

MLA (Modern Language Association) Citation and Format Style Guide

This guide provides examples of citations you might use in research papers following the MLA standard. It is an interpretation of MLA standard for citing resources. For precise MLA guidelines, see [MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers](#) by Joseph Gibaldi, fifth edition (LB2369.G53 1999 Ref). You may also want to consult [A Pocket Style Manual](#) by Diana Hacker, second edition (PE 1408.H26 1997 Ref). Both of these books are shelved at the reference desk.

CONTENTS:

- Which subject areas use the MLA standard?
- What is the basic format of the research paper?
- Parenthetical Text References to Other Sources
- Works Cited List
- Format for Citing Electronic Sources
- Footnotes and Endnotes
- Links to Other MLA Citation Guides

Which subject areas use the MLA standard?

MLA style is used in most English classes as well as other courses in the Humanities. Unless your professor tells you otherwise, use MLA for Art History, Classics, English, History, Modern Languages, Music, Philosophy, Religion, and Theater courses.

It is always preferable to find out from your professor which style s/he prefers. If this is not possible, at least be consistent in choosing one style of presenting bibliographic information and use it throughout your paper.

What is the basic format of the research paper?

A paper written according to MLA style will document outside sources in at least two ways: (1) a parenthetical reference in the text and (2) inclusion in a list of works cited. Occasionally, additional documentation will occur in endnotes or footnotes.

The list of works cited at the end of the paper includes an alphabetical compilation of all the sources used to write the paper. Parenthetical documentation augments this list of sources by indicating exactly what has been used from each source. It occurs within the text of the paper and tells the reader the source and location of a quotation, an idea, or observation that is not the writer's own. Notes may be used to supply comment or explanations that might break up the flow of text if included there, or supply additional sources, with or without commentary, that the reader may wish to consult on a particular point.

Should Titles be Underlined or Italicized?

With regard to whether you should italicize or underline the titles of books and periodicals, MLA once clearly preferred underlining. More recent guidance expresses a preference only for whichever style of type is distinctive enough to be easily recognizable. Italics are sometimes not distinctive enough, so when in doubt, use underlining.

Parenthetical Text References to Other Sources

The necessary information for parenthetical documentation is an author's last name and a page number from an identifiable source. The author must refer to a source that is listed in the Works Cited page. If the author and the page number appear within the parentheses, no punctuation need separate them. In general, parenthetical references should contain only enough information to refer the reader to a source in the list of Works Cited. Below are examples:

1. When the Works Cited Page contains only one work by an author you are citing, the in-text citation should include only the author's last name and the page number:

Some critics see Planet of the Apes as prophetic of the destruction that racial prejudice can cause (McConnell 68).

Note: If you mention the author's name in your sentence, you do not need to include it in the parenthetical reference.

McConnell sees Planet of the Apes as prophetic of the destruction that racial prejudice can cause (68).

2. When the Works Cited page contains more than one work by an author you are citing, the in-text citation should either mention the work in the text or include the title (if brief) or a shortened version of the title within the parenthetical reference:

In Storytelling and Mythmaking, McConnell sees interesting similarities between Eisenstein's Ivan the Terrible and Virgil's Aeneid (78).

McConnell sees interesting similarities between Eisenstein's Ivan the Terrible and Virgil's Aeneid (Storytelling 78).

3. When the Works Cited page includes different authors with the same last name, the in-text citation should include either the author's complete name in the text or the author's first initial along with the last name and the page number in the parenthetical reference:

According to Brian McConnell, Gandhi's teachings have had no significant impact on the development of modern India (268).

Some historians argue that Gandhi's teachings have not had a significant impact on the development of modern India (B. McConnell 268).

4. When there are two or three authors or editors, the in-text citation should include each last name:

Collective bargaining has increased the faculty's role in campus decision-making (Mortimer and McConnell 103).

Mortimer and McConnell believe that collective bargaining has helped faculty gain power in the campus decision-making process (103).

5. When there are more than three authors or editors, the in-text citation should include the first author's last name and either mention "the coauthors" or "coeditors" in the text or follow it with "et al." (Do not type the quotation marks shown here.) in the parenthetical reference.

6. When the work has no author, then the in-text citation should include the title in the text and the page number in parentheses or a shortened form of the title and the page number in the parentheses:

The introduction of Chinese writing had a significant impact on the development and preservation of ancient Korean mythology (Handbook 282).

According to the Handbook of Korea, Chinese writing played a significant role in the development and preservation of ancient Korean mythology (282).

7. When the work you cite quotes another author, the parenthetical citation should include the abbreviation “qtd. in,” before the author’s name and page number. Note, however, that the preference is to use original sources if possible:

Henry James held Balzac in “great esteem” (qtd. in Edel 242).

8. When the work cited is part of a larger anthology, your parenthetical citation should include the name of the author of the work rather than the editor of the anthology.

Works Cited List

The list of works cited appears at the end of the paper and is an alphabetical list (by author’s or editor’s last name) of all the sources that are cited within the text of the paper. If the work has no author or editor, then include it in the alphabetical list by the first key word in the title. A bibliographic entry in the works cited list has three main divisions, each followed by a period:

The author’s or editor’s name reversed for alphabetizing. The title. The publishing data, consisting of place of publication: publisher, and date.

Your Works Cited list should begin on a new page after the last page of text of your paper, and the title, Works Cited, should be centered at the top of the page. The first line of each entry should not be indented but subsequent lines should. Use double spacing throughout the list. The traditional rule has been to underline rather than italicize titles of books, but the newer versions of style guides state a preference only for the style of type that is distinctive enough to be easily recognizable.

Below are samples of different kinds of entries in the Works Cited list in MLA format. Examples are taken from or based on the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers by Joseph Gibaldi, fourth edition (LB2369.G53 1995 Ref). For additional formats please consult A Pocket Style Manual by Diana Hacker, second edition (PE 1408.H26 1997 Ref). Both manuals are shelved at the reference desk.

I. BOOKS

By a single author:

McConnell, Frank. Storytelling and Mythmaking: Images From Film and Literature. New York: Oxford UP, 1979.

Edel, Leon. Henry James, the Master: 1901-1916. Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1972.

By two or three authors:

Mortimer, Kenneth P. and T.R. McConnell. Sharing Authority Effectively: Participation, Interaction, and Discretion. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1978.

If there are more than three authors, name only the first and add “et al.” which means “and others” (example: Walter Edens, et al., eds.) or you may give all names in full in the order in which they appear on the title page.

More than one work by the same author:

When citing two or more books by the same authors, give the name(s) in the first entry. In subsequent entries, type three hyphens (which represent the name(s)) followed by a period and the title.

McConnell, Frank . The Spoken Seen: Film and the Romantic Imagination. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1975.

---. Storytelling and Mythmaking: Images from Film and Literature. New York: Oxford UP, 1979.

No Author Given:

No author given (in this example, the work should appear in the alphabetical Works Cited list under “Handbook”).

A Handbook of Korea. 4th ed. Seoul: Korean Overseas Information Service, Ministry of Culture and Information, 1982.

An Edition:

When citing editions students often wonder, “Which comes first...the author or the editor?” The answer depends on how you’ve used the edition in your paper. If you refer mostly to the text of the edition in your paper, you should begin with the author of the book.

Conrad, Joseph. Heart of Darkness: A Case Study in Contemporary Criticism. Ed. Ross C. Murfin. New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1989.

If you refer mostly to the work of the editor in your paper (for example the introduction or notes), begin your entry with the editor’s name.

Murfin, Ross C., ed. Heart of Darkness: A Case Study in Contemporary Criticism. By Joseph Conrad. New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1989.

An Edition Other Than the First:

If there is no edition number or name (ex. “expanded edition” or “revised edition”) on the book’s title page, it is probably a first edition. Unless your Works Cited list entries specifically state what edition a book is, readers assume that books are first editions.

A Handbook of Korea. 4th ed. Seoul: Korean Overseas Information Service, Ministry of Culture and Information, 1982.

A Multivolume Work:

If using two or more volumes of a multivolume work, cite the total number of volumes:

Churchill, Winston S. A History of the English-Speaking Peoples. 4 vols. New York: Dodd, 1956-58.

Separately titled volume in a multivolume work with a general title and one author:

Churchill, Winston S. The Age of Revolution. New York: Dodd, 1957. Vol. 3 of A History of the English-Speaking Peoples. 4 vols. 1956-58.

A Work in an Anthology:

Garcia Marquez, Gabriel. "A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings," Leaf Storm, and Other Stories. Trans. Gregory Rabassa. New York: Harper, 1972. 105-112.

If you quoted from Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness, printed in the Norton Anthology of English Literature (7th ed.), and you referred only to volume 2 of the Norton Anthology of English Literature (7th ed.) in your paper, your works cited entry would be:

Conrad, Joseph. "Heart of Darkness." The Norton Anthology of English Literature. Gen. ed. M. H. Abrams. Assoc. ed. Stephen Greenblatt. 7th ed. Vol. 2. New York: Norton, 2000. 1958-2017.

Cross-References:

If you cite two or more works from the same collection in your list of Works Cited, you can make a complete entry for the collection and then cross-reference the individual works to the entry for the collection. A cross-reference includes the author and title of the work, the last name of the editor of the collection, and the page numbers of the work. *Note: Using Cross-References does not affect alphabetizing your list of Works Cited—all entries are alphabetized, whether or not the cross-references come before the collection in which they are printed.

Example Cross Reference:

Brantlinger, Patrick. "Victorians and Africans: The Genealogy of the Myth of the Dark Continent." Gates 185-222.

Example Complete Entry for Collection:

Gates, Henry Louis, Jr. "Race," Writing, and Difference. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1986.

Example Cross Reference:

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. "Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism." Gates 262-280.

II. PERIODICALS

Periodicals are published regularly at fixed intervals. You are most likely familiar with the following types of periodicals: scholarly journals, magazines, and newspapers.

Most scholarly journals are paginated continuously throughout an annual volume. For example, if the first issue for a year ends on page 50, the next issue for that same year will begin with page 51.

Basic Format for Periodicals:

Author's name, reversed for alphabetizing. "Title of the article in quotation marks with a period inside the closing quotation mark." Name of the Periodical no period at end Volume Number (Year): start page-end page. (*Or start page+ if the pages of the article are not printed consecutively. See example for Ryan, Maureen below.)

*When you cite journals that paginate each issue separately, you need to include the issue number. After author's name, title of article, and title of periodical include: Volume Number.Issue Number (Year):Start page-end page. (See example for Ryan, Maureen below.)

Article in a Scholarly Journal paginated continuously:

Meyers, Jeffrey. "Bogie in Africa." American Scholar 66 (1997): 237-50.

Article in a Scholarly Journal that paginates each issue separately (The example below is not printed on consecutive pages. Since you can't list its page range, use a "+" sign to indicate that the article begins on page 77 (in this example) and continues, although not on consecutive pages.):

Ryan, Maureen. "Barbara Kingsolver's Lowfat Fiction." Journal of American Culture 18.4 (1995): 77+.

Articles in Magazines:

Article in a magazine published every week or every two weeks:

Bernstein, Jeremy. "The Dark Continent of Henry Stanley." New Yorker 31 Dec. 1990: 93-107.

If this article was in a magazine published every month or every two months:

Bernstein, Jeremy. "The Dark Continent of Henry Stanley." New Yorker Nov.-Dec. 1990: 93-107.

Book Review in a Magazine or Journal:

Ashton, Sherley. Rev. of Death and Dying, by David L. Bender and Richard C. Hagen. Humanist July-Aug. 1982: 60.

Crutchfield, Will. "Pure Italian." Rev. of Verdi: A Biography, by Mary-Jane Phillips-Matz. New Yorker 31 Jan. 1994: 76-82.

III. ARTICLES IN REFERENCE BOOKS

Signed articles:

Chiappini, Luciano. "Este, House of." Encyclopaedia Britannica: Macropaedia. 1974 ed.

Unsigned Articles (This Example: A Definition):

"Unctuous." Def. 5. The Oxford English Dictionary. 2nd ed. 1989.

IV. NEWSPAPERS

Brody, Jane. "Heart Attacks: Turmoil Beneath the Calm." New York Times 21 June 1983, late ed.: Cl.

V. TELEVISION, RADIO, AND FILM

Television and Radio:

"Stephen King: Fear, Fame, and Fortune." Biography. Arts and Entertainment Network. 22 Nov. 2001.

"Dugan's Double Play." All Things Considered. NPR. 15 Nov. 2001.

Film or Video Recording:

Boys Don't Cry. Dir. Kimberly Peirce. Twentieth Century Fox, 1999.

DVDs, Laser Discs, and Other Formats:

Boys Don't Cry. Dir. Kimberly Peirce. 1999. DVD. Twentieth Century Fox, 2000.

Format for Citing Electronic Sources:

Citations of electronic resources have the same purpose as citations of paper resources: they credit authors and provide enough information to allow the reader to find the items cited.

A Complete Scholarly Project or Information Database:

Basic Form (include those items that apply):

*If you cannot find some of this information, cite what is available.

Title of Project or Database. Name of the editor of the project or database (if given) preceded by "Ed." Electronic publication information, including version number (if relevant and if not part of the title). Date of posting or latest update. Sponsoring institution or organization. Date of access followed by <URL>.

Hoover's Online. 1998. Hoover's Company Information. 20 October 2001 <<http://www.hoovers.com>>

The Electronic Text Center. Ed. David Seaman. 7 Nov. 2001. U of Virginia Lib. 19 Nov. 2001 <<http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/index.html>>.

A Document within a Scholarly Project or Information Database:

Begin with the author's name (if given) or the title of the work in quotation marks. The entry continues with the basic information for a complete scholarly

project or information database (see above).

"Groundhog Day." Encyclopaedia Britannica Online. Vers. 99.1. 2000. Encyclopaedia Britannica. 19 Nov. 2001 <<http://www.eb.com:180/bol/topic?eu=39000&sctn=1>>.

Wollstonecraft, Mary. "A Vindication of the Rights of Woman." The Electronic Text Center. Ed. David Seaman. 7 Nov. 2001. U of Virginia Lib. 19 Nov. 2001 <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/toc/modeng/public/WoVind.html>.

A Professional or Personal Site:

Begin with the name of the person who created the site (if given) or the title of the site (underlined). If no title is given, provide a description such as "Home page." Continue with basic citation information (See "Complete Scholarly Project or Information Database" above).

Doe, Jane. Home page. 2 Feb. 2000 <<http://www.facstaff.bucknell.edu/doej>>.

Joseph Conrad Foundation. 19 Nov. 2001 <<http://members.tripod.com/~JTKNK/index.htm>>.

An Online Government Publication:

United States. Dept. of Justice. Natl. Inst. of Justice. Prosecuting Gangs: A National Assessment. By Claire Johnson, Barbara Webster, and Edward Connors. Feb. 1995. 9 June 1999 <<http://www.ncjrs.org/txtfiles/pgang.txt>>.

An Article in an Online Periodical or Online Versions of Print Journals:

Basic Format:

*If you cannot find some of this information, cite what is available.

Author's name. "Title of article." Name of Periodical. Volume or issue number Publication Date. Number range or total number of pages or paragraphs (if numbered). Date of access followed by <URL>.

Dans, Peter. "The Temple of Healing: Reflections from a Physician at the Movies."

Literature & Medicine 17.1 (1998): 114-125. 2 Oct. 1998 <http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/literature_and_medicine/v017/17.1dans.html>.

Viviano, Frank. "The New Mafia Order." Mother Jones Magazine. May-June 1995.

72 pars. 1 Oct. 1998 <http://www.mojones.com/MOTHER_JONES/MJ95/viviano.html>.

An E-Mail Communication:

Basic Form:

Name of Sender. "Title of Message." Description of message. Date of message.

Doe, Jane. "Re: Paper Assignment." E-mail to Jane Doe. 11 Jan. 2000.

An Online Posting:

Basic Form:

Author's name. "Title of Document." Online posting. Date document was posted. Name of the forum (if known). Date of access followed by <online address of the lists' Internet site or if no site address is known, the e-mail address of the lists' moderator or supervisor>.

Hurst, John A. "International Finance Questions." Online posting. 10 Sept. 1992. Business Libraries Discussion List. 10 June 1996 <BUSLIB-L@ISBSU.BITNET>.

Footnotes and Endnotes

There are two kinds of notes that can be used with parenthetical documentation:

1. Content Notes—Give the reader comment, explanation, or information that the author cannot include in her/his text.
2. Bibliographic Notes—Include citation information that is too detailed for a parenthetical reference. They are especially useful when you are citing multiple sources for one idea.

The distinction between endnotes and footnotes is merely one of location in your paper (See "Endnotes versus Footnotes—Which to Use and Formatting" below.) Both endnotes and footnotes can be used to provide the reader with additional information that is not readily incorporated into the main body of the paper.

When additional information in a footnote or endnote is necessary, place a superscript number at the appropriate point in the text and type the note at either the bottom of the page (as a footnote) or at the end of the paper (as an endnote). The numbers should appear in consecutive order throughout the text of the paper and they should refer to the appropriately numbered footnote or endnote.

In contrast to the Works Cited list, the first line of the content note is indented while the remaining lines are not. Typical MLA style uses notes only sparingly.

Endnotes versus Footnotes—Which to Use and Formatting

In research papers, make all notes endnotes, unless your instructor requests that you use footnotes. **Endnotes** appear at the end of your paper (before your list of Works Cited), starting on a new page numbered in order following the previous pages. Center the title "Notes" one inch from the top, double-space, tab in one-half inch from the left margin, and add the note number, without punctuation, slightly above the line (as a superscript numeral—see examples below). Type one space and then begin your note. Only the first line of the note is indented; the remaining lines begin at the left margin. Type the notes in the order they appear in your paper (matching each note to the appropriate number in the text), double-space, and number all pages.

Footnotes appear at the bottoms of pages, beginning four lines below the text. Single-space footnotes, but double-space between them. When a note continues on the following page, add a solid line across the new page two lines below the last line of the text and continue the note

two lines (one double space) below the solid line. (*Note: Most word-processing software, such as Microsoft Word, inserts footnotes and formats them properly.)

*Note, however, that by using the preferred parenthetical documentation method, many papers will have no footnotes at all.

Example Text followed by Example Content Note:

Memory in its varied forms—psychological, philosophical and textual—can provide a structure for full investigation of Joyce's work, and many other critics, especially in recent years, have taken up issues related to memory in Joyce's texts.¹

¹ Other writers who have recently explored issues related to my own interests in memory in Joyce's works include Udaya Kumar, The Joycean Labyrinth, Patrick Parrinder's James Joyce, and Klaus Reichert's address to the 1990 Monaco Joyce Symposium, entitled "Joyce's Memory."

Basic format for bibliographic footnotes or endnotes includes four main divisions:

**Note that the first line of the note is indented—the opposite of Works Cited entries:

The author's name in normal order, followed by a comma; the title; the publishing data in parentheses; and a page reference. (A period is only used once in footnotes and endnotes—at the end of the note.)

Following are some common format examples for your first bibliographic reference to a particular source.

For information about bibliographic note references to sources after they have been cited once, see "Subsequent Bibliographic Note References to a Source" below.

Books:

¹ Frank McConnell, Storytelling and Mythmaking: Images From Film and Literature (New York: Oxford UP, 1979) 32.

² A Handbook of Korea, 4th ed. (Seoul: Korean Overseas Information Service, Ministry of Culture and Information, 1982) 241-47.

³ Winston S. Churchill, The Age of Revolution, vol. 3 of A History of the English-Speaking Peoples, 4. vols. (New York: Dodd, 1957) 20.

⁴ Clyde E. Blocker, Robert H. Plummer, and Richard C. Richardson, Jr., The Two-Year College: A Social Synthesis (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice, 1965) 52-57.

If there are more than three authors, name only the first and add "et al." Example: Walter Edens, et al., eds.

Journals, Magazines, and Newspapers:

*Remember to include the issue number if the periodical paginates each issue separately.

*If the article does not appear on consecutive pages, list the starting page with a "+" sign.

² Maureen Ryan, "Barbara Kingsolver's Lowfat Fiction," Journal of American Culture 18.4 (1995): 77+.

³ Mark Snyder, "Self-Fulfilling Stereotypes," Psychology Today July 1982: 68.

⁴ Karen Spear, "Building Cognitive Skills in Basic Writers," Teaching English in the Two-Year College 9 (1983): 95.

⁵ Jane Brody, "Heart Attacks: Turmoil Beneath the Calm," New York Times 21 June 1983, late ed.: Cl.

Encyclopedia Articles:

¹⁴ Luciano Chiappini, "Este, House of," Encyclopaedia Britannica: Macropaedia, 1974 ed.

¹⁵ "Mandarin," The Encyclopedia Americana, 1993 ed.

A Work in an Anthology:

⁵ Gabriel Garcia Marquez, "A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings," trans. Gregory Rabassa, Leaf Storm, and Other Stories (New York: Plume, 1992) 83.

A Government Publication:

²¹ United Nations, Centre on Transnational Corporations, Foreign Direct Investment, the Service Sector, and International Banking (New York: United Nations, 1987) 4-6.

A Television or Radio Program:

³ "Stephen King: Fear, Fame, and Fortune," Biography, Arts and Entertainment Network, 22 Nov. 2001.

A Film or Video Recording:

⁴ Boys Don't Cry, dir. Kimberly Peirce. Twentieth Century Fox, 1999.

An Online Scholarly Project, Information Database, or Professional or Personal Site:

⁷ Britannica Online, vers. 98.2, Apr. 1998, Encyclopaedia Britannica, 7 Nov. 1998 <<http://www.eb.com/>>.

⁸ Joseph Conrad Foundation, 19 Nov. 2001 <<http://members.tripod.com/~JTKNK/index.htm>>.

⁹ Jane Doe, Home page, 2 Feb. 2001 <<http://www.facstaff.bucknell.edu/doej>>.

Articles in Online Periodicals or Online Versions of Print Journals:

¹¹ Frank Viviano, "The New Mafia Order," Mother Jones Magazine May-June 1995 72 pars. 1 Oct. 1998 <http://www.mojones.com/MOTHER_JONES/MJ95/viviano.html>.

¹² Peter Dans, "The Temple of Healing: Reflections from a Physician at the Movies," Literature & Medicine 17.1 (1998): 114-125. 2 Oct. 1998 <http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/literature_and_medicine/v017/17.1dans.html>.

¹³ John Markoff, "The Voice on the Phone Is Not Human, but It's Helpful," New York Times on the Web 21 June 1998, 6 July 1998 <<http://www.nytimes.com/library/tech/98/06/biztech/articles/21voice.html>>.

Subsequent Bibliographic Note References to a Source:

After full documentation has been given, a shortened form—author's surname and page number—is used in subsequent notes. “Ibid” and “op.cit.” are not used.

¹ Dorothy Allison, Two or Three Things I Know for Sure (New York: Dutton, 1995) 7.

² Allison 25-38.

If you've previously fully cited two or more works by the same author—for example, Dorothy Allison's Two or Three Things I Know for Sure and her Skin: Talking about Sex, Class & Literature—include a shortened form of the title following the author's last name.

⁸ Allison, Two or Three 13.

⁹ Allison, Skin 2-11.

Links to Other MLA Citation Guides

The first place to look: [MLA Style](#), by the Modern Language Association.

When you get to the MLA homepage, click “MLA Style.” For **specific examples**, click “Frequently Asked Questions about MLA Style.”

Some other good options:

Harnack, Andrew and Eugene Kleppinger. [Online! A Reference Guide to Using Internet Sources](#).

Research and Documentation in the Electronic Age: [The Humanities: MLA Style](#)

Walker, Janice. [Columbia Online Style: MLA-Style Citations of Electronic Sources](#), endorsed by the Alliance for Computers & Writing.

