



MLA STYLE ~ QUICK REFERENCE

MLA (Modern Language Association) style is usually used when writing papers for literature, the arts, or the humanities. The following is a brief guide to formatting and citing sources using MLA Style. Students should consult *The MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* for more detailed information.

Formatting Guidelines

Margins and Spacing – All margins should be set at 1 (one) inch (top, bottom, left, and right). The first word of each paragraph should be indented ½ inch or 5 (five) spaces from the left margin. The paper should be *double-spaced* throughout, including quotations, notes, and works cited.

Parenthetical Citations – Brief references to the full citation should be inserted within the text whenever another person's words or ideas are incorporated into your own work. The brief reference should usually contain the author's last name and the appropriate page numbers in parentheses. For example: The theory has been proposed in the past (Jones 56-83). *or* Jones has proposed this theory in the past (56-83).

Page Numbering – Page numbers should be placed in the upper right hand corner of each page, ½ inch from the top of the page and 1 (one) inch from the right side of the page. Numbering should start on the first page and continue to the end. Your last name should be inserted before the page number on every page.

General Rules – The first line of each citation should not be indented, but each following line should be indented ½ inch or 5 (five) spaces from the left margin. Alphabetize the citations by the authors' last names. As in the rest of your paper, all lines should be *double-spaced*.

Information to Include – Most citations should generally contain the author's name, the title of his work, the title of the book or journal in which his work appears, the edition, the location and name of the publisher, the publication year, and the appropriate page numbers. Some citations include different information depending on the type of source. Some examples are:

- **Book by a single author:**

Angelou, Maya. The Complete Collected Poems of Maya Angelou. New York: Random House, 1994.

- **Book by two authors:**

Jakobson, Roman, and Linda R. Waugh. The Sound Shape of Language. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1975.

- **Books by three or more authors:**

Smith, John, *et al.* Name of Book. Place: Publisher, 1984.

- **Books with corporate or organizational authors:**

U. S. Department of Labor. Occupational Outlook Handbook. 1999-2000 ed. Washington, DC: Bernan, 1996.

- **Book with unknown author:** (Do NOT use either *Anonymous* or *Anon*)

Harper Collins World Atlas. New York: Scott Foresman, 1994.

- **Edited Book:**

Williams, Michael W., ed. The African American Encyclopedia. 6 vols. New York: Marshall Cavendish, 1993.

- **A Work in an Anthology:**

Franco, Veronica. "To the Painter Jacopo Tintoretto." Poems and Selected Letters. Ed. and trans. Ann Rosalind Jones and Margaret Rosenthal. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1998. 35-37.

- **Encyclopedia or Dictionary (familiar reference works)** (list only edition and year of publication):

"Mandarin." The Encyclopedia Americana. 1994 ed.

"Chaotic." Webster's Third New International Dictionary. 1993 ed.

- **A Multivolume Work:** use if you are citing 2 or more volumes in a multi-volume work

Blanco, Richard L., ed. The American Revolution, 1775-1783: An Encyclopedia. 2 vols. Hamden: Garland, 1993.

- **Article in Journal with Continuous Pagination** (the volume number follows the journal title and page numbers follow the year):

Spear, Karen. "Building Cognitive Skills in Basic Writers." Teaching English in the Two-Year College 9 (1983): 908-18.

- **Article in Journal with Each Issue Paged Separately** (the volume and issue number follow the title):

Lyon, George Ella. "Contemporary Appalachian Poetry: Sources and Directions." Kentucky Review 2.2 (1981): 98-101.

- **Article in a Weekly or Biweekly Periodical:**

Begley, Sharon. "A Healthy Dose of Laughter." Newsweek 4 Oct. 1982: 60-88.

- **Article in a Monthly or Bimonthly Periodical:**

Snyder, Mark. "Self-Fulfilling Stereotypes." Psychology Today July 1982: 23-29.

- **Newspaper Article** (if there is no author listed, start with the title of the article):

Collin, Glenn. "Single-Father Survey Finds Adjustment Problem." New York Times 21 Nov. 1983: B17+.

- **Article in an Online Database** (Journal & Newspaper):

Tangley, Laura. "Swamping Louisiana." National Wildlife 40.3 (2002) :26 (8). Academic Search Premier. EBSCOhost. River Parishes Community College, Sorrento, LA. 16 Aug. 2003 <<http://web9.epnet.com/>>.

Elie, Lolis Eric. "An Honor that's Truly Undeserved." Times-Picayune 16 Feb. 2004. Academic Universe. Lexis-Nexis. River Parishes Community College Lib., Sorrento, LA. 23 Mar. 2004 <<http://web.lexis-nexis.com/universe>>.

- **Article at an Online Scholarly Website:**

Victorian Women Writers Project. Ed. Perry Willett. Apr. 1997. Indiana U. 26 Feb. 2000 <<http://www.indiana.edu/~lettrs/vwwp/>>.

- **An Online Book:**

Blythe, Camenson. Careers in Writing. Chicago, Ill.: NTC Contemporary, 2001. River Parishes Community College, Sorrento, LA. 9 Oct. 2002 <<http://www.netlibrary.com>>.

- **Article from a Professional Website:**

“Scientists: most distant object in Solar System found.” CNN.com. 15 Mar. 2004. Cable News Network. 23 Mar. 2004 <<http://www.cnn.com/2004/TECH/space>>.

For examples for citing other types of information, such as other print sources (e.g., theses, dissertations, etc.) or various non-print materials (e.g., television programs, art work, music, etc.), see the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, 6th edition, call number **LB 2369 .G53 2003. Several copies are available for check-out.**

Tips:

- Record complete citation information for each of your sources during your search process so that you will not need to go back later and search again for the information.
- Always carefully cite your sources within your paper and on the Works Cited page in order to avoid plagiarism.
- For more information on citing *other online sources*, refer to one of the following reference sites on the Internet:

<http://www.lib.duke.edu/libguide/citing.htm>

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/557/01>

<http://thewritesource.com/mla.htm>

<http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/DocMLA.html>

www.rpcc.edu

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