



Center for Academic Excellence

## Modern Language Association (MLA) Style of Referencing

The following departments generally use the MLA referencing style:

**English**

**Philosophy**

**Foreign Languages**

**Religious Studies**

Professors in other departments may also accept MLA formatting. Please check with your individual instructor.

### MLA FORMATTING

**Title Page:** The MLA research paper does not need a separate title page. Instead, beginning one inch from the top of the first page and flush against the left margin, type your name, your instructor's name, the course name and number, and the date all on separate lines with double spacing between lines. Double space again and center the title of your paper. Double space between the title and the first line of your paper.

**The Title:** Do not underline your title, put it in quotation marks, bold face, italicize it, or type it in all capital letters. Do not use periods at the end of your title or after any headings.

**Margins:** Except for the "header" (see next guideline), leave one-inch margins at the top and bottom and on both sides of the text. Always use standard, white 8 ½ by 11-inch paper.

**Pagination:** Page numbers are included in an MLA "header." The MLA header helps ensure consecutive pagination and guards against loss of pages. The header includes the student's last name and consecutive page numbers. The header must appear flush against the right margin in the upper right-hand corner, one-half inch from the top of the page. Do not use the abbreviation "p." before the page number or add a period, hyphen, or any other mark or symbol.

**Spacing:** The entire text of the MLA paper must be double-spaced. This guideline applies to blocked quotations, content notes, and the Works Cited page.

**Indentation:** Indent the first word of a paragraph five spaces from the left margin. Indent block quotations ten spaces from the left margin. Although the first line of entries on the Works Cited page abuts the left margin, subsequent lines in the Works Cited entries are indented five spaces, using a hanging indent.

## PARENTHETICAL CITATIONS

The MLA style uses parenthetical citations to document a reference in the text of a paper. When you quote a source, you need to cite the author and give the page number(s) on which the material appears. You may do this in different ways.

If you mention the author's name in the text, you put *only* the page number in the parenthetical citation. The quotation mark to close quoted text is placed before the parenthetical citation.

Willa Cather describes Paul as “tall for his age and very thin, with high cramped shoulders and a narrow chest” (144).

Please be aware that the abbreviation “p.” is **not** used before the page number with MLA parenthetical citations.

If the author's name is not used in your sentence, you must give the name in the parenthetical citation in the following format:

Paul was “tall for his age and very thin, with high cramped shoulders and a narrow chest” (Cather 144).

The period follows the closing parenthesis. Note that there is **not** a comma between the author's name and page number.

Whether set off from the text or run into it, quoted material is usually preceded by a colon if the quotation is formally introduced and by a comma or no punctuation if the quotation is an integral part of the sentence structure. (See section 3.7.7.)

Percy Bysshe Shelley held a bold view: “Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the World” (794).

Percy Bysshe Shelley thought poets “the unacknowledged legislators of the World” (794).

“Poets,” according to Percy Bysshe Shelley, “are the unacknowledged legislators of the World” (794).

The comma after “Poets” did not appear in the original text but was added to make the grammar of the sentence correct. However, you may *not* include punctuation within your quotation marks that does not appear in the original text. For example:

Edith Wharton claims that “the test of the novel is that its people should be *alive*”; however, she feels that short stories depend more on “the dramatic rendering of a situation” (389).

If you are transcribing an **exclamation point or question mark** that appeared in the source you are quoting, those marks will appear inside the quotation marks. Note that a period still follows the parenthetical citation.

The older waiter in Ernest Hemingway’s “A Clean, Well-Lighted Place” asks himself, “What did he fear?” (79).

Voices in the house of “The Rocking-Horse Winner” haunt its inhabitants, incessantly telling them that “*There must be more money!*” (297).

#### **Use of References’ First Names and Middle Names or Initials:**

The *author’s full name* is given in the *text of the paper* the first time the author is mentioned. For subsequent references to the same person, just use the author’s last name. However, *parenthetical citations* use only *last names*. See the two examples below. Also note that the ampersand sign (&) is not used in parenthetical citations between the two names.

Edgar V. Roberts and Henry E Jacobs claim, “The skills needed for writing strong essays about literature cannot be separated from the skills involved in intelligent reading” (xiii).

“The skills needed for writing strong essays about literature cannot be separated from the skills involve in the intelligent reading” (Roberts and Jacobs xiii).

#### **WORKS CITED PAGE**

A list of works cited appears at the end of the paper. Begin the list on a new page and center the title, Works Cited. Entries are double spaced and subsequent lines should employ a hanging indent. Sources are listed alphabetically by author’s last name. Only those sources that were cited in the paper should be listed here. Sources not cited in your paper are not included on this list, even if you have read them to inform your discussion of the research topic.

Some basic formats for commonly used sources appear below. Note the guidelines that govern punctuation, spacing, capitalization, underlining, and other formatting details. For additional

assistance consult the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers: Sixth Edition or an updated college composition book that includes a section on the MLA documentation format.

**A book written by one author** (section 5.6):

Each section – author, title, and publication essentials – is punctuated with a period. The publication information lists the city, followed by a colon, then the name of the publishing company, followed by a comma, and the date of publication. Give the most recent date listed. You can italicize or underline publication information; just be consistent in your choice.

Cressy, David. Birth, Marriage, and Death: Ritual, Religion, and the Life Cycle in Tudor and Stuart England. New York: Oxford UP, 1997.

**A book by two or more authors:**

Jakobson's name comes first because it is listed first on the title page of the book.

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

**A book with an editor:**

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

**A short story found in an anthology:**

The page numbers for the short story are given at the end of the citation.

Cather, Willa. "Paul's Case." The Story and Its Writer: An Introduction to Short Fiction. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Ed. Ann Charters. Boston: Bedford, 1991. 83-94.

**An essay in an edited book:**

Everingham, Jo-Anne. "Organizing for Television Study and Use." English Teachers at Work: Ideas and Strategies from Five Countries. Ed. Stephen N. Tchudi. Upper Montclair: Boynton, 1986. 224-227.

**Article in a journal** (section 5.7):

Note that "67.2" signifies the volume number followed by the issue number.

Haswell, Janis, and Richard H. Haswell. "Gendership and the Miswriting of Students." College Composition and Communication 67.2 (1995): 223-254.

**An article from a monthly or bimonthly magazine:**

Wills, Garry. "The Words That Remade America: Lincoln at Gettysburg." Atlantic  
Monthly June 1992: 57-79.

**An article from a weekly or biweekly magazine:**

Trillin, Calvin. "Culture Shopping." New Yorker 15 Feb. 1993: 48-51.

**An article in a newspaper:**

"D5" is the section of the paper and the page number.

Rosenberg, Geanne. "Electronic Discovery Proves an Effective Legal Weapon." New York  
Times 31 Mar. 1997, late ed.: D5.

**Speech or lecture** (section 5.8):

Atwood, Margaret. "Silencing the Scream." Boundaries of the Imagination Forum. MLA  
Convention. Royal York Hotel, Toronto. 29 Dec. 1993.

Terkel, Studs. Address. Conf. On Coll. Composition and Communication Convention. Palmer  
House, Chicago. 22 Mar. 1990.

**Interviews:**

There are three different kinds: Published or recorded interviews, interviews broadcast on  
television or radio, and interview conducted by the researcher.

Wolfe, Tom. Interview. The Wrong Stuff: American Architecture. Dir. Tom Bettag.  
Videocassette. Carousel, 1983.

Wiesel, Elie. Interview with Ted Koppel. Nightline. ABC. WABC, New York. 18 Apr. 2002.

Slade, Hammer. Personal interview. 25 Oct. 1995.

**Television program:**

The Infinite Voyage. PBS. WNET, New York. 6 May 1992.

**Film or Video Recording:**

A film entry begins with title (underlined or italicized) and includes director, distributor, and  
year of release. You may want to include other pertinent data such as names of the writer,  
performers, and producer between the title and the distributor.

It's a Wonderful Life. Dir. Frank Capra. Perf. James Stewart, Donna Reed, Lionel Barrymore, and Thomas Mitchell. RKO, 1946.

Like Water for Chocolate [Como agua para chocolate]. Screenplay by Laura Esquivel. Dir.

Alfonso Arau. Perf. Lumi Cavazos, Marco Lombardi, and Regina Torne. Miramax, 1993.

### **CITING INTERNET SOURCES**

The rules for documenting Internet sources contained in the MLA manual should address most documentation situations that arise. Below are examples of commonly used types of Internet sources. See also the CAE handout *Citing Electronic Sources, MLA*. For more details and a thorough explanation, look in section 5.9 of the *MLA Handbook*.

Because Internet sources change rapidly, the most important detail when documenting Internet sources is the date that you consulted the site. Be sure to give the source's exact address. You want to record the link that corresponds to the specific pages from which you are extracting the information. Remember to put the electronic address in angle brackets. Also, note that when you type the web address on your Works Cited page, you must be sure not to include extra hyphens for line breaks. If the web address will not fit in a line of your text, make sure your line break occurs only after a slash (/); introducing a hyphen actually changes the web address and will make it difficult for readers to locate your site. It is always a good idea to print the material you intend to use in your papers. Below are some examples:

#### **Material from a computer database:**

Rocco, Pier L. "Lithium and Suicidal Behavior in Bipolar Patients." Medical Science Research 19 (1991): 910-16. Psych LIT 78-34111.

#### **Material from an information service:**

Schomer, Howard. "South Africa: Beyond Fair Employment." Harvard Business Review May-June 1983: 145+. Dialog file 122, item 119425 833160.

#### **Material from an information service, such as ERIC:**

Spolsky, Bernard. Navaho Language Maintenance: Six-Year-Olds in 1969. Navajo

Reading Study Prog. Rept. 5. Albuquerque: U. of New Mexico, 1969. ERIC ED 043 004.

If the material was not previously published, use the information service as the publication.

Streiff, Paul R. Some Criteria for Designing Evaluation of TESOL Programs. ERIC,

1970. ED 040 385.

For those of you taking advantage of Saint Joseph College's **library databases/subscription services**, such as Lexis-Nexis and EBSCO, you may use the following Works Cited reference model. You may also use this model for your own subscription services like AOL.

"Cooling Trend in Antarctica." Futurist May-June 2002: 15. Academic Search Premier. EBSCO.

City U of New York, Graduate Center Lib. 22 May 2002 <<http://www.epnet.com/>>.

"Table Tennis." Compton's Encyclopedia Online. Vers. 2.0. 1997. America Online. 4 July

1998. Keyword: Compton's.

**A personal or professional online site:**

Dawe, James. Jane Austen Page. 15 Sept. 1997 <[http://nyquist.ee.ualberta.ca/](http://nyquist.ee.ualberta.ca/~dawe/austen.html)

[~dawe/austen.html](http://nyquist.ee.ualberta.ca/~dawe/austen.html)>.

**An online book:**

Austen, Jane. Pride and Prejudice. Ed. Henry Churchyard. 1996. 6 Sept. 2002

<<http://www.pemberley.com/janeinfo/pridprej.html>>.

**An online scholarly journal:**

Chan, Evans. "Postmodernism and Hong Kong Cinema." Postmodern Culture 10.3 (2000).

Project Muse. 20 May 2002 <<http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/pmc/v010/10.3chan.html>>.

**An article in an online newspaper:**

Coates, Steve. "A Dead Language Comes to Life on the Internet." New York Times on the Web

28 Oct. 1996. 20 Apr. 1997 <[http:](http://www.nytimes.com/web/docsroot/library/cyber/week/1028Latin.html)

[//www.nytimes.com/web/docsroot/library/cyber/week/1028Latin.html](http://www.nytimes.com/web/docsroot/library/cyber/week/1028Latin.html)>.

**CITING ELECTRONIC SOURCES IN YOUR TEXT:**

As with print sources, information you access electronically is attributed in your text to its author. However, because page numbers are not used with Internet sources, the usual format for MLA parenthetical citations (author's last name page number) does not work very well. The *MLA Handbook* recommends citing all sources without pagination in your text rather than in parenthetical citations. Examples:

Stephen Hall Clark points out that while increased use of the railways in Britain promoted leisure travel for all classes, train cars, divided into first, second and third class, also were “steel barriers” between classes.

Jere Longman suggests that the women’s World Cup team is sending “a message around the world that women can be both athletic and feminine in an endeavor that in many countries, still carries the stigma that women who play are somehow unwomanly.”

Note that no parenthetical citation is used, and the web address does **NOT** appear in the text. Readers will reference the author’s names in your Works Cited and find out where these citations came from.