

SOME GUIDELINES FOR MLA FORMAT

Excerpted from the website for Purdue's Online Writing Lab:
http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_mla.html

For full guidelines, see the *MLA Style Manual*.

General Guidelines

- * Type your paper or write it on a computer and print it out on standard-sized paper (8.5 X 11 inches).
- * Double-space your paper.
- * Set the margins of your document to 1 inch on all sides.
- * 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 instructor or whoever is reading the manuscript may ask that you omit the number on your first page. Always follow their guidelines.)
- * Use either underlining or *italics* throughout your essay for highlighting the titles of longer works and providing emphasis.
- * If you have any notes, include them on a page before your works cited page and format them the same way as your works cited list.

Making reference to works of others in your text

In MLA style, referring to the works of others in your text is done in two ways. When you make reference to someone else's idea, either through paraphrasing or quoting them directly, you:

- * provide the author's name (or the title of the work) and the page (or paragraph) number of the work in a **parenthetical citation**
- * provide full citation information for the work in your **Works Cited list**

This allows people to know which sources you used in writing your essay and then be able to look them up themselves, so that they can use them in their scholarly work. Here are some basic guidelines for referring to the works of others in your text.

Parenthetical Citations

MLA format follows the author-page method of citation. This means that the author's last name and the page number(s) from which the quotation is taken must appear in the text, and a complete reference should appear in your works cited list (see Your Works Cited Page, below). The author's name may appear either in the sentence itself or in parentheses following the quotation or paraphrase, but the page number(s) should always appear in the parentheses, not in the text of your sentence.

For example:

Wordsworth stated that Romantic poetry was marked by a "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" (263).

Romantic poetry is characterized by the "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" (Wordsworth 263).

Wordsworth extensively explored the role of emotion in the creative process (263).

If the work you are making reference to has no author, use an abbreviated version of the work's title. For non-print sources, such as films, TV series, pictures, or other media, or electronic sources, include the name that begins the entry in the Works Cited page.

For example:

An anonymous Wordsworth critic once argued that his poems were too emotional ("Wordsworth Is A Loser" 100).

Sometimes you may have to use an indirect quotation. An indirect quotation is a quotation that you found in another source that was quoting from the original. For such indirect quotations, use "qtd. in" to indicate the source.

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).

Sometimes more information is necessary to identify the source from which a quotation is taken. For instance, if two or more authors have the same last name, provide both authors' first initials (or even her or his full name if different authors share initials) in your citation. If you cite more than one work by a particular author, include a shortened title for the particular work from which you are quoting to distinguish it from the other works by that same person.

For example:

Two authors with the same last name:

Although some medical ethicists claim that cloning will lead to designer children (R. Miller 12), others note that the advantages for medical research outweigh this consideration (A. Miller 46).

Two works by the same author:

Lightenor has argued that computers are not useful tools for small children ("Too Soon" 38), though he has acknowledged that early exposure to computer games does lead to better small motor skill development in a child's second and third year ("Hand-Eye Development" 17).

Long Quotations

Place quotations longer than four typed lines in a free-standing block of typewritten lines, and omit quotation marks. Start the quotation on a new line, indented one inch from the left margin, and maintain double-spacing. Your parenthetical citation should come after the closing punctuation mark. When quoting verse, maintain original line breaks. (**You should maintain double-spacing throughout your essay.**)

For example:

Nelly Dean treats Heathcliff poorly and dehumanizes him throughout her narration:

They entirely refused to have it in bed with them, or even in their room, and I had no more sense, so, I put it on the landing of the stairs, hoping it would be gone on the morrow. By chance, or else attracted by hearing his voice, it crept to Mr. Earnshaw's door, and there he found it on quitting his chamber. Inquiries were made as to how it got there; I was obliged to confess, and in recompense for my cowardice and inhumanity was sent out of the house. (Brontë 78)

Adding or Omitting Words In Quotations

If you add a word or words in a quotation, you should put brackets around the words to indicate that they are not part of the original text.

For example:

Jan Harold Brunvand, in an essay on urban legends, states: "some individuals [who retell urban legends] make a point of learning every rumor or tale" (78).

If you omit a word or words from a quotation, you should indicate the deleted word or word by using ellipsis marks surrounded by brackets.

For example:

In an essay on urban legends, Jan Harold Brunvand notes that "some individuals make a point of learning every recent rumor or tale [...] and in a short time a lively exchange of details occurs" (78).

Your Works Cited List

The works cited list should appear at the end of your essay. It provides the information necessary for a reader to locate and be able to read any sources you cite in the essay. Each source you cite in the essay must appear in your works-cited list; likewise, each entry in the works-cited list must be cited in your text.

List Format

- * Begin your works cited list on a separate page from the text of the essay under the label Works Cited (with no quotation marks, underlining, etc.), which should be centered at the top of the page.
- * Make the first line of each entry in your list flush left with the margin. Subsequent lines in each entry should be indented one-half inch. This is known as a hanging indent.
- * Double space all entries, with no skipped spaces between entries.
- * Keep in mind that underlining and *italics* are equivalent; you should select one or the other to use throughout your essay.
- * Alphabetize the list of works cited by the first word in each entry (usually the author's last name),

Basic Rules for Citations

- * Authors' names are inverted (last name first); if a work has more than one author, invert only the first author's name, follow it with a comma, then continue listing the rest of the authors.
- * If you have cited more than one work by a particular author, order them alphabetically by title, and use three hyphens in place of the author's name for every entry after the first.
- * When an author appears both as the sole author of a text and as the first author of a group, list solo-author entries first.
- * If no author is given for a particular work, alphabetize by the title of the piece and use a shortened version of the title for parenthetical citations.
- * Capitalize each word in the titles of articles, books, etc. This rule does not apply to articles, short prepositions, or conjunctions unless one is the first word of the title or subtitle.
- * Underline or italicize titles of books, journals, magazines, newspapers, and films.
- * Use quotation marks around the titles of articles in journals, magazines, and newspapers. Also use quotation marks for the titles of short stories, book chapters, poems, and songs.
- * List page numbers 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). For more about this, see our discussion of electronic sources.

Basic Forms for Sources in Print

Books

Author(s). *Title of Book*. Place of Publication: Publisher, Year of Publication.

Book with one author

Henley, Patricia. *The Hummingbird House*. Denver: MacMurray, 1999.

Two books by the same author

(After the first listing of the author's name, use three hyphens and a period for the author's name. List books alphabetically.)

Palmer, William J. *Dickens and New Historicism*. New York: St. Martin's, 1997.

---. *The Films of the Eighties: A Social History*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 1993.

Book with more than one author

Gillespie, Paula, and Neal Lerner. *The Allyn and Bacon Guide to Peer Tutoring*. Boston: Allyn, 2000.

If there are more than three authors, you may list only the first author followed by the phrase et al. (the abbreviation for the Latin phrase "and others") in place of the other authors' names, or you may list all the authors in the order in which their names appear on the title page.

Book with a corporate author

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

Book or article with no author named

Encyclopedia of Indiana. New York: Somerset, 1993.

"Cigarette Sales Fall 30% as California Tax Rises." *New York Times* 14 Sept. 1999: A17.

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/italics as appropriate. For example, parenthetical citations of the two sources above would appear as follows: (*Encyclopedia* 235) and ("Cigarette" A17).

Anthology or collection

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

A part of a book (such as an essay in a collection)

Author(s). "Title of Article." *Title of Collection*. Ed. Editor's Name(s). Place of Publication: Publisher, Year. Pages.

Essay in a collection

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.

Cross-referencing: If you cite more than one essay from the same edited collection, you should cross-reference within your works cited list in order to avoid writing out the publishing information for each separate essay. To do so, include a separate entry for the entire collection listed by the editor's name. For individual essays from that collection, simply list the author's name, the title of the essay, the editor's last name, and the page numbers. For example:

L'Eplattenier, Barbara. "Finding Ourselves in the Past: An Argument for Historical Work on WPAs." Rose and Weiser 131-40.

Peeples, Tim. "'Seeing' the WPA With/Through Postmodern Mapping." Rose and Weiser 153-167.

Rose, Shirley K., and Irwin Weiser, eds. *The Writing Program Administrator as Researcher*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1999.

Article from a reference book

"Jamaica." *Encyclopedia Britannica*. 1999 ed.

An article in a periodical (such as a newspaper or magazine)

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

When citing the date, list day before month; use a three-letter abbreviation of the month (e.g. Jan., Mar., Aug.). 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.).

Magazine or newspaper article

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

Trembacki, Paul. "Brees Hopes to Win Heisman for Team." *Purdue Exponent* 5 Dec. 2000: 20.

An article in a scholarly journal

Author(s). "Title of Article." *Title of Journal* Vol (Year): pages.

"Vol" indicates the volume number of the journal. If the journal uses continuous pagination throughout a particular volume, only volume and year are needed, e.g. *Modern Fiction Studies* 40 (1998): 251-81. If each issue of the journal begins on page 1, however, you must also provide the issue number following the volume, e.g. *Mosaic* 19.3 (1986): 33-49.

Essay in a journal with continuous pagination

Allen, Emily. "Staging Identity: Frances Burney's Allegory of Genre." *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 31 (1998): 433-51.

Essay in a journal that pages each issue separately

Duvall, John N. "The (Super)Marketplace of Images: Television as Unmediated Mediation in DeLillo's *White Noise*." *Arizona Quarterly* 50.3 (1994): 127-53.

Basic Forms for Electronic Sources

If no author is given for a web page or electronic source, start with and alphabetize by the title of the piece and use a shortened version of the title for parenthetical citations.

A web site

Author(s). Name of Page. Date of Posting/Revision. Name of institution/organization affiliated with the site. Date of Access <electronic address>.

It is necessary to list your date of access because web postings are often updated, and information available at one date may no longer be available later. Be sure to include the complete address for the site. Also, note the use of angled brackets around the electronic address; MLA requires them for clarity.

Web site examples

Felluga, Dino. Undergraduate Guide to Literary Theory. 17 Dec. 1999. Purdue University. 15 Nov. 2000 <<http://omni.cc.purdue.edu/%7Efelluga/theory2.html>>.

Purdue Online Writing Lab. 2003. Purdue University. 10 Feb. 2003 <<http://owl.english.purdue.edu>>.

An article on a web site

It is necessary to list your date of access because web postings are often updated, and information available at one date may no longer be available later. Be sure to include the complete address for the site. Also, note the use of angled brackets around the electronic address; MLA requires them for clarity.

Author(s). "Article Title." Name of web site. Date of posting/revision. Name of institution/organization affiliated with site. Date of access <electronic address>.

Article on a web site

Poland, Dave. "The Hot Button." *Roughcut*. 26 Oct. 1998. Turner Network Television. 28 Oct. 1998 <<http://www.roughcut.com>>.

"Using Modern Language Association (MLA) Format." Purdue Online Writing Lab. 2003. Purdue University. 6 Feb. 2003 <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_mla.html>.

An article in an online journal or magazine

Author(s). "Title of Article." *Title of Journal* Volume. Issue (Year): Pages/Paragraphs. Date of Access <electronic address>.

Wheelis, Mark. "Investigating Disease Outbreaks Under a Protocol to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention." *Emerging Infectious Diseases* 6.6 (2000): 33 pars. 5 Dec. 2000 <<http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/eid/vol6no6/wheelis.htm>>.