

# Style Guide

# MLA



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# Contents

This guide contains answers to commonly asked questions about MLA style, including how to format parenthetical citations in your essay and how to format entries on your works cited page. The material is based on the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, Eighth Edition.

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## **For More Information**

*MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. 8th ed., MLA, 2016.

# Formatting Essays

## Throughout the Essay

### Use Times New Roman font in 12-point size

- Type your paper on a computer and print it out on standard, white 8.5 x 11-inch paper.
- Set the document to double spaced; do not add extra, additional spaces between any lines.
- Leave only one space after periods or other punctuation marks (unless otherwise instructed by your instructor).
- Set the margins of your document to 1 inch on all sides.
- Indent the first line of paragraphs one half-inch from the left margin. MLA recommends that you use the Tab key as opposed to pushing the Space Bar five times.
- 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 may ask that you omit the number on your first page. Always follow your instructor's guidelines.)
- Use italics throughout your essay for the titles of longer works and, if absolutely necessary, to provide emphasis.
- If you have endnotes, include them on a separate page before your Works Cited page. Title the section Notes (centered, unformatted).

## The First Page

- 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 (according to MLA's specifications. Ex: 15 October 2011).
- Hit enter and center the title. Do not underline, italicize, or place your title in quotation marks; write the title in Title Case (standard capitalization), not in all capital letters.
- Use quotation marks and/or italics when referring to other works in your title, just as you would in your text: *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* as Morality Play; Human Weariness in "After Apple Picking"

## *Formatting Essays (continued)*

### **The Works Cited Page**

**The first line of the page is the title (Works Cited). Center the title, and do not apply special text treatment to it, such as italics or bold face.**

- Begin your Works Cited page on a separate page at the end of your research paper. It should have the same margins and last name, page number header as the rest of your paper.
- Double space all citations, but do not skip extra spaces between entries.
- Indent the second and subsequent lines of citations five spaces so that you create a hanging indent.
- Sources should be listed alphabetically.
- List page numbers of sources efficiently. If you refer to a journal article that appeared on pages 225 through 250, list the page numbers on your Works Cited page as pp. 225-250 or p. 225-250.
- For every entry, you should follow the Core Elements (listed on page 22 of this guide).
- URLs are recommended, unless a professor requests otherwise. When copying a URL copy it in full from your web browser, but omit *http://* or *https://*. If a URL is provided in Works Cited entry it will not include angle brackets.
- When citing articles in journals, a DOI is preferred over a URL if it is provided.
- 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 type the online database name in italics. *You do not need to provide subscription information in addition to the database name.*
- City of publication is no longer necessary for Works Cited entries, however, it can be used for texts pre-1900 in place of publisher's name if this information is not available.

# Paraphrasing, Quoting, and Treating Titles Properly In Your Essay

## Paraphrase

Paraphrasing, expressing another's idea in your own words, is used more often than quoting in research papers. When you paraphrase, you must acknowledge the source with a parenthetical citation and/or a signal phrase.

## Quotations

- According to the *MLA Handbook*, you should “quote only words, phrases, lines, and passages that are particularly interesting, vivid, unusual, or apt, and keep all quotations as brief as possible” (Gibaldi 92).
- Quoted material must be attached to your words; it cannot stand alone and “naked.” See the first bullet in this list for a quote that is integrated by using a signal phrase.
- Generally, commas and periods fall within the quote marks. When a quote is followed by a parenthetical citation, however, the punctuation looks like the first bullet in this list: Close quote, then parentheses, then a period.
- If quoted material takes up more than four lines of your paper, set it off on a new line, 0.5 inch from the left margin. In the case of these long quotes only, the period comes before, not after, the parenthetical citation, and no quote marks are used.

## Titles

- **Capitalize** nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, and subordinating conjunctions. Always capitalize the first and last words and words that follow hyphens in compound terms.
- **Italicize** the titles of books, plays, long poems, pamphlets, periodicals, films, radio and TV programs, audio recordings, and most works of art.
- **Quote** the titles of works published within longer works, such as essays published within anthologies. Quote the names of articles, essays, short stories, short poems, chapters of books, individual episodes of TV and radio programs, and songs. Also quote unpublished works such as speeches.

# Citing Sources in Your Essay

**Each reference to an outside source must point clearly to a specific entry in the list of works cited.** Generally, parenthetical citation includes the author's name and a reference to the page or place where cited material appears. Signal phrases may do some of the work; for instance, if the author is named in the signal phrase, only page numbers are needed in the parentheses. If a source does not have page numbers, use other part numbers (i.e. chapter or section numbers) if they are provided. Use present tense in signal phrases. See section 2.3 in the *MLA Handbook* for more information and further examples.

## Author Named in a Signal Phrase

Brian Taves suggests some interesting conclusions regarding the philosophy and politics of the adventure film (153-54, 171).

## Author Not Named in a Signal Phrase

Repetitive strain injury, or RSI, is reported to be “the fastest-growing occupational hazard of the computer age” (Taylor A1).

## Citing an Unknown Author

Use the title of the work in a signal phrase or place a shortened version in the parentheses.

According to the article “It’s Raining Pennies - But Not From Heaven,” for years we have known that we cannot buy much with a penny, but “now the coin is under attack as a public nuisance” (31). For years we have known that we cannot buy much with a penny, but “now the coin is under attack as a public nuisance” (“It’s Raining Pennies” 31).

## Two Authors:

If the source includes two authors, include both last names in the in-text citation, connected by *and*.

(Dorris and Erdrich 23).

## *Citing Sources in Your Essay (continued)*

### **Three or More Authors**

The study was extended for two years, and only after results were duplicated on both coasts did the authors publish their results (Doe et al. 137).

### **Poetry or Drama**

Like the bard who performed the *Ballad of Sir Patrick Spence*, Coleridge sees the “new-moon winter bright” with the “old Moon in her lap, foretelling / The coming on of rain and squally blast” (“Dejection” 1.9, 13-14).

Shakespeare’s Hamlet seems resolute when he declares, “The Play’s the thing / Wherein I’ll catch the conscience of the King” (2.2.633-34).

### **Citing Internet Sources in Your Essay**

Create an in-text reference to an Internet source by using a signal phrase or a parenthetical citation. As .html files do not contain standard page numbers, generally citations of websites do not contain page numbers. If the text contains a standard system of numbering (numbered paragraphs or page numbers on a .pdf file, for instance) use the numbering system in your parenthetical citations and works cited page. Otherwise, only the author’s last name appears in the parenthesis. If no author is named, use the name of the source, quoted or italicized as necessary. A signal phrase alone may be acceptable.

### **Signal Phrase in Your Essay**

(Note: In this case, there is no parenthetical citation because there is no page or paragraph number to refer to.):

According to Steven Landsberg, “if you know you’re going to treasure something, you don’t hesitate to buy it.”

### **What it would look like on your works cited page:**

Landsburg, Steven. “Who Shall Inherit the Earth?” *Slate* 1 May 1997. Accessed 2 May 1997.



## *Citing Sources in Your Essay (continued)*

### **In your essay:**

The association states, “APPMA’s mission is to promote, develop and advance pet ownership and the pet product industry and to provide the services necessary to help its members prosper.”

### **What it would look like on your works cited page:**

“APPMA Backgrounder.” *American Pet Products Association*. N.d. Accessed 4 Nov. 2010.

### **Parentetical Citation**

#### **In your essay:**

In response to Brombert’s 1990 PMLA address on the “politics of critical language,” one correspondent suggests that “some literary scholars envy the scientists their wonderful jargon and thus wish to emulate it by creating formidably technical-sounding words of their own” (Mitchell).

### **What it would look like on your works cited page:**

Mitchell, Jason P. “PMLA Letter.” 1991, Accessed 23 May 1996.

# Making a Works Cited Entry: Books, Pamphlets, Government Documents

## Basic Entry:

Author. Title of source. Title of Container, Other contributors, Version, Number, Publisher, Pub.  
Date, Location.

## Book by a Single Author

Fukuyama, Francis. *Our Posthuman Future: Consequences of the Biotechnology Revolution*.  
Farrar, 2002.

## Anthology or Compilation

Lopate, Phillip, editor. *The Art of the Personal Essay: An Anthology from the Classical Era to the Present*. Anchor-Doubleday, 1994.

## Author with an Editor

Franklin, Benjamin. *The Autobiography and Other Writings*. Edited by Kenneth Silverman,  
Penguin, 1986.

## Two or More Books by the Same Author

Borroff, Marie. *Language and the Past: Verbal Artistry in Frost, Stevens, and Moore*. U of  
Chicago P, 1979.

---, translator. *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. Norton, 1967.

***Making a Works Cited Entry: Books, Pamphlets, Government Document  
(continued)***

**Book by Two or More Authors**

Jakobson, Roman, and Linda R. Waugh. *The Sound Shape of Language*. Indiana UP, 1979.

**Book by Three or More Authors**

Gilman, Sander, et al. *Hysteria Beyond Freud*. U of California P, 1993.

**Unknown Author**

*Encyclopedia of Virginia*. Somerset, 1993.

**Work in an Anthology (Short Story or Essay)**

More, Hannah. "The Black Slave Trade: A Poem." *British Women Poets of the Romantic Era*, edited by Paula R. Feldman, John Hopkins UP, 1997, pp. 472-482.

**Pamphlet (Treat Like a Book)**

*Renoir Lithographs*. Dover, 1994.

**Government Document**

United States. Dept. of Labor. *Child Care: A Workforce Issue*. GPO, 1998.

# Making a Works Cited Entry: Books and Works from Books

## Introduction, Preface, Forward, Afterward

Coetzee, J.M. Introduction. *The Confusions of Young Törless*. By Robert Musil. Translated by Shaun Whiteside. Penguin, 2001. v-xiii.

## Article in a Reference Book (Encyclopedia or Dictionary)

“Azimuthal Equidistant Projection.” *Merriam Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*. 10th ed. 1993. Print.

## Less Familiar Reference Books (Give Full Publication Information)

La Patourel, John. “Normans and Normandy.” *Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, edited by Joseph R. Strayer. Scribner’s, 1987. 13 vols.

## Edition (The date of original publication is optional. Cite original date immediately after source’s title).

Crane, Stephen. *The Red Badge of Courage: An Episode of the American Civil War*. 1895. Edited by Fredson Bowers. UP of Virginia, 1975.

## Book Published in a Second or Subsequent Edition

Chaucer, Geoffrey. *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*. Edited by F. N. Robinson. 2nd ed., Houghton, 1957.

***Making a Works Cited Entry: Books and Works from Books (continued)***

**Multivolume Work (Providing the total number of volumes is optional)**

Blanco, Richard L., editor. *The American Revolution, 1775-1783: An Encyclopedia*. Garland, 1993. 2 vols.

**Book with Multiple Publishers**

Duff, J. Wright. *A Literary History of Rome: From the Origins to the Close of the Golden Age*, 1953. Edited by A. M. Duff, 3rd ed, Benn/Barnes, 1967.

**Translation**

*Beowulf*. Translated by E. Talbot Donaldson, edited by Nicholas Howe, Norton, 2001.

Murasaki Shikibu. *The Tale of Genji*. Translated by Edward G. Seidensticker, Knopf, 1976.

# Making a Works Cited Entry: Periodicals

MLA documentation requires the same basic information for each source using the core elements. Different kinds of sources require different specific information, but you should always provide this basic information *in this order* for each source. If a piece of information is missing (i.e. there is no author), skip to the next piece of information for the particular type of source.

## Basic Entry

Author. Title of source. Title of Container, Other contributors, Version, Number, Publisher, Pub. Date, Location.

## Article in a Scholarly Journal with Continuous Pagination

Hanks, Patrick. "Do Word Meanings Exist?" *Computers and the Humanities*, vol. 34, 2000, pp. 205-215.

## Article in a Scholarly Journal Paginated by Issue

Barthelme, Frederick. "Architecture." *Kansas Quarterly*, vol. 13, no. 3-4, 1981, pp. 77-80.

## Article in a Monthly Magazine

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

## Article in a Weekly Magazine

Mehta, Pratap Bhanu. "Exploding Myths." *New Republic*, 6 June 1998, pp. 17-19.

## Article in a Daily Newspaper

Note: The + in newspaper page ranges refers to a story that continues on another page.

Chang, Kenneth. "The Melting (Freezing) of Antarctica." *New York Times*, late ed., 2 Apr. 2002, pp. F1+.

***Making a Works Cited Entry: Periodicals (continued)***

**Editorial in a Newspaper**

“Death of a Writer.” *New York Times*, late ed., 20 Apr. 1994, late ed., p. A18. Editorial.

**Unsigned Article in a Newspaper or Magazine**

“Dubious Venture.” *Time*, 3 Jan. 1994, pp. 64-65.

**Letter to the Editor**

Mehlman, Jeffrey. *Partisan Review*, vol. 69, 2002, p. 320. Letter.

**Book Review or Film Review**

Kaufmann, Stanley. “Toward the Shadows.” *New Republic*, 11 Feb. 2002, pp. 26-27.

# Making a Works Cited Entry: Library Databases and Other Internet Sources

An entry for a nonperiodical publication on the Web usually contains most of the following components, in sequence:

1. Author.
2. Title of source.
3. Title of container,\*
4. Other contributors,
5. Version,
6. Number,
7. Publisher,
8. Publication date,
9. Location.

## Basic Format

No single entry will contain all items of information listed above; however, most works cited entries for works from library databases contain the following basic information: Author's last name, First name. "Title of work." Article's original source and publication date: page numbers. If pagination is unavailable, use *n. pag.* *Title of the database.* Publication medium (*Web*). Date researcher accessed the site. The URL or DOI of website/article. Date of access is optional for published journal articles. Date of access is important for online works (like websites) that can be updated or changed at any time, especially if the source provides no date specifying when it was produced or published.

\*A note on containers: If a source has more than one container (i.e. The Georgia Review, and JSTOR) repeat parts 3-9 for each container.

## Article from a Scholarly (Peer-Reviewed) Journal

Chan, Evans. "Postmodernism and Hong Kong Cinema." *Postmodern Culture* vol. 10, no. 3, 2000, n. pag. *Project Muse*. Accessed 5 June 2008.



***Making a Works Cited Entry: LibraryDatabases and Other Internet Sources (continued).***

**Article from a Popular Journal (Magazine)**

Guterl, Fred, and William Underhill. "Behind the Science of Mad Cow Disease." *Newsweek International*, vol. 32, 4 Dec. 2000. *InfoTrac OneFile*. Accessed 14 Jan. 2005.

**Article from a Newspaper**

"Group Seeks to Halt Canada Beef Imports." *Wall Street Journal*, 2 Feb. 2005, p. 1A. *ProQuest Newspapers*. Accessed 14 Feb. 2005.

# Other Sources in Works Cited: Film, Interviews, Etc.

## Published Proceedings of a Conference

Freed, Barbara F., editor. *Foreign Language Acquisition Research and the Classroom*. Proc. of Consortium for Language Teaching and Learning Conference, Oct. 1989, U of Pennsylvania. Heath, 1991.

## Personal Letter

Morrison, Toni. Letter to the author. 17 May 2001. Manuscript.

## Lecture or Public Address

Hyman, Earle. *Othello*. By William Shakespeare. 28 Mar. 1994, Symphony Space, New York. Reading.

## Personal Interview

Pei, I. M. Personal Interview. 22 July 1993. Transcript.

## Published Interview

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

## Videotape, DVD, Film

*It's a Wonderful Life*. 1946. Directed by Frank Capra, performances by James Stewart, Donna Reed, Lionel Barrymore, and Thomas Mitchell. Republic, 2001.

## ***Other Sources in Works Cited: Film, Interviews, Etc.(continued)***

### **Radio or Television Program**

“Death and Society.” Narrated Joanne Silberner. *Weekend Edition Sunday*, Natl. Public Radio. WUWM, Milwaukee. 25 Jan. 1998.

*Passion*. By Stephen Sondheim. Directed by James Lapine, performances by Donna Murphy, Jere Shea, and Marin Mazzie, Amer. Playhouse. PBS. WNET, New York. 7 Mar. 1996.

### **Sound Recording**

Bono, Brian Eno, the Edge, and Luciano Pavarotti. “Miss Sarajevo.” *Pavarotti and Friends for the Children of Bosnia*, 1996.

### **Advertisement**

Head and Shoulders. Advertisement. *Newsweek*, 17 Mar. 2008, p. 2.

### **Video from YouTube**

“*Buffy the Vampire Slayer*: Unaired Pilot 1996.” *YouTube*, uploaded by Brian Stowe, 28 Jan. 2012, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=WR3J-v7QXXw](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WR3J-v7QXXw).

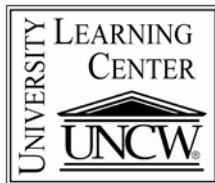
# Core Elements of Works Cited Page Entries

1. **Author.**
2. **Title of source.**
3. **Title of container,** → A container is a larger work in which the source itself can be found. Examples include, but are not limited to, anthologies, periodicals, comic books, television series, and Web sites.
4. **Other contributors,**
5. **Version,** → If more than one version of a work is released (i.e. a special or revised edition or a director's cut), the version should be identified.
6. **Number,** → i.e. volume and issue numbers.
7. **Publisher,**
8. **Publication date,**
9. **Location.** → Location includes page numbers, URL/DOI, disc number, physical place (like a museum). The 8<sup>th</sup> edition of MLA no longer requires the medium of publication to be stated (i.e. "Web." or "Print.") unless the source is an unexpected type of work and the medium is needed for clarification. City of publication is only required in special circumstances.

# Works Cited

MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers. 8th ed., MLA, 2016.

Purdue OWL. "MLA Formatting and Style Guide." *The Purdue OWL*. Purdue U Writing Lab, 10 May 2008. Accessed 15 Nov. 2008.



*Revised by: Cecily de Forest and Kayla Schilke 2016*