MLA Format: Quick Reference Guide
Revised February 2010

This handout provides a quick reference to the basics of using Modern Language Association (MLA) style. For complete guidelines, consult MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, 7th ed. For additional assistance, go to the Online Writing Lab (OWL) at Purdue University: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/557/15/

Recent Updates

- MLA no longer requires underlining. Titles, such as books and periodical titles, are now italicized rather than underlined.
- All entries in a reference list, whether print or electronic, must now include the medium in which they have been published (Print, Web, DVD, Television, etc.)
- URLs are not required in citations. MLA recommends that writers only include a web address if the audience is unlikely to find the source otherwise.
- Abbreviations: Some sources do not have a date, publisher or pagination. MLA advises, where applicable, to write n.d. for no date, n.p. for no publisher, and n.pag. for no pagination given.

Formatting Basics

- Double space throughout paper, with no extra spaces between paragraphs.
- Do not right justify.
- Top, bottom, and side margins should be one inch.
- Indent the first word of each paragraph by ½ inch or 5 spaces.
- Do not use a title page for the research paper: instead simply type your name, instructor’s name, course number, and date. This should be flush with the left margin.
- Center the title of the paper. Do not underline the title, or put in “quotation marks,” or set in ALL CAPITALS.
- Number all pages consecutively in the upper right-hand corner, ½ inch from the top and flush with right margin. Type your last name before the page number, and do not use “p.” before the number.

SAMPLE FIRST PAGE:

Laura Josephson
Professor Barnett
Humanities 210
8 November 2008

Ellington’s Adventures in Music and Geography

Works Cited

MLA style requires that the list of Works Cited start on a new page at the end of your paper. Formatting rules:

- Continue page numbering from the body of your paper.
• Center the title “Works Cited,” one inch from the top.
• Alphabetize entries by the author’s last name. If no author, alphabetize by the title (ignore A, An, The).
• Use hanging indents; that is, the first line of each entry begins at the left margin, and each line thereafter is indented.

For Books
• Name(s) of authors or editors. If only citing one chapter within a book, the author and title (in “quotation marks”) of the chapter.
• Title of book (including subtitle) *italicized*.
• City of publication, name of the publisher, and year of publication.
• Medium of publication.
• Edition (only if 2nd ed. or later).
• Volume number (if there is one).
• If citing one chapter within a book, the page numbers of the chapter.

For Print Journal and Magazine Articles
• Names of authors.
• Title of article in “quotation marks.”
• Title of journal or magazine *italicized*.
• Volume number (for a journal).
• Issue number (for a journal, if available).
• Date of publication (for journal article, note year only).
• Page numbers of the article.
• Medium of publication (Print).

For Journal and Magazine Articles Acquired Using a Library Database
• Names of authors.
• Title of article in “quotation marks.”
• Title of journal or magazine *italicized*.
• Volume number and issue number (for a journal).
• Date of publication (for journal article, note year only).
• Page numbers of the article as originally published in print journal.
• Name of the database *italicized*.
• Medium of publication (Web).
• Date of access (day, month, and year).
For Websites

- Name of author or editor (if given).
- Title of the work italicized if the work is independent; in quotation marks if it is part of a larger work.
- Title of the overall website italicized, if distinct from above.
- Publisher or sponsor of the site; if not available, use n.p.
- Date of publication (day, month, and year), if not available, use n.d.
- Medium of publication (Web).
- Date of access (day, month, and year).

Examples of Works Cited Page Entries

**Book with one author:**

**Book with two or three authors:**

**Book with four or more authors:**

**Book with an editor:**

**Encyclopedia article:**

**Chapter in a book:**

**Book of literary criticism:**

**Translation:**

**Print journal article:**

**Journal article acquired using a library database:**
Website:

Online periodical:

Newspaper article:

Magazine article:

Personal interview:

Filmstrip, slide program, and videotape:

Radio or television program transcript:

CD

Film:

Parenthetical Citations within the Text of the Paper

• References in your paper must clearly point to the specific sources in your list of Works Cited.
• In most cases, providing the author’s last name and the page number is sufficient:
  Medieval Europe was a place both of “raids, pillages, slavery, and extortion” and of “traveling merchants, monetary exchange, towns if not cities, and active markets in grain” (Townsend 10).
• If you have several works by the same author, also include the title (abbreviated if long):
  (Frye, Double Vision 85).
• If no author is listed, use the title (shortened if long):
  Voice of the Shuttle has many electronic sources.
• If using the title, remember to use correct punctuation: italicize book titles but use quotation marks for journal articles, short stories, book chapters, etc.
• The author’s name can be referred to within the sentence:
  Tannen has argued this point (178-85).
  …or the author’s name can be referred to within the parenthetical reference:
  This point has already been argued (Tannen 178-85).