



## Quick Guide to MLA Documentation and Formatting

### First Page:

- Do not make a title page unless specifically requested by your professor. If this occurs, follow the guidelines given.
- Your first page should include your name, your instructor's name, the course number, and the date in the upper left corner.
- Your title should be under your name and other information. It should be centered and typed in Title Case (standard capitalization) and should not be in italics, quotation marks, or bold print. If you are including the name of a work in your title, such as the name of a book, then you would only italicize the book's title, not your whole title.
- Be sure that your paper is double spaced!
- Your header is going to be in the upper right corner. This will consist of your last name followed by a page number (5 spaces between them). It should be ½ inch from the top of the paper and flush with the right margin. (Some instructors ask you to omit the last name from this header style. Be sure to follow all instructor guidelines!)

Here is a sample MLA first page:

	Last Name
1	
Full Name	
Instructor Name	
Course and Course Number	
Date	
	Title
Begin writing here.	

### MLA In-Text Citations:

Writers incorporate researched information into paper in three ways: paraphrase, summary, and direct quotes. In MLA, referring to the works of others in your text is done by using **parenthetical citation**. What this means is after you put in researched information from another



source, you put in the relevant source information in parenthesis following it. Some general rules to follow are:

- The source information required in your parenthesis depends upon the source medium (Print, Web, DVD, etc.) and upon the source's entry on your Works Cited page.
- Any source of information that you cite in-text must correspond to the source information on the Works Cited page. This means that whatever signal word or phrase you provide to your readers in the text must be the first thing that appears on the left-hand margin of the corresponding entry in the Works Cited list.

### **Author-page Citation Style:**

#### **Known author:**

MLA format follows the author-page method of in-text citations. This means that the author's last name and the page numbers from which the quotation or paraphrase is taken must appear in the text. There are a few ways to properly cite using this method:

Wordsworth states that Romantic poetry was marked by a "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" (263).

Romantic poetry is characterized by the "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" (Wordsworth 263).

Wordsworth extensively explored the role of emotion in the creative process. (263).

The citations above each tell the reader that the information is coming from Wordsworth and that information can be found in the secondary source on page 263. Then, if readers want more information about the source, they would look to the work cited page where they would find the following information:

Wordsworth, William. *Lyrical Ballads*. London: Oxford UP, 1967. Print.

For any work with a known author, you must include the last name of the author and a page number in your citation.

#### **Unknown Author:**

If your source does not have a listed author, do not panic. There is a way to properly cite the source without an author. Instead, you are going to focus on the title of the work. For example:

Research shows "global warming can correlate with the amount of pollution in a given area" ("Global Warming and Pollution" 6).



Since the reader does not know the author of the article, an abbreviated title of the article is cited in place of the name. The citation, then, would be:

“Global Warming and Pollution: A Systematic Study.” *Global Warming: Early Signs*. 1999. Web. 23 Mar. 2009.

### **Multiple Authors:**

For a source with more than three authors, use the work’s bibliographic information as a guide; provide the first author’s last name followed by et al. or list all the last names:

Jones et al. states. . . (93).

Some studies argue . . . (Jones et al. 93).

Jones, Smith, and Edgar state . . . (93).

On the work cited page, all authors should be listed. The first author given (refer to your source) should appear last name, first name. All authors following the first should be in first name last name format:

Jones, William, Paul Smith, and Neal Edgar . . .

The most important thing to remember when citing in MLA format, whether you are quoting, paraphrasing, or summarizing, is that the author or title and the page numbers are the most relevant information you can give to your reader.

### **Block Quotes:**

When you are using a quote that is four line of text or longer, then you will put it in a black of text referred to as a block quote. You will not use quotation marks. First, you should introduce the quote in a sentence that ends with a colon (:). Then, start the quote on a new line that will be indented one inch from the left margin, and you should retain the double spacing. The parenthetical citation should come at the end of the actual quote. Your block quote will look like this:

Nelly Dean treats Heathcliff poorly and dehumanizes him throughout her narration:

They entirely refused to have it in bed with them, or even in their room, and I had no more sense, so, I put it on the landing of the stairs, hoping it would be gone on the morrow. By chance, or else attracted by hearing his voice, it crept to Mr. Earnshaw's door, and there he found it on quitting his chamber. Inquiries were made as to how it got



there; I was obliged to confess, and in recompense for my cowardice and inhumanity was sent out of the house. (Bronte 78)

Several other examples illustrate the negative relationship between Nelly Dean and Heathcliff.

When block quoting, you should sufficiently present and explain your quote. That is, you should have your own words surrounding the quote.

\*\*\*\*\* Block quote usage should be limited and reserved for longer pieces of work. Avoid using block quotes when you are only writing a 3-5 page essay. Remember that the quotes should only compliment your writing, not make up your writing.

### **MLA Citations for the Works Cited Page:**

Examples of Works Cited entries for commonly used sources. Note that each entry will have a “hanging indent” (not indenting the first line) for the second line of text and beyond.

### **ELECTRONIC SOURCES:**

**Online Journal Article:** For all online scholarly journals, provide the author(s) name(s), the name of the article in quotation marks, the title of the publication in italics, all volume and issue numbers, and the year of publication.

Last Name, First Name. “Title of Article.” *Title of Journal* Volume Number. Issue Number  
(year): Page Range. Web. Date Accessed.

If you got the article from an online database, you will put the name of the database, in italics, in between the page number and the date you accessed it.

**A Web Site:** Note: MLA no longer requires a URL to be included in the citation.

Entire Website:

Editor, author, or compiler name (if available). *Name of Site*. Version number. Name of institution/organization affiliated with the site (sponsor or publisher), date of resource creation (if available). Medium of publication. Date of access.

Page on a Website:



“Name of Page.” *Name of Site*. Name of publisher, Date Published. Web. Date Accessed.

**Article in an Online Magazine:**

Last Name, First Name. “Title.” *Title of Web Magazine*. Publisher Name, Date Published. Web. Date Accessed.

**PRINT SOURCES:**

**Books:** There are numerous ways to cite a book based on edition, whether or not it was translated, etc. The basic format for a book is as follows:

Lastname, Firstname. *Title of Book*. City of Publication: Publisher, Year of Publication. Medium  
of Publication.

If you are working from an anthology and are only citing one chapter, you would cite it like this:

Last Name, First Name. “Title of Essay/Chapter.” *Title of Collection*. Ed. Editor’s Name(s). City  
of Publication: Publisher, Year. Page Range. Print.

For more information and specifications on how to cite books in MLA, please consult Purdue OWL.

**Works Cited Page:**

On your paper’s works cited page, “Works Cited” will appear centered at the top of a NEW page, not immediately following the page you stopped writing on. If you only have one source, then the title of this page is called “Work Cited.” The citations should be in alphabetical order by the first thing that is mentioned in the citation, either author or title. All citations will use a hanging indent for any lines of text that exceed the first line for a given citation (lines 2,3,4 etc. for one resource). Your page should look like this:

<p>Works Cited</p> <p>"Blueprint Lays Out Clear Path for Climate Action." <i>Environmental Defense Fund</i>.</p> <p>Environmental Defense Fund, 8 May 2007. Web. 24 May 2009.</p>
---



Clinton, Bill. Interview by Andrew C. Revkin. "Clinton on Climate Change." *New York Times*.

New York Times, May 2007. Web. 25 May 2009.

Dean, Cornelia. "Executive on a Mission: Saving the Planet." *New York Times*. New York

Times, 22 May 2007. Web. 25 May 2009.