

Academic Skills Center
Asnuntuck Community College
Room 130 (860) 253-3164

MLA STYLE GUIDE

This guide is based on the **Sixth Edition of the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers (2003)** and sets the documentation style for writing in English, history, education, and fine arts classes. Marketing and business courses may also employ MLA documentation. MLA style requires *two* elements for citing outside sources: parenthetical (in-text) references and a Works Cited list (at the end). Together, these elements direct a reader to the sources consulted. For the system to function, all authors cited in the text must also appear in the Works Cited list, and conversely, all sources listed in Works Cited must be paraphrased or quoted in the text.

PARENTHETICAL REFERENCES

Whether paraphrasing (re-stating in your own words) or quoting an author directly, you must credit the source; however, the information provided will vary depending on whether your source was in print or electronic form. **When citing print sources, author and page number must be identified. Note that end punctuation follows the parenthetical reference.**

Examples:

Quotation 1 – less than 40 words; incorporated in text; author is unnamed so is included in the parenthetical reference at the end:

It may be true that “in the appreciation of medieval art the attitude of the observer is of primary importance . . .” (Robertson 136).

Quotation 2 – less than 40 words, incorporated in text; author is named so omitted from parenthetical citation

It may be true, as Robertson maintains, that “in the appreciation of medieval art the attitude of the observer is of primary importance” (136).

Quotation 3 – more than four lines, **a.)** set apart from the text in a block quote; **b.)** indented 10 spaces from the left margin; **c.)** double-spaced with no quotation marks; **d.)** introduced by a complete sentence followed by a colon; and **e.)** end punctuation appears *before* the parenthetical reference:

At the conclusion of Lord of the Flies, Ralph and the other boys realize the horror of their actions:

The tears began to flow and sobs shook him. He gave himself up to them now for the first time on the island; great, shuddering spasms of grief that seemed to wrench his whole body. His voice rose under the black smoke before the burning wreckage of the island; and infected by that emotion, the other little boys began to shake and sob too. (Golding 186)

Since electronic sources usually do not provide fixed page numbers or any kind of section numbering, omit numbers from your parenthetical references. For documents accessed with a Web browser, readers will be able to search for the quoted material using the URL. However, if your source does include fixed page numbers or section numbering (such as numbering of paragraphs), cite the relevant numbers using the appropriate abbreviation: i.e. (Moultrip pars. 19-20) *Pars* is the abbreviation for *paragraphs*.

Frequently-asked questions:

1. What should I do when an author cites the ideas or work of another person, and I want to use the information in my paper?

Give both sources credit by listing the source where you found the information in the Works Cited list and citing the original work in the text. For such indirect quotations, use "qtd. in" to indicate the source you actually consulted. For example:

Ravitch argues that high schools are pressured to act as "social service centers, and they don't do that well" (qtd. in Weisman 259).

In this example, Ravitch's quote was found on page 259 of Weisman's work. Only publication information about Weisman's work would appear on the Works Cited list.

2. How should I handle in-text citations when my source has no author, only a title?

Abbreviate the title, beginning with the word by which the entry is alphabetized in the Works Cited list. Use double quotation marks around words from the title of an article or chapter, and underline words from the title of a periodical, book, brochure or report.

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Sample Reference List Entries – MLA Style Rules

- | | |
|---|---|
| A book with one author | Freedman, Richard R. <i>What Do Unions Do?</i> New York: Basic, 1984. |
| A book with two authors | Eggs, Suzanne and Diane Slade. <i>Analyzing Casual Conversation</i> . London: Cassell, 1997. |
| Daily newspaper on one page | Booth, William. "Monkeying with Language: Is Chimp Using Words or Merely Aping Handlers?" <i>The Washington Post</i> 29 Oct. 1992: A3. |
| Weekly magazine article | Kantrowitz, Barbara and Keith Naughton. "Generation 9-11." <i>Newsweek</i> 12 Nov. 2001: 46 – 49. |
| Essay from an anthology or collection of works | Bailey, Ronald. "An Environmental Apocalypse is Imaginary." <i>21st Century Earth Opposing Viewpoints</i> . Eds. Oliver W. Markley and Walter R. McCuan. San Diego: Greenhaven Press, 1996: 127-135. |
| Magazine article with no author | "Dubious Venture." <i>Time</i> 3 Jan. 1994: 64-65. |
| Videocassette film, or DVD | <i>It's a Wonderful Life</i> . Dir. Frank Capra. Perf. James Stewart, Donna Reed, Lionel Barrymore, and Thomas Mitchell, RKO, 1946. |
| Government document | United States. Dept. of Justice. <i>Child-Support Payment Laws</i> . Washington: GPO, 1991. |
| Online article from subscription database | Johnson, Scott. "One Father's Unique Perspective." <i>Newsweek</i> 5 Mar. 1999: 38. MasterFILE Premier. Asnuntuck Comm. College Lib., Enfield, CT. 12 Jul. 1999 < http://search.epnet.com > |
| Online magazine article | Calvin, William H. "The Emergence of Intelligence." <i>Scientific American</i> 271 (Oct. 1994) 30 Nov. 1999
< http://WilliamCalvin.com/1990s/1998SciAmer.htm > |
| Online encyclopedia No author given | "Parent." <i>Encyclopaedia Britannica Online</i> . 1994-1999. Encyclopaedia Bri 13 July 1999 < http://www.eb.com:180 > |
| Article from an online professional site | Lindell, Kathleen, MSN, RN, and John Hansen-Flaschen, MD. <i>Health Effects of Tobacco Use</i> . Univ. of Pennsylvania Health System. 24 Jan. 2001
< http://upenn.edu/health/hi_files/topics/smoking/smokecess.html > |
| Reliable web page (gov or edu) | Willett, Perry. <i>WWW Resources for English and American Literature</i> . 24 Sept. 1998. Indiana U. Bloomington Lib. 8 Jan. 1999
< http://www.indiana.edu/~libsalc/pwillett/english-www.html > |

Sample List of Sources – MLA Style
Works Cited

- Bailey, Ronald. "An Environmental Apocalypse is Imaginary." *21st Century Earth Opposing Viewpoints*. Eds. Oliver W. Markley and Walter R. McCuan. San Diego: Greenhaven Press, 1996:127-135.
- Booth, William. "Monkeying with Language: Is Chimp Using Words or Merely Aping Handlers?" *The Washington Post* 29 Oct. 1992: A3.
- Calvin, William H. "The Emergence of Intelligence." *Scientific American* 271 (Oct. 1994) 30 Nov. 1999.
- "Dubious Venture." *Time*. 3 Jan. 1994: 64-65.
- Eggs, Suzanne and Diane Slade. *Analyzing Casual Conversation*. London: Cassell, 1997.
- Freedman, Richard R. *What Do Unions Do?* New York: Basic, 1984.
- It's a Wonderful Life*. Dir. Frank Capra. Perf. James Stewart, Donna Reed, Lionel Barrymore, and Thomas Mitchell, RKO, 1946.
- Johnson, Scott. "One Father's Unique Perspective." *Newsweek* 5 Mar. 1999: 38. MasterFILE Premier. Asnuntuck Comm. College lib., Enfield, CT. 12 Jul. 1999 <<http://search.epnet.com>>
- Kantrowitz, Barbara and Keith Naughton. "Generation 911." *Newsweek* 12 Nov. 2001: 46-49.
- Lindell, Kathleen, MSN, RN, and John Hanson-Flaschen, MD. *Health Effects of Tobacco Use*. Univ. of Pennsylvania Health System. 24 Jan. 2001
<http://upenn.edu/health/hi_files/topics/smoking/smokecess.html>
- "Parent." *Encyclopaedia Britannica Online*. 1994-1999. Encyclopaedia Bri 13 July 1999
<<http://www.eb.com:180>>
- United States. Dept. of Justice. *Child-Support Payment Laws*. Washington: GPO, 1991.
- Willett, Perry. *WWW Resources for English and American Literature*. 24 Sept. 1998. Indiana U. Bloomington Lib. 8 Jan. 1999
<<http://www.indiana.edu/~libsalc/pwillett/english-www.html>>

Formatting the Works Cited list:

1. Type the words Works Cited at the top of a new page, centered.
2. Alphabetize and double space all entries. (They have been single-spaced above to save space.)
3. Capitalize the first and all important words in a title.
4. Underline titles of books and other publications (journals, newspapers, magazines).
5. Use quotation marks around the title of articles.
6. Align the first line with the left margin and Tab or indent subsequent lines five spaces.

Remember: If you have questions, ask your instructor or the Academic Skills Center staff for help or search the Internet. Keywords: Modern Language Association documentation

Handout adapted for the Academic Skills Center, Asnuntuck Community College, Enfield, CT from the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, Sixth Edition (2003) by Catherine Juozokas, Director, (860) 253-3175 or cjuozokas@acc.commnet.edu

Some Tips on Handling Electronic Sources

It is always a good idea to maintain personal copies of electronic information, when possible. It is good practice to print or save Web pages or, better, using a program like Adobe Acrobat, to keep your own copies for future reference. Most Web browsers will include URL/electronic address information when you print, which makes later reference easy. Also learn to use the Bookmark function in your Web browser.

Special Warning for Researchers Writing/Publishing Electronically

MLA style requires electronic addresses to be listed between carets (<, >). This is a dangerous practice for anyone writing or publishing electronically, as carets are also used to set off HTML, XHTML, XML and other markup language tags (e.g., HTML's paragraph tag, <p>). When writing in electronic formats, be sure to properly encode your carets.

Basic Style for Citations of Electronic Sources

Here are some common features you should try and find before citing electronic sources in MLA style. Always include as much information as is available/applicable:

- Author and/or editor names
- Name of the database, or title of project, book, article
- Any version numbers available
- Date of version, revision, or posting
- Publisher information
- Date you accessed the material
- Electronic address, printed between carets (<, >).

Web Sources

Web sites (in MLA style, the "W" in Web is capitalized, and "Web site" or "Web sites" are written as two words) and Web pages are arguably the most commonly cited form of electronic resource today. Below are a variety of Web sites and pages you might need to cite.

An Entire Web Site

Basic format:

Name of Site. Date of Posting/Revision. Name of institution/organization affiliated with the site (sometimes found in copyright statements). Date you accessed the site <electronic address>.

It is necessary to list your date of access because web postings are often updated, and information available on one date may no longer be available later. Be sure to include the complete address for the site. Here are some examples:

The Purdue OWL Family of Sites. 26 Aug. 2005. The Writing Lab and OWL at Purdue and Purdue University. 23 April 2006 <<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>>.

Felluga, Dino. *Guide to Literary and Critical Theory*. 28 Nov. 2003. Purdue University. 10 May 2006 <<http://www.cla.purdue.edu/english/theory/>>.

Treat entire Weblogs or "blogs" just as you would a Web site. For single-author blogs, include the author name (or screen name or alias, as a last resort); blogs with many authors, or an anonymous author, should be listed by the title of the blog itself:

Design Observer. 25 Apr. 2006. 10 May 2006. <<http://www.designobserver.com/>>.

Ratliff, Clancy. *CultureCat: Rhetoric and Feminism*. 7 May 2006. 11 May 2006. <<http://culturecat.net>>.

Long URLs

URLs that won't fit on one line of your Works Cited list should be broken at slashes, when possible.

Some Web sites have unusually long URLs that would be virtually impossible to retype; others use frames, so the URL appears the same for each page. To address this problem, either refer to a site's search URL, or provide the path to the resource from an entry page with an easier URL. Begin the path with the word Path followed by a colon, followed by the name of each link, separated by a semicolon. For example, the Amazon.com URL for customer privacy and security information is <<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/tg/browse/-/551434/104-0801289-6225502>>, so we'd need to simplify the citation:

Amazon.com. "Privacy and Security." 22 May 2006 <<http://www.amazon.com/>>. Path: Help; Privacy & Security.

A Page on a Web Site

For an individual page on a Web site, list the author or alias if known, followed by the information covered above for entire Web sites. Make sure the URL points to the exact page you are referring to, or the entry or home page for a collection of pages you're referring to:

"Caret." *Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia*. 28 April 2006. 10 May 2006

<<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caret>>.

"How to Make Vegetarian Chili." *eHow.com*. 10 May 2006 <[http://www.ehow.com/](http://www.ehow.com/how_10727_make-vegetarian-chili.html)

[how_10727_make-vegetarian-chili.html](http://www.ehow.com/how_10727_make-vegetarian-chili.html)>.

Stolley, Karl. "MLA Formatting and Style Guide." *The OWL at Purdue*. 10 May 2006.

Purdue University Writing Lab. 12 May 2006

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

An Image, Including a Painting, Sculpture, or Photograph

For works housed outside of an online home, include the artist's name, the year the work was created, and the institution (e.g., a gallery or museum) that houses it (if applicable), followed by the city where it is located. Include the complete information for the site where you found the image, including the date of access. In this first example, the image was found on the Web site belonging to the work's home museum:

Goya, Francisco. *The Family of Charles IV*. 1800. Museo del Prado, Madrid. 22 May

2006 <<http://museoprado.mcu.es/i64a.html>>.

In this next example, the owner of the online site for the image is different than the image's home museum:

Klee, Paul. *Twittering Machine*. 1922. Museum of Modern Art, New York. *The Artchive*.

"Klee: Twittering Machine." 22 May 2006 <[http://artchive.com/artchive/K/](http://artchive.com/artchive/K/klee/twittering_machine.jpg.html)

[klee/twittering_machine.jpg.html](http://artchive.com/artchive/K/klee/twittering_machine.jpg.html)>.

For other images, cite as you would any other Web page, but make sure you're crediting the original creator of the image. Here's an example from Webshots.com, an online photo-sharing site ("brandychloe" is a username):

brandychloe. *Great Horned Owl Family*. 22 May 2006 <[http://image46.webshots.com/](http://image46.webshots.com/47/7/17/41/347171741bgVWdN_fs.jpg)

[47/7/17/41/347171741bgVWdN_fs.jpg](http://image46.webshots.com/47/7/17/41/347171741bgVWdN_fs.jpg)>.

The above example links directly to the image; but we could also provide the user's profile URL, and give the path for reaching the image, e.g.

brandychloe. *Great Horned Owl Family*. 22 May 2006

<<http://community.webshots.com/user/brandychloe>>. Path: Albums; birds; great horned owl family.

Doing so helps others verify information about the images creator, where as linking directly to an image file, like a JPEG (.jpg) may make verification difficult or impossible.

An Article in a Web Magazine

Author(s). "Title of Article." *Title of Online Publication*. Date of Publication.
Date of Access <electronic address>.

For example:

Bernstein, Mark. "10 Tips on Writing The Living Web." *A List Apart: For People Who Make Websites*. No. 149 (16 Aug. 2002). 4 May 2006
<<http://alistapart.com/articles/writeliving>>.

An Article in an Online Scholarly Journal

Online scholarly journals are treated different from online magazines. First, you must include volume and issue information, when available. Also, some electronic journals and magazines provide paragraph or page numbers; again, include them if available.

Wheelis, Mark. "Investigating Disease Outbreaks Under a Protocol to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention." *Emerging Infectious Diseases* 6.6 (2000): 33 pars. 8 May 2006 <<http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/eid/vol6no6/wheelis.htm>>.

An Article from an Electronic Subscription Service

When citing material accessed via an electronic subscription service (e.g., a database or online collection your library subscribes to), cite the relevant publication information [as you would for a periodical](#) (author, article title, periodical title, and volume, date, and page number information) followed by the name of the database or subscription collection, the name of the library through which you accessed the content, including the library's city and state, plus date of access. If a URL is available for the home page of the service, include it. **Do not** include a URL to the article itself, because it is not openly accessible. For example:

Grabe, Mark. "Voluntary Use of Online Lecture Notes: Correlates of Note Use and Note Use as an Alternative to Class Attendance." *Computers and Education* 44 (2005): 409-21. ScienceDirect. Purdue U Lib., West Lafayette, IN. 28 May 2006 <<http://www.sciencedirect.com/>>.

E-mail or Other Personal Communication

Author. "Title of the message (if any)." E-mail to person's name. Date of the message.

This same format may be used for personal interviews or personal letters. These do not have titles, and the description should be appropriate. Instead of "Email to John Smith," you would have "Personal interview."

E-mail to You

Kunka, Andrew. "Re: Modernist Literature." E-mail to the author. 15 Nov. 2000.

MLA style capitalizes the E in E-mail, and separates E and mail with a hyphen.

E-mail Communication Between Two Parties, Not Including the Author

Neyhart, David. "Re: Online Tutoring." E-mail to Joe Barbato. 1 Dec. 2000.

A Listserv or E-mail Discussion List Posting

Author. "Title of Posting." Online posting. Date when material was posted (for example: 18 Mar. 1998). Name of listserv. Date of access <electronic address for retrieval>.

If the listserv does not have an open archive, or an archive that is open to subscribers only (e.g., a password-protected list archive), give the URL for the membership or subscription page of the listserv.

<<http://www.intersivity.org/lists/techrhet/subscribe.html>>

Discussion Board/Forum Posting

If an author name is not available, use the username for the post.

cleaner416. "Add `` Tags to Selected Text in a Textarea" Online posting. 8

Dec. 2004. Javascript Development. 3 Mar. 2006

`<http://forums.devshed.com/javascript-development-115/`

`add-b-b-tags-to-selected-text-in-a-textarea-209193.html>`.

An Article or Publication in Print and Electronic Form

If you're citing an article or a publication that was originally issued in print form but that you retrieved from an online database that your library subscribes to, you should provide enough information so that the reader can locate the article either in its original print form or retrieve it from the online database (if they have access).

Provide the following information in your citation:

- Author's name (if not available, use the article title as the first part of the citation)
- Article Title
- Periodical Name
- Publication Date
- Page Number/Range
- Database Name
- Service Name
- Name of the library where or through which the service was accessed
- Name of the town/city where service was accessed
- Date of Access
- URL of the service (but not the whole URL for the article, since those are usually very long and won't be easily re-used by someone trying to retrieve the information)

The generic citation form would look like this:

Author. "Title of Article." *Periodical Name* Volume Number (if necessary)

Publication Date: page number-page number. Database name. Service name. Library Name, City, State. Date of access `<electronic address of the database>`.

Here's an example:

Smith, Martin. "World Domination for Dummies." *Journal of Despotry* Feb. 2000: 66-72. Expanded Academic ASAP. Gale Group Databases. Purdue University Libraries, West Lafayette, IN. 19 February 2003 `<http://www.infotrac.galegroup.com>`.

Article in a Database on CD-ROM

"World War II." *Encarta*. CD-ROM. Seattle: Microsoft, 1999.

Article From a Periodically Published CD-ROM

Reed, William. "Whites and the Entertainment Industry." *Tennessee Tribune* 25 Dec. 1996: 28. *Ethnic NewsWatch*. CD-ROM. Data Technologies, Feb. 1997.

From:

Stolley, Karl. *OWL Materials MLA Formatting and Style Guide*. 31 Oct. 2006. The Writing and OWL at Purdue and Purdue University. 11 Jan. 2007.

<<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/557/01/1/>>