

## Modern Language Association (MLA) Format

*From Purdue University Online Writing Lab  
Revised by Germanna Community College Tutoring Services*

### General Format

- 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.

### Formatting the First Page of Your Paper

- Do not make a title page for your paper unless specifically requested.
- Provide a double-spaced entry in the top left corner of the first page that lists your name, your instructor's name, the course, and the date.
- 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.)
- Center your title on the line below the header with your name, and begin your paper immediately below the title.

Here is a sample first page of an essay in MLA style:

|   |
|---|
| <b>Purdue 1</b>   |
| <b>Pete Purdue</b>  |
| <b>Dr. B. Boilermaker</b>   |
| <b>English 101</b>  |
| <b>12 November 2000</b>   |
| <b>Building a Dream: Reasons to Expand Ross-Aide Stadium</b>  |
| <b>During the 2000 football season, the Purdue Boilermakers won the Big Ten Conference Title, earned their first trip to the Rose Bowl in thirty-four years, and played consistently to sold-out crowds. Looking ahead...</b> |

### Formatting Your Works Cited List

- Begin your works cited list on a separate page from the text of the essay.
- Label the works cited list Works Cited (do not underline the words Works Cited nor put them in quotation marks) and center the words Works Cited at the top of the page.
- Double space all entries and do not skip spaces between entries.

### 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**.

## 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. 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).**

### **Short Quotations**

To indicate short quotations (fewer than four typed lines of prose or three lines of verse) in your text, enclose the quotation within double quotation marks and incorporate it into your text. Provide the author and specific page citation (in the case of verse, provide line numbers) in the text, and include a complete reference in the works-cited list. Punctuation such as periods, commas, and semicolons should appear after the parenthetical citation. Question marks and exclamation points should appear within the quotation marks if they are a part of the quoted passage but after the parenthetical citation if they are a part of your text. For example:

**According to some, dreams express "profound aspects of personality" (Foulkes 184), though others disagree.**

According to Foulkes's study, dreams may express "profound aspects of personality" (184).

Is it possible that dreams may express "profound aspects of personality" (Foulkes 184)?

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

### 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. (Bronte 78)**

In her poem “Sources,” Adrienne Rich explores the roles of women in shaping their world:

The faithful drudging child  
the child at the oak desk whose penmanship,  
hard work, style will win her prizes  
becomes the woman with a mission, not to win prizes  
but to change the laws of history. (23)

### **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).**

If there are ellipsis marks in the quoted author’s work, do not put brackets around them; only use brackets around ellipsis marks to distinguish them from ellipsis marks in the quoted author’s work.

## Citing the Bible

In your first parenthetical citation, you want to make clear which Bible you're using (and italicize or underline the title), as each version varies in its translation, followed by book (do not italicize or underline), chapter and verse. For example:

Ezekiel saw “what seemed to be four living creatures,” each with faces of a man, a lion, an ox, and an eagle (*New Jerusalem Bible*, Ezek. 1.5-10).

All future references can then just cite book, chapter, and verse, since you've established which edition of the Bible you will be using.

## Your Works Cited List

The works cited list, alphabetized by the first word in each entry (usually the author's last name), 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 must be cited in your text.

### Basic Rules

- 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.
- The first line of each entry in your list should be flush left. Subsequent lines should be **indented one-half inch**. This is known as a hanging indent.
- All references should be **double-spaced**.
- **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.
- **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 effectively, 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.
- Every entry must have a publication medium marker (Print, Web, Television, etc.). These are at the end of the citation, with the exception of web sources which will be placed before the date of access.

## Basic Forms for Sources in Print

### A Book

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

### Book with One Author

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

### 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. Print.

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

### Book with More Than One Author

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

**NOTE:** If there are **more than three authors**, you may list only the first author followed by the phrases 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. Print.

### Book or Article with no Author Named

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

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

**NOTE:** 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 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: John Hopkins UP, 1997. Print.

### 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. Print.

### 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. Print.

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

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

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

#### Article from a Reference Book

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

#### An Article in a Periodical (Such as a Newspaper or Magazine)

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

**NOTE:** 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. Print.

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

#### An Article in a Scholarly Journal

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

### Essay in a Journal

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

### The Bible (Specific Editions)

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

### Basic Forms for Electronic Sources

If no author is given for a webpage 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 Website

Author(s). Name of Page. Date of Posting/Revision. Name of institution/organization affiliated with the site. Web. Date of Access.

#### Website Examples

Felluga, Dino. *Undergraduate Guide to Literary Theory*. 17 Dec. 1999. Purdue University. Web. 15 Nov. 2000. Purdue Online Writing Lab. 2003. Purdue University. Web. 10 Feb. 2003.

#### An Article on a Website

Author(s). "Article Title." *Name of website*. Date of posting/revision. Name of institution/organization affiliated with site. Web. Date of access.

#### Article on a Website

Poland, Dave. "The Hot Button." *Roughcut*. 26 Oct. 1998. Turner Network Television. Web. 28 Oct. 1998.

“Using Modern Language Association (MLA) Format.” *Purdue Online Writing Lab*. 2003.

Purdue University. Web. 6 Feb. 2003

### **An Article in an Online Journal or Magazine**

Author(s). “Title of Article.” *Title of Journal* Volume. Issue (Year): Pages/Paragraphs. Web.

Date of Access.

**NOTE:** Some electronic journals and magazines provide paragraph or page numbers; include them if available. This format is also appropriate to online magazines; as with a print version, you should provide a complete publication date rather than volume and issue number. If the source does not provide pagination, use the abbreviation N. pag.

### **Online Journal Article**

Wheelis, Mark. “Investigating Disease Outbreaks Under a Protocol to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention.” *Emerging Infectious Diseases* 6.6 (2000): N. pag. Web. 5 Dec. 2000.

### **An Online Image or Series of Images**

Artist if available. “Description or title of image.” Date of image. Online image. Title of larger site. Web. Date of download.

Smith, Greg. “Rhesus Monkeys in the Zoo.” N. d. Online image. *Monkey Picture Gallery*. Web. 3 May 2003.

### **E-mail (Or Other Personal Communication)**

Author. “Title of the message (if any)” E-mail to person’s name. Web. Date of the message.

**NOTE:** 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.”

### E-mail to You

Kunka, Andrew. "Re: Modernist Literature." E-mail to the author. Web. 15 Nov. 2000.

### E-mail Communication Between Two Parties, Not Including the Author

Neyhart, David. "Re: Online Tutoring." E-mail to Joe Barbato. Web. 1 Dec. 2000.

### Online Posting

Karper, Erin. "Welcome!" Online posting. 23 Oct. 2000. Professional Writing Bulletin Board. Web. 12 Nov. 2000.

## An Article or Publication Retrieved From an Electronic Database

### The Generic Citation Form Would Look Like This:

Author. "Title of Article." *Publication Name* Volume Number (if necessary) Publication Date: page number-page number. *Database name*. Service name. Library Name, City, State. Web. Date of access.

### 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. Web. 19 February 2003.

### Article in a Reference Database on CD-ROM

"World War II." *Encarta*. CD-ROM. Seattle: Microsoft, 1999.

### Article from a Periodically Published Database on CD-ROM

Reed, William. "Whites and the Entertainment Industry." *Tennessee Tribune* 25 Dec. 1996: 28. *Ethnic NewsWatch*. CD-ROM. Data Technologies. Feb. 1997.

## Other Types of Sources

### Government Publication

United States Dept. of Health and Human Services. *Healthy People 2010: Understanding and Improving Health*. Washington: GPO, 2000. Print.

### Pamphlet

Office of the Dean of Students. *Resources for Success: Learning Disabilities and Attention Deficit Disorders*. West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University, 2000. Print.

### Interview that you Conducted

Purdue, Pete. Personal Interview. 1 Dec. 2000.

### A Lecture or a Speech

Harris, Muriel. "Writing Labs: A Short History." 2003 Writing Center Conference. National Writing Centers Association. La Swank Hotel, Seattle. 28 March 2003. Lecture.

### Advertisement

Lufthansa. Advertisement. *Time* 20 Nov. 2000: 151.

### Television or Radio Program

"The Blessing Way." *The X-Files*. Fox. WXIA, Atlanta. 19 Jul. 1998. Television.

### Sound Recording

U2. *All That You Can't Leave Behind*. Interscope, 2000. Recording.

### Film

*The Usual Suspects*. Dir. Bryan Singer. Perf. Kevin Spacey, Gabriel Byrne, Chazz Palminteri, Stephen Baldwin, and Benecio del Toro. Polygram, 1995. Film.

### TV Advertisement

Staples. Advertisement. CBS. 3 Dec. 2000.

## Additional Resources

### From the Modern Language Association

- [MLA Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing](#) (ISBN: 0-87352-977-4)
- [MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers](#) (ISBN: 0-87352-975-8)

### From Other Presses

- [The World's Easiest Guide to Using the MLA: A User-Friendly Manual for Formatting Research Papers According to the Modern Language Association Style Guide](#) (ISBN: 0964385376)
- [The Essentials of MLA Style: A Guide to Documentation for Writers of Research Papers](#) (ISBN: 0395883164)
- [A Guide to MLA Documentation: With an Appendix on APA Style](#) (ISBN: 0395938511)

### Online Resources

- <http://www.apastyle.org/> (purchase an MLA style manual and learn more about citing electronic sources)
- <http://www.liu.edu/cwis/cwp/library/workshop/citmla.htm> (MLA citation style)
- <http://webster.commnet.edu/mla/index.shtml> (everything about MLA)
- <http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/DocMLA.html> (MLA citations and works cited)

## A Final Reminder...

The Germanna Community College Tutoring Services is here to help answer any questions you may have about MLA style. To make an appointment, call (540) 891-3017 for an appointment at the Fredericksburg Area Campus or call (540) 423-9148 to make an appointment at the Locust Grove Campus.