



MLA Style: The Basics

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Citation & Documentation Workshop Series

Today's Goals

- Learn what MLA style is and why it is important
- Learn about the standard MLA title page format
- Learn basic documentation for books, journals, and websites
- Learn the differences between methods of source integration: summarizing, paraphrasing, and quoting
- Learn how to use signal phrases and in-text citation to avoid plagiarism

What is MLA, and why use it?

- Modern Language Association
- MLA Style sheet was established in 1951 by Modern Language Association; the first MLA handbook was established in 1977
- Style provides guidelines for publication in Liberal Arts & Humanity Journals, especially Language and Literature Journals
- Style lends consistency and makes texts more readable by those who assess or publish them

An MLA Cover Page

- **Do not** make an MLA Title Page unless specifically requested to by your professor.
- Title (Approximately 1/3 down from the top of the page)
 - Brief Title
 - Center text on page and double space.
- Author's Name (1" under the title)
 - First line: use only the word "by"
 - Second line: double-space under "by" then First and Last name
- Identification (1" under author's name)
 - Professor's Name
 - Subject Course # (**ex.** English 111)
 - Date: Day Month Year (**ex.** 10 May 2008)

MLA First Page

- Upper Left Hand Corner
 - List your name, instructor's name, course number, and date; remember to double space your lines.

Ex.

John Williams

Dr. R. Koch

English 111

12 August 2009

MLA First Page

- Title
 - Double space after the date and center your title. Do not use quotation marks or italicize the title. Only use quotation marks or italicize when recognizing another piece of work.

Ex.

11 August 2009

The Brick is Red: A Story of the *Three Little Pigs*

MLA First Page

- Header

- Create a header ½” from the top of the page with your last name and the page number in numerical form. Your professor may omit this requirement, so check with him or her about specific requirements.

Ex.

Williams 1

Example MLA First Page

Smith 1

Pete Smith

Dr. B. Boilermaker

English 101

12 October 2005

Building a Dream: Reasons to Expand

Ross-Aide Stadium

During the 2000 football season, the Purdue Boilermakers won the Big Ten Conference Title, earned their first trip to the Rose Bowl in thirty-four years, and played every game in front of a sold-out crowd. Looking ahead...

Documentation

- Refers to the Works Cited page at the end of the paper & in-text citations
- The List
 - is labeled Works Cited (centered, no font changes)
 - starts at the top of a new page
 - continues page numbering from the last page of text
 - is alphabetical
 - is double spaced
 - uses a hanging indent (1/2 inch – can be formatted from the Paragraph dialog box in MS Word)

Documenting Authors

- One Author (list the author's last name, first name):
Williams, John. *A Crazy Book*.
- More than One Author (list first author's last name, first name, and second author's first name last name):
Stewart, Jessica, and Gail Smith. *Panic: Writing Research Papers*.
- More than Three Authors (list first author's last name, first name, et al. or list first author's last name, first name, then remaining authors' first names last names)
Francis, Marcus, et al. *Forgetting Your College Papers*.
or
Francis, Marcus, Jessica Cooke, Polly Cracker, and Harry Hall.
Forgetting Your College Papers.

Documenting Authors

- Same Author (on the second entry of the same author insert three hyphens and a period)

Ex.

Young, Rob. *The Big Escape*.

---. *A Great History*.

Documenting Authors

- No Author (list and alphabetize by title, ignoring articles)

Ex.

An Afternoon of Tea. New York: Somerset, 1993.

Blue Dogs. Philadelphia: Harris Publishing, 2009.

Documenting Books

Model:

Author A's last name, first name, and Author B's first name last name.
Title of Book. City: Publisher, Year. Medium of Publication

Sample:

Williams, Ron, and Harrison Ford. *A Large, Boring Book*. Boston:
Houghton Mifflin, 2005. Print.

If the place of publication is a well known city, list only the city. If it is not a well known city, list the city and state or city and country.

Documenting Editions and Books with Editors

Model for an edition of a book:

Author A's Last Name, Author A's First Name, and Author B's
First Name Last Name. *Title of Book*. #th ed. City of Publication:
Publisher, Year. Medium of Publication.

Ex.

Williams, Abby, and John Williams. *The English Bulldog*. 7th ed.
Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2004. Print.

Model for a book with an editor:

Author's Last Name, First Name. *Title of Book*. Ed. Editor's First
Name Last Name. City of Publication: Publisher, Year. Medium
of Publication.

Ex.

Bronte, Emily. *Jane Eyre*. Ed. Margaret Smith. Oxford: Oxford UP,
1998. Print.

Documenting Journal Articles

Model:

Author A's Last Name, Author A's First Name, and Author B's First Name Last Name. "Title of Article." *Title of Journal* Volume.Issue (Year): pages. Medium of Publication.

Ex.

Jacobson, Will, and Brick Davis. "A Big Adventure in Central Park." *Educational Psychology* 11.1 (2006): 144-155. Print.

Documenting an Online Journal

- Article from an Online Scholarly Journal

Model:

Author's Last Name, First Name. "Title of Article."
Online Journal Volume.Issue (Year): n. pag.
Medium of Publication. Day Month Year
<website>.

Ex. *n. pag.* Is used in this case to show there is no pagination of this article.

Davis, Alan. "A Nuclear Fusion Program." *Science Today* 70.11 (2008): n. pag. Web. 9 January 2009.

Documenting Websites

Model for an entire website:

Author/Creators Last name, First name. *Title of Web Site*. Version number. Name of organization associated with the site. Date of Posting on Website. Medium of Publication. Day Month Year accessed.

Ex.

The Purdue OWL Family of Sites. The Writing Lab and OWL at Purdue and Purdue U, 2008. Web. 23 Apr. 2008.

Model for a page on a website:

Author's Last name, First name. "Name of Page on Website." *Main Website*. Name of organization associated with the site. Medium of Publication. Day Month Year accessed.

Ex.

"How to Make Vegetarian Chili." *eHow.com*. eHow, n.d. Web. 24 Feb. 2009.

Why Source Integration?

- Quotations, paraphrases, and summaries
 - provide support for claims or add credibility to your writing
 - refer to work that leads up to the work you are now doing
 - give examples of several points of view on a subject
 - call attention to a position that you wish to agree or disagree with
 - highlight a particularly striking phrase, sentence, or passage by quoting the original
 - distance yourself from the original by quoting it in order to cue readers that the words are not your own
 - expand the breadth or depth of your writing

Choosing Text to Integrate

1. Read the entire text, noting the key points and main ideas.
2. Summarize in your own words what the single main idea of the essay is.
3. Paraphrase important supporting points that come up in the essay.
4. Consider any words, phrases, or brief passages that you believe should be quoted directly.

Summarizing

- When you **summarize**, you put the main idea(s) into your own words, including only the main point(s).
 - Summarized ideas must be attributed to the original source.
 - Summaries are significantly shorter than the original.
 - Summaries take a broad overview of source material.

Paraphrasing

- **Paraphrasing** involves putting a passage from source material into your own words.
 - Attribute paraphrases to their original sources.
 - Paraphrases are usually shorter than the original passage.
 - Paraphrases take a somewhat broader segment of the source and condense it slightly.

Quoting

- **Quotations** must be identical to the original.
 - Quotations use a narrow segment of the source.
 - They must match the source document word for word and must be attributed to the original author.
 - Use quotes when the actual words are so integral to the discussion that they cannot be replaced.
 - Use quotes when the author's words are so precisely and accurately stated that they cannot be paraphrased.

Signal Phrases and In-Text Citation

- Signal phrases introduce someone else's work – they signal that the words and ideas that are about to be offered belong to someone other than the author of the paper.
- In-text citations are the parenthetical pieces of information that appear usually at the end of a quote paraphrase, or summary (though they sometimes appear before).

- A simple rule:

Author or Title and Page: what isn't signaled up front must be cited at the end.

Signal Phrases and In-Text Citation (continued)

- Limited signal, everything in citation
 - ... end of paraphrased sentence, in which you convey the author's ideas in your own words (Williams 103).
 - "... end of quoted sentence" (Williams 103).
- Author in signal, page in citation
 - In 1985, Williams reported that ... (103).
 - Williams tells us that ... (103).
 - According to Williams, "... " (103).

Signal Phrases and In-Text Citation (continued)

- Citing Source with Unknown Author

Ex.

An anonymous Twain critic once stated that Twain was actually a female (“Twain is a Female” 100).

- Citing Sources with Same Last Name

Ex.

The big red tracker was the largest (R. Williams 100) However, the blue tracker was often stated as being the largest (Z. Williams 670).

- No Page Number

Provide other information in signal phrase (paragraph #)

Recommended Resources

Gibaldi, Joseph. *MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing*. 2nd ed. New York: MLA Association of America, 1998. Print.

Modern Language Association of America. *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. 7th ed. New York: MLA Association of America, 2009. Print

Stolley, Karl. "MLA Formatting and Style Guide." The OWL at Purdue. 10 May 2006. Purdue University Writing Lab. Web. 1 March 2008
<<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/557/01/>>.