

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 APA or American Psychological Association 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* (7th ed., 2009), the Writing Center staff, or the Writing Center web page at www.millikin.edu/wcenter

MLA In-Text Citations

The 7th 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*).

1. The first time you use a source in your text, introduce it, identifying author and credentials in order to establish his/her/their credibility.

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).

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)

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. Or,

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

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).

2. 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.

3. If you are quoting more than *four* fully typed lines, ask yourself whether you really need the entire quote (as a general rule, your paper should contain about 10% direct quotes; the rest of the sources used should be paraphrased). 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)

-omit quotation marks

-author and/or page number are parenthetically cited *1 space after the period* (see *MLA* 6.3)

M. Scott Peck states in *The Road Less Travelled* that,

[T]he myth of romantic love is a dreadful lie. Perhaps it is a necessary lie in that it ensures the survival of the species by its encouragement and seeming validation of the falling-in-love experience that traps us into marriage. But as a psychiatrist I weep in my heart almost daily for the ghastly confusion and suffering that this myth fosters. (91-92)

4. 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).

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 offer samples for entries in the Works Cited. Not all examples are included in this list. If you need more information, use the *MLA Handbook*, 7th edition, go to www.mla.org and click on FAQ (good information here concerning internet source citations), or ask a tutor in the Writing Center.

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 to page 13 to begin typing your Works Cited. 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.

Appearance of citations: 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.

Arrangement of 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: When citing a book in your Works Cited, do not cite page numbers used. Simply cite as shown below. 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.*

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.

Otherwise, the following are examples of correct MLA citations.

1. Book with one author:

Cott, Nancy F. *Public Vows: A History of Marriage and the Nation*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2000. 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:

Blair, Walter, et al. *American Literature: A Brief History*. New York: Macmillan, 1974. Print.

4. Republished book:

Wharton, Edith. *The Age of Innocence*. 1920. New York: Appleton, 1974. Print.

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

Treat, Nola, and Lenore Richards. *Quantity Cookery*. 4th 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*. 3rd ed. New York: Scribner, 1985. Print.

---. *Little Women*. 3rd 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 Music and Musicians*. 20 vols. New York: Macmillan, 1980. Print.

8. Specialized dictionary or encyclopedia:

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

“Witch.” *Oxford English Dictionary*. 2nd ed. 1989. 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:

Boswell, John. "Categories, Experience, and Sexuality." *Columbia Reader on Lesbian and Gay Men in Media, Society, and Politics*. Ed. Larry Gross and James D. Woods. New York: Columbia UP, 1999. 36-47. 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.

Holland-Toll, Linda J. "Bakhtin's Carnival Reversed: King's *The Shining* as Dark Carnival." *Journal of Popular Culture* 33.2 (1999): 131-146. 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 Mar. 2009.
King, Stephen. E-mail interview. 17 Jan. 2009.

14. Television or Radio Broadcast

See MLA 5.7.1 for variations in program citations. Be sure to add the medium of reception at the end of the citation (e.g. Television, Radio, etc.). Note that you must 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.

“Death and Society.” Narr. Joanne Silberner. *Weekend Edition Sunday*. PBS. WSEC, Springfield, IL, 25 Jan. 1998. Radio.

c. Television show on DVD:

“Chandler Can't Cry.” *Friends: The Complete Sixth Season*. Writ. Andrew Reich and Ted Cohen. Dir. Kevin Bright. NBC. 10 Feb. 2000. Warner Brothers, 2004. DVD.

15. Film, Video, or Sound Recording

Public Enemies. Dir. Michael Mann. Perf. Johnny Depp, Christian Bale, Marion Cotillard. Universal, 2009. Film.

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

Twilight. Dir. Catherine Hardwicke. Perf. Kristen Stewart, Robert Pattison. 2008. Summit Entertainment, 2009. DVD.

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.

-To cite 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.

16. A live performance

Holiday Jazz. Perf. Millikin University Faculty Jazz Sextet. Kirkland Fine Arts Theatre. Millikin University, Decatur, IL. 19 Dec. 2009. Performance.

17. Advertisements

Neutrogena Visibly Firm Night Cream. Advertisement. *Redbook* Dec. 2008: 27. Print.

ONLINE SOURCES

Information you access on your computer—whether it is through a subscription service (such as Ebscohost, JSTOR, Lexis-Nexis, 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 in the library is cited differently than that same article acquired online, and this must be made clear in your Works Cited. The 7th 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. 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.

Page numbers: MLA points out that you can only cite what information you are given and thus must direct your readers as best you can to the sources you are using. Online periodicals might not always list page numbers. Whenever possible, give the page number (e.g. A13) or inclusive page numbers (e.g. 34-41), or paragraph number (par. 3), **but only if they are already numbered**. (If pagination is not continuous, use the first page number listed followed by a plus sign, e.g. 14+).

If pagination is not given, use N. pag. **DO NOT NUMBER PARAGRAPHS OR PAGE NUMBERS YOURSELF.**

Page numbers on a printout (e.g. 1 of 3, 2 of 3, etc.) are *not* cited because pagination may vary from printer to printer. In other words, your computer might print out the document in 3 pages, whereas another computer might print out the same document in 4 pages. Thus, use N. pag.

18. Works from a Subscription Service

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

Title of database (italicized)
Medium of publication consulted (*Web*)
Date of access (day, month, year)

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.

Hall, Elaine J., and Marnie Salupo Rodriguez. “The Myth of Postfeminism.” *Gender and Society* 17.3 (2003): N. pag. *JSTOR*. Web. 9 Aug. 2007.

McMichael, Anthony J. "Population, Environment, Disease, and Survival: Past Patterns, Uncertain Futures." *Lancet* 30.6 (2002): 1145-48. *LexisNexis*. Web. 23 Apr. 2003.

19. 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.

20. 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.

de Kooning, Willem. *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*. Encyclopedia Britannica, 2008. Web. 20 May 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.

21. Digital files

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.”

-To cite a recording on a digital audio player:

Hudson, Jennifer, perf. “And I am telling You I’m Not Going.” *Dreamgirls: Music from the Motion Picture*. Sony BMG, 2006. MP3 file.

-To cite an online book

Generally, follow the guidelines for citing a book. Then identify the source from which you retrieved your book, followed by a description of the digital file format with the word “file.” If you’re not sure, use “Digital file.”

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

-To cite YouTube:

Obama, Barack. “We Have a Lot of Work to Do.” Speech. 2 Nov. 2008. YouTube. 23
June 2009.

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

“Unrest Plagues Iran after Election.” *ABC News Nightline*. 16 June 2009. YouTube. 24
June 2009.

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

Works Cited

- Alcott, Louisa May. *Little Men*. 3rd ed. New York: Scribner, 1985. Print.
- . *Little Women*. 3rd ed. New York: Scribner, 1985. Print.
- 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.
- Carr, Nicholas. "Is Google Making Us Stupid?" *The Atlantic.com*. Atlantic Monthly Group, July/Aug. 2008. Web. 25 Aug. 2008.
- Cott, Nancy F. *Public Vows: A History of Marriage and the Nation*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2000. Print.
- de Kooning, Willem. *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*. Encyclopedia Britannica, 2008. Web. 20 May 2008.
- Hall, Elaine J., and Marnie Salupo Rodriguez. "The Myth of Postfeminism." *Gender and Society* 17.3 (2003): N. pag. *JSTOR*. Web. 9 Aug. 2007.
- Holiday Jazz*. Perf. Millikin University Faculty Jazz Sextet. Kirkland Fine Arts Theatre. Millikin University, Decatur, IL. 19 Dec. 2009. Performance.
- Neutrogena Visibly Firm Night Cream. Advertisement. *Redbook* Dec. 2008: 27. Print.
- Myers, Denise. Personal interview. 29 Mar. 2009.
- Obama, Barack. "We Have a Lot of Work to Do." Speech. 2 Nov. 2008. YouTube. 23 June 2009.
- Public Enemies*. Dir. Michael Mann. Perf. Johnny Depp, Christian Bale, Marion Cotillard. Universal, 2009. Film.
- "Pharmacy Discounts Will Help Elderly." *Herald and Review* [Decatur, IL] 24 July 2001: A5. Print.
- Twilight*. Dir. Catherine Hardwicke. Perf. Kristen Stewart, Robert Pattison. 2008. Summit Entertainment, 2009. DVD.