

## THE MLA DOCUMENTATION STYLE

The Modern Language Association (MLA) documentation style is an accepted method of documenting other people's ideas and words into a research paper. However, documentation style differs according to disciplines (for example, Nursing uses American Psychological Association style/APA; History uses Chicago Style), so you should consult your instructor to verify the accepted documentation style options for the work you are doing. This handout provides an overview of MLA style; for material not covered in this handout, please consult your instructor, the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* (7<sup>th</sup> ed., 2009), the Writing Center staff, or the Writing Center web page.

### MLA In-Text Citations

As a general rule, only about 10% of your paper should consist of direct quotes. Most of the sources you use should be paraphrased.

The 7<sup>th</sup> ed. of the MLA suggests that titles of books, periodicals, newspapers, films, home pages, etc. be italicized, both within your text and Works Cited (see 3.6.2 in the *MLA Handbook*).

**Introducing sources:** The first time you use a source in your text, it's beneficial to the reader to introduce it, identifying author and credentials in order to establish his/her/their credibility as well as your own as writer.

Nancy F. Cott, author of *Public Vows: A History of Marriage and the Nation*, points out that "the suitability of the marital metaphor for political union drew tremendous attention to marriage itself in the Revolutionary era" (16).

After you have introduced the source, subsequent parenthetical citations in the text will include only the author's/s' last name (if not already mentioned in the text) and page number (if available). Note the lack of a comma between the author's last name and the page number; the period is placed outside parentheses.

While men and women consented to marry, "public authorities set the terms of marriage" such that they were indeed common law and could not be broken without offending not only the partner, but "the larger community, the law, and the state" (Cott 11).

*or*

Cott observes that living together, having children outside of marriage, and even divorce elicited social ostracism, yet today these formerly condemned behaviors raise little negative comment, if any at all (202-203).

**Works by the same author:** If you are using more than one work by the same author, you must include a shortened form of the title along with the author's/s' last name and page number if available. Note the use of the comma here.

(Cott, *Public Vows* 16)      (Cott, *No Small Courage* 43)

**More than one author:** In works with one to three authors, all authors must be cited (Jones, Smith, and Alt 21). If you are citing a source written or edited by four or more people, use only the name of the first person listed, followed by et al. (Latin for "and others") with no additional punctuation, for example, (Blair et al. 21) if Blair isn't mentioned in your text. If the author is mentioned in the text:

Blair et al. observed that the fine arts were almost ignored by colonial writers (21).

**No author:** If there is no author, introduce the article by its title or source:

In “Death of a Writer,” Ralph Ellison is described as “a writer of universal reach” (A18).

Subsequent parenthetical citations used later in your paper will include the article title (or a shortened form of it if it’s long) in quotes:

A *New York Times* editorial describes Ralph Ellison as “a writer of universal reach” (“Death” A18).

**Source within a source:** If you are quoting a source within a source, that is, the source that you’re using is citing information that you want to use as well, indicate this by using **qtd. in** (for “quoted in”) in your parenthetical citation.

George Cukor once told F. Scott Fitzgerald, “I’ve only known two people who eat faster than you and I, and they are both dead now” (qtd. in Latham 39).

You thus refer your readers to the source in your Works Cited in which the quote can be found.

**Blocked quotes:** If you are quoting more than *four* fully typed lines, first ask yourself whether you really need the entire quote. A blocked quote means that:

-the entire quote is *indented one inch or ten spaces from the left margin only and double spaced* (see *MLA* 3.7.2)

-quotation marks are omitted

-author and/or page number are parenthetically cited *one space after the period* (see *MLA* 6.3)

Naomi Baron states in *Always On: Language in an Online and Mobile World* that

Studies on the cognitive effects of multitasking continue to appear, and the news is sobering. The bottom line is that at least for many cognitive tasks, we simply cannot concentrate on two things at once and expect to perform each as well as if we did the tasks individually. Now a group of neuroscientists has the pictures to prove it. (217)

**Ellipses:** If you need to leave out words in an exact quote, use ellipses—a series of three periods with a space between each. Do not use ellipses if you are paraphrasing or summarizing.

Margaret Fuller, in *Women in the Nineteenth Century*, assures her readers that “All men are privately influenced by women; each . . . is too much biased by these relations to fail of representing their interests” (97).

### **Citing page numbers within the text**

Whenever possible, give the correct page number, e.g. (A13) or inclusive page numbers, e.g. (34-41), or paragraph number (par. 3), *but only if the numbering already exists in the text*. If no page numbers are given, as can happen with online sources and information from library subscription services (Academic Search Complete, etc.), page numbers are not used; do not number pages yourself. A printout may list pages “1 of 4,” “2 of 4,” etc. Do not use these as they simply reflect the number of pages printed out which may be inconsistent from printer to printer. If no page numbers are used in the document, cite the author’s/s’ last name(s) or the title of the article if no author is given:

(Hemingway)  
 (“Afghanistan Retaliates”)

If the document has numbered paragraphs (again, do not number them yourself), you may cite by the paragraph number:

(Smith and Ames, par. 4)

### **e-books**

According to MLA, “Most electronic readers provide a numbering system that tells users their location in the work. Do not cite this numbering, because it may not appear consistently to other users. If the work is divided into stable numbered sections like chapters, the numbers of those sections may be cited.” Thus, location numbers as well as page numbers cannot be used. A chapter is cited as follows:

(Carr, ch. 3)

*Note that a comma appears in the parenthetical citation after the author’s name if the subsequent reference begins with a word.*

## **MLA Works Cited**

The Works Cited list is just what its name indicates: a list of the works you have actually cited in your paper. The following offers samples for entries in the Works Cited. Not all examples are included in this list. If you need more information, use the *MLA Handbook*, 7<sup>th</sup> edition, go to [www.mla.org](http://www.mla.org) and click on FAQ (good information here concerning internet source citations), or ask a tutor in the Writing Center.

**Location of Works Cited:** The Works Cited page begins on the page following your last page of text. For example, if your paper ends in the middle of page 12, you would move begin typing your Works Cited at the top of page 13. Number this page as you do your others and center the title “Works Cited” (without the quotation marks) at the top of the page. Keep your word processing program on double-space; do not add any extra spaces between entries.

**Indentation:** Use hanging indentation when preparing each entry, which means that the first line of each entry should begin at the left margin. Indent second and subsequent lines of that entry five spaces or ½ inch.

**Titles:** *Italicize* titles of books, periodicals, films, etc. Capitalize the first word and all major words in titles as well as the first word after a colon in a title.

**Alphabetizing citations:** Alphabetically arrange sources in your Works Cited list according to author's last name. If no author is listed, alphabetize by the first important word in the title (not "A," "An," or "The").

**Authors:** Always invert the name of the first author listed (even if there is only one). If there is more than one author, invert only the first name and separate subsequent names with a comma. For more than three authors, you may use the first author's name followed by *et al.* (see *MLA* 5.5.4).

Examples: Baker, Nancy L., and Nancy Huling.  
Booth, Wayne C., Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams.  
Carroll, Noel, et al.

**Page numbering in citations:** When citing a book in your Works Cited, do not cite the page numbers you used; simply cite the entire book. When citing journals, newspapers, periodicals, etc., cite complete page ranges; if ranges are not continuous, i.e. continue at the back of a magazine, for example, use the first page number with a plus sign, e.g. (43+). If the sources are online, page numbers may not appear, and you need to use N. pag. (*MLA* 5.6.2c)

**Abbreviations:** All months are abbreviated except for May, June, and July.

**Publication information:** Major cities such as Chicago, New York, Boston, etc. do not need the geographic state listed after them; use states with less identifiable cities or cities with the same name. Cities are abbreviated by their two-initial designation: IL, MO, MI, etc.

(*MLA* 7.5): General information about publishers is also omitted, such as Company, Inc., Corp., etc. For example, W. W. Norton and Company becomes W. W. Norton. When citing a university press, such as Oxford or Chicago, use U for University and P for press, as in Oxford UP or U of Chicago P.

### Sample Citations

A book citation includes the author's name or names, the title of the book, the place of publication, the publisher, the year of publication, *and the medium of publication consulted*. If the place of publication or publisher is missing, use N.p. If the date is missing, use N.d. For example:

Smyth, John. *A Book of Etiquette*. New York: N.p., 1899. Print.  
Reedy, Mary. *Rules of Etiquette*. New York: Harper, N.d. Print.

The following are examples of correct MLA citations.

#### 1. Book with one author:

Carr, Nicholas. *The Shallows: What the Internet Is Doing to Our Brains*. New York: W. Norton, 2011. Print.

#### 2. Book with two to three authors:

Milkes, Sidney, and Michael Nelson. *The American Presidency: Origins and*

*Development, 1776-1990*. Washington: Congressional Quarterly, 1990. Print.

**3. Book with more than three authors or editors:**

Plag, Ingo, et al. *Introduction to English Linguistics*. Berlin: Mouton, 2007. Print.

**4. Republished book:**

King, Stephen. *Danse Macabre*. 1981. New York: Gallery, 2010. Print.

**5. Revised edition** (such as a textbook, etc.):

Treat, Nola, and Lenore Richards. *Quantity Cookery*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Boston: Little, 1966. Print.

**6. Two or more works by the same author:**

Alphabetize by the *title* of the work. Note that the author's name is not repeated but is represented by three dashes (---) followed by a period.

Alcott, Louisa May. *Little Men*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. New York: Scribner, 1985. Print.

---. *Little Women*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. New York: Scribner, 1985. Print.

**7. Multi-volume work (entry changes depending on number of volumes used):**

Sadie, Stanley. *The New Grove Dictionary of American Music*. 29 vols. Oxford, UK:

Oxford UP, 2004. Print.

**8. Specialized dictionary or encyclopedia:**

When citing **familiar** works, do not give full publication information. Only edition and year are needed.

"Hegemony." *Oxford English Dictionary*. 11<sup>nd</sup> ed. 2008. Print.

-For all other specialized reference works, use full publication information:

Allen, Anita A. "Privacy in Health Care." *Encyclopedia of Bioethics*. Ed. Warren T.

Reich. Rev. ed. 5 vols. New York: Macmillan, 1995. Print.

**9. Work in an anthology or collection of works by different authors:**

Sconce, Jeffrey. "'Trashing' the Academy: Taste, Excess, and an Emerging Politics of

Cinematic Style." *The Horror Zone: The Cultural Experience of Contemporary Horror*

*Cinema*. Ed. Ian Conrich. London: I. B. Tauris, 2010. 103-122. Print.

**10. Newspaper articles:**

Signed

Smith, Rena. "Turning Her Life Around." *Wall Street Journal* 2 Apr. 1995,  
Midwest ed.: B3. Print.

Unsigned

"Pharmacy Discounts Will Help Elderly." *Herald and Review* [Decatur, IL] 24  
July 2001: A5. Print.

**11. Magazine/Periodical articles**

Signed

Carr, Nicholas. "Is Google Making US Stupid?" *Atlantic* July/Aug. 2008: 56-63. Print.

Unsigned

"NSCA Offers the First in a Series of New Video Training Tapes." *Electronic Service and  
Technology* June 1995: 69. Print.

**12. Journal articles**

Note that all scholarly journals are cited using volume and issue number, no matter what kind of pagination appears (see MLA 5.4.2). If only one number appears, it is the issue number.

Martin, Regina. "The Drama of Gender and Genre in Edith Wharton's Realism."

*Twentieth Century Literature* 58.4 (2012): 582-605. Print.

**13. Interview**

Only three pieces of information are needed: the name of the subject, the type of interview (usually "personal," "telephone," or "E-mail"), and the date of the interview.

Myers, Denise. Personal interview. 29 Oct. 2013.

Rammelsberg, Anne. E-mail interview. 24 Jan. 2014.

**14. A Lecture, Presentation, etc.**

Frech, Stephen. "The Dark Villages of Childhood." Millikin University, Decatur, IL.

21. Oct. 2011. Reading.

O'Conner, Michael. "Twain in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century." Millikin University, Decatur, IL. 19 Sept. 2012.

Class lecture.

**15. Television or Radio Broadcast** (MLA 5.7.1)

These citations can vary, so check *MLA*. Be sure to add the medium of reception at the end of the citation (e.g. Television, Radio, etc.). Identify the national affiliate as well as the local affiliate.

“The Phantom of Corleone.” Narr. Steve Kroft. *Sixty Minutes*. CBS. WCBS, New York. 10 Dec. 2006. Television.

“Why Traditional Publishing Is Really in a ‘Golden Age.’” Narr. Audie Cornish. Interview with Michael Pietsch. *All Things Considered*. NPR. WSEC, Springfield, IL, 5 Feb. 2013. Radio.

Television show on DVD:

“The Luminous Fish Effect.” *The Big Bang Theory: The Complete First Season*. Writ. David Litt, Lee Arensohn, Chuck Lorre, and Bill Prady. Dir. James Burrows. CBS. 15 Oct. 2007. Warner Brothers, 2008. DVD.

**16. Film, Video, or Sound Recording** (see MLA 5.7.1-5)

If you’re citing a movie that you’ve seen at the movie theatre, cite it as a Film. If you’ve watched it in another format, be sure to identify that format (DVD, Netflix, Hulu+, etc.)

*Lee Daniels’ The Butler*. Dir. Lee Daniels. Perf. Forest Whitaker, Cuba Gooding Jr., Oprah Winfrey. The Weinstein Company, 2013. Film.

*The Normal Heart*. Dir. Ryan Murphy. Perf. Mark Ruffalo, Julia Roberts, Jim Parsons. HBO Home Video, 2014. DVD.

*Psycho*. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Perf. Anthony Perkins, Janet Leigh. 1960. Universal, 1999. Netflix.

Holiday, Billie. *The Essence of Billie Holiday*. Columbia, 1991. CD.

“Midnight Train to Georgia.” Perf. Gladys Knight, Ben Stiller, Jack Black, and Robert Downey Jr. *American Idol*. 21 May 2008. YouTube. 6 June 2009.

-Citing a Bonus Feature on a DVD (also see *MLA* 5.5.7 for an interview on a DVD)  
(The following is an audio commentary from both the director and the performer):

Verbinski, Gore, dir., and Johnny Depp, perf. *Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl*. Audio Commentary. Buena Vista Home Entertainment, 2004. DVD.

### 17. A live performance

*Holiday Jazz*. Perf. Millikin University Faculty Jazz Sextet. Kirkland Fine Arts Theatre. Millikin University, Decatur, IL. 17 Dec. 2013. Performance.

### 18. Advertisement

Television:

Name of Product, Company, or Institution. Advertisement. Name of local affiliate. Name of national affiliate. Viewing date. Medium.

Honda Civic. CBS. WCBS, New York. 2 Feb. 2014. Television.

Magazine:

Name of Product, Company, or Institution. Advertisement. *Publication*. Day Month Year of Publication: page numbers. Medium.

Miller Genuine Draft. Advertisement. *Sports Illustrated*. 4 May 2013: 112. Print.

### ELECTRONIC SOURCES

Information you access on your computer—whether it is through a subscription service (such as Academic Search Complete, JSTOR, ERIC, etc.) or the Internet, must be cited such that your readers know exactly where you acquired it. An article from a periodical you held in your hand is cited differently than that same article acquired online, and this must be made clear in your Works Cited. The 7<sup>th</sup> edition of the *MLA Handbook* (sec. 5.6) offers an explanation of correct citing of online information.

**URLs:** Note that URLs are not used in any online publications (*MLA* 5.6.1). You may include a URL *only* if the reader cannot find the information without it *or* your instructor requires it. Place the URL at the end of the citation, in angle brackets (< >), followed by a period.

### 19. Works from a Subscription Service

First, cite the source as if it were a hard copy, but omit the word “Print.” Instead, use:

Title of database (italicized)

Medium of publication consulted (*Web*)

Date you accessed the source (day, month, year)

Martin, Regina. “The Drama of Gender and Genre in Edith Wharton’s Realism.” *Twentieth*

*Century Literature* 58.4 (2012): 582-605. *Academic Search Complete*. Web. 9 Sept.

2014.

Hall, Elaine J., and Marnie Salupo Rodriguez. “The Myth of Postfeminism.” *Gender and Society*

17.3 (2003): N. pag. *JSTOR*. Web. 9 Aug. 2007.



**20. Scholarly journal not accessed through a subscription service (exists only in electronic form on the Web)** (see *MLA* 5.6.3)

Shehan, Constance. L., and Amanda B. Moras. "Deconstructing Laundry: Gendered Technologies and the Reluctant Redesign of Household Labor." *Michigan Family Review* 11 (2006): N. pag. Web. 8 Nov. 2007.

**21. Other works cited from the Web** (magazines, newspapers, news sources, etc.)  
General information needed:

Author. "Title of Article." *Title of overall website*. Publisher/sponsor of the site (if not available, use N.p.). Date of publication (day, month, year). Medium of publication (*Web*). Date of access (day, month, year).

"The ABCs of Obama's Health Care Plan." *WNBC.com*. WNBC, 24 June 2009. Web. 24 June 2009.

Carr, Nicholas. "Is Google Making Us Stupid?" *The Atlantic.com*. Atlantic Monthly Group, July/Aug. 2008. Web. 25 Aug. 2008.

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

Tyre, Peg. "Standardized Tests in College?" *Newsweek*. Newsweek, 16 Nov. 2007. Web. 15 May 2008.

"Utah Mine Rescue Funeral." *CNN.com*. Cable News Network, 21 Aug. 2007. Web. 21 Aug. 2007.

"Gnarly." *Urban Dictionary*. Urban Dictionary. 2013. Web. 26 Jan. 2013.

**22. Digital files** (*MLA* 5.7.18)

Digital files are those sources that exist independently from the Web or a published disc. Examples may include a sound recording on a digital audio player (e.g iPod) or an online book. In general, determine the type of source you're citing, and cite according to the guidelines presented earlier in this handout. In the place reserved for the medium of publication, record the digital file format, followed by the word "file." If you are unable to identify the file type, use "Digital file."

**-Citing music**

Beethoven, Ludwig van. *Moonlight Sonata*. Crownstar, 2006. MP3 file.

Hudson, Jennifer, perf. "And I am Telling You I'm Not Going." *Dreamgirls: Music from the Motion Picture*. Sony BMG, 2006. iPod file.

**-Citing a digital photograph or picture**

Delano, Jack. *At the Vermont State Fair*. 1941. Lib. of Congr., Washington. JPEG file.

**-Citing an electronic book (e-book):**

Follow the usual guidelines for citing a book. Then identify the source from which you retrieved your book followed by the word "file." If you're not sure, use "Digital file."

Rowling, J. K. *The Casual Vacancy*. New York: Little, Brown, 2012. Kindle file.

Chbosky, Stephen. *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*. New York: MTV Books, 2012. Nook file.

Austen, Jane. *Pride and Prejudice*. 1813. New York: Arcturus, 2009. Project Gutenberg file.

The same source may be available in a variety of formats. Be sure you identify the correct digital file you're using.

Hawthorne, Nathaniel. "Young Goodman Brown." *Digital American Literature Anthology*, 1.0.

Ed. Michael O'Conner. 2012. PDF file.

Hawthorne, Nathaniel. "Young Goodman Brown." *Digital American Literature Anthology*, 1.0.

Ed. Michael O'Conner. 2012. Kindle file.

Hawthorne, Nathaniel. "Young Goodman Brown." *Digital American Literature Anthology*, 1.0.

Ed. Michael O'Conner. 2012. Web. 7 Feb. 2013.

**-Citing YouTube:**

Obama, Barack. "We Have a Lot of Work to Do." Speech. 2 Nov. 2008. YouTube. 23

June 2009.

"Hidden America: Chicago Gang Members on Tough Street Life." *ABC News Nightline*. 19 Oct.

2012. YouTube. 5 May 2013.

"Midnight Train to Georgia." Perf. Gladys Knight, Ben Stiller, Jack Black, and Robert

Downey Jr. *American Idol*. 21 May 2008. YouTube. 6 June 2009.

**-Citing a blog post:**

A blog post citation contains the following components, in sequence:

1. Name of author(s), compiler, director, editor, narrator, or translator of the work
2. Title of the work (in quotation marks if the work is part of a larger work; italicized if the work is independent)
3. Title of the overall website (italicized)
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 no date is given, use n.d.
7. Medium of publication (Web)
8. Date of access (day, month, year)

Rose, Mike. "Reflections on Standards, Teaching, and Learning." *Mike Rose's Blog*. N.p. 22.

Mar. 2014. Web. 6 Apr. 2014.

The following is a sample Works Cited page shown properly laid out:

Works Cited

- Bartlett, Nancy H., Paul L Vasey, and William M. Bukowski. "Is Gender Identity in Children a Mental Disorder?" *Sex Roles* 43.2 (2000): 753-67. *Academic Search Premier*. Web. 17 Mar. 2009.
- Bradley, Linda. "Bringing It All Back Home: Horror Cinema and Video Culture." *Horror Zone*. Ed. Ian Conrich. London: I. B. Tauris, 2010. 45-63. Print.
- Carr, Nicholas. "Is Google Making Us Stupid?" *The Atlantic.com*. Atlantic Monthly Group, July/Aug. 2008. Web. 25 Aug. 2008.
- The Fault in Our Stars*. Dir. Josh Boone. Perf. Shailene Woodley, Ansel Elgort. 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox, 2014. Film.
- Hall, Elaine J., and Marnie Salupo Rodriguez. "The Myth of Postfeminism." *Gender and Society* 17.3 (2003): n. pag. *JSTOR*. Web. 9 Aug. 2007.
- Hawthorne, Nathaniel. "Young Goodman Brown." *Digital American Literature Anthology*, 1.0. Ed. Michael O'Conner. 2012. PDF file.
- Holiday Jazz*. Perf. Millikin University Faculty Jazz Sextet. Kirkland Fine Arts Theatre. Millikin University, Decatur, IL. 15 Dec. 2012. Performance.
- King, Stephen. "The Modern American Horror Movie—Text and Subtext." *Danse Macabre*. 1981. New York: Berkley, 2010. Kindle file.
- "The Luminous Fish Effect." *The Big Bang Theory: The Complete First Season*. Writ. David Litt, Lee Arensohn, Chuck Lorre, and Bill Prady. Dir. James Burrows. CBS. 15 Oct. 2007. Warner Brothers, 2008. DVD.
- Myers, Denise. Personal interview. 29 Mar. 2013.
- Obama, Barack. "We Have a Lot of Work to Do." Speech. 2 Nov. 2008. YouTube. 23 June 2009.
- The Shining*. Dir. Stanley Kubrick. Perf. Jack Nicholson, Shelley Duvall. 1980. Warner Bros. Summit Entertainment, 2001. Hulu+.