Sometimes you may have to use an indirect source. An indirect source is a source cited in another source. For such indirect quotations, use "qtd. in" to indicate the source you actually consulted. For example:

Ravitch argues that high schools are pressured to act as "social service centers, and they don't do that well" (qtd. in Weisman 259).

Electronic Sources

The Purdue OWL is accessed by millions of users every year. Specifically, the OWL's MLA Formatting and Style Guide is one of the most popular resources.

One online film critic stated that Fitzcarraldo is "...a beautiful and terrifying critique of obsession and colonialism" (Garcia, "Herzog: a Life," par. 18).

Sources: _____ Heckman, Grant. (2007). Thomson Nelson Guide to Essay Writing: Toronto: Nelson.

The Writing Lab, Purdue University, Retrieved May 2009,
<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/workshops>