

The MLA Documentation Style Sheet

The Modern Language Association (MLA) documentation style is an accepted method of documenting other people's ideas and words within a research paper. However, documentation styles differ according to disciplines; for example, nursing students use American Psychological Association (APA) style, so you should consult your instructor to verify the accepted documentation style options for the work you are doing.

MLA requires that titles of major works, e.g., books, periodicals, newspapers, films, home pages, be italicized in your text and on your Works Cited page (see *MLA Handbook* article **3.6.2 & 3.6.5**).¹ The titles of magazine articles and newspaper articles are placed within quotation marks. See **3.6.3–3.6.6** for a complete explanation of quotation marks and using italics with titles of source materials.

***Note that the period at the end of a citation sentence is on the outside of the parenthetical citation, not at the end of the sentence.*

This handout, prepared by [ASC](#) tutors, provides the most basic information on how to document research material using the MLA style. The *MLA Handbook*, 7th edition, should be consulted for more specific instructions.

Documentation Tips (6.3–6.5):

1. The first time you use a source in your text, introduce it:²

According to Rena Smith, successful entrepreneur and noted author of the article “Turning Her Life Around,” financially, women do not rebound as quickly after a divorce (B3).³

In subsequent references to the same author, use only the author's last name:

Smith further points out that the “glass ceiling” facing women is very much apparent in twenty-first century business (B3).

***Note that in both of the previous citations, Rena Smith's name is not repeated in the parentheses because it is already recorded in the text.*

¹ Hereafter, all citations from the *MLA Handbook* will note only chapter and section numbers in bold (**1.2.3**).

² More generally, every citation (whether a direct quotation, paraphrase, or summary) requires an introduction to establish the credibility of the source. This can be provided in either an introductory sentence or a footnote. Then, the citation, itself, should be followed by a comment that demonstrates how the citation illuminates the research student's argument.

³ **Normally, all text in the MLA system of documentation is double-spaced; however, to conserve space, some textual examples are only single-spaced in the examples that follow.**

When does the author's name go in the parentheses?

Subsequent citations used later in your paper after you've already introduced the source will include the author's /s' last name and page number.

Salaries for women in the corporate world still continue to reflect 80% of the pay received for men doing the same job (Smith B3).

If there is no author, introduce the article by title:

The *USA Today* article "Curriculum Battles from Left and Right" points out that problems in current pedagogy date back more than 30 years (D5).

2. If you're quoting a source within a source, that is, the source you're using is cited information that you want to use as well, indicate this by using qtd. in (for "quoted in") in your parenthetical citation (6.4.7).

George Cukor once told F. Scott Fitzgerald, "I've only know two people who eat faster than you and I, and they are both dead now" (qtd. in Latham 39).

The above "qtd. in" reference tells the reader that Latham quoted Cukor in his, Latham's, book; then the student author of the research paper quoted Latham. The entry on the Works Cited page will be for Latham, not Cukor. For example:

Latham, Albert. *The Life and Times of Famous People in American Culture*. New York: Scribner, 1992.

3. If you are typing a direct quotation and you realize that it is more than four (4) fully typed lines, you should "block" the quote (3.7.2). This means that:

- the entire quote is indented one inch from **the left only**.
- it is double-spaced with no quotation marks used.
- a colon generally introduces a quotation.
- the author and/or page number are parenthetically cited one space after the period.

Eric S. Rabkin, well-known literary critic and University of Michigan academic, states, in *Science Fiction: A Historical Anthology*:

In fact, many science fiction works deal with subtly defined characters, but the special hallmark of the field is that the characters live in dramas that speak to our whole culture or to whole aspects of the human condition, rather than to the

particularities of a brief cultural moment intersecting a person at the fleeting stage of life. (6-7)

Note: Again, in addition to not using quotation marks in a blocked quotation, the end period does go after the end of the sentence and not after the parentheses.

4. If you need to leave out words in an exact quote, use ellipses, a series of three periods with a space between each (3.7.5). Do not use ellipses if you are paraphrasing or summarizing. Moreover, you must take care not to risk distorting a writer’s intention when omitting words from his/her material.

Margaret Fuller, American journalist and women’s rights activist, in *Women in the Nineteenth Century*, assures her readers that “All men are privately influenced by women; each . . . is too much biased by these relations to fail of representing their interests” (97).

5. If you are using more than one work by the same author, you must include a shortened form of the title along with the author’s/s’ last name and page number if available (6.4.6).

(Rabkin, *Science Fiction* 191) (Rabkin, *Fantastic Worlds* 43)

6. If you are citing a source that has two authors, both authors’ last names must be included in the text and/or the parenthetical reference (6.2).

John Smith and Clyde Jones,⁴ in *No Way to Treat a Teacher*, describe the current crop of high school students in the inner city schools of Chicago as “inmates in training” (112).

Inner city schools have fallen on difficult times, both economically and socially (Smith and Jones 114).

7. If you are citing a source written or edited by four or more people, use only the name of the first person listed, followed by (et al. - Latin for “and others”), (5.5.4).

Blair et al. observed that the fine arts were almost ignored by colonial writers (21).

⁴ Again, to conserve space, ethical appeals or establishing the credentials of sources will, henceforth, be omitted in this guide sheet. Note, such comments as the foregoing, those to illuminate particular points in the body of an essay without disrupting a reader’s attention from a more central line of reasoning, are legitimate uses for annotation.

Works Cited (5.3)

At the end of your paper, begin a new page for the Works Cited page(s). The Works Cited list is an alphabetized list of all sources used in your paper. The works are alphabetized by author's last name. In the case of no author, the unsigned work is alphabetized by the first significant word in the work's title. The Works Cited list is double spaced and uses hanging indentation, with the second and subsequent lines of all entries indented 5 spaces. The Works Cited page is paginated with the rest of the document; in other words, if the last page of your paper is 12, the Works Cited page begins on page 13 (5.3.2 & 5.3.3). The words, Works Cited, are centered in the middle of the first line with no special punctuation or style (e.g., no bold or larger type face). The text below provides samples for entries in the Works Cited. Not all possibilities are included in this list. If you need more information, use the *MLA Handbook*, or contact a tutor in the [Academic Success Center](#)

Sample Citations: Refer to (5.4.1 & 5.5.1) for overall page format for print publications and 5.6.2b and 5.6.4 for web sources.

1. Book with one author (5.5.2):

Merelman, Richard M. *Partial Vision: Culture and Politics in Britain, Canada, and the United States*. Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1991. Print.⁵

2. Book with two or three authors (MLA 5.5.4):

Milkes, Sindy, and Michael Nelson. *The American Presidency: Origins and Development, 1776-1990*. Washington: Congressional Quarterly, 1990. Print.

3. Book with more than three (3) authors or editors (5.5.4):

Blair, Walter, et al. *American Literature: A Brief History*. New York: Macmillan, 1974. Print.

4. A republished book (5.5.16):

Wharton, Edith. *The Age of Innocence*. 1920. New York: Appleton, 1974. Print.

5. Revised edition (5.5.13):

Treat, Nola, and Lenore Richards. *Quantity Cookery*. 4th ed. Boston: Little, 1966. Print.

⁵ Again, subsequent examples with more than one line of text will be single-spaced.

6. Two or more works by the same author (alphabetize by the title of the work) (5.3.4):

Alcott, Louisa May. *Little Men*. 3rd ed. New York: Scribner, 1985. Print.

-- -. *Little Women*. 3rd ed. New York: Scribner, 1985. Print.

Note that the author's name is not repeated, but is represented by 3 dashes (- - -) followed by a period.

7. Multi-volume work (entry changes depending on number of volumes used) (5.5.14):

Sadie, Stanley. *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*. 20 vols. New York: Macmillan, 1980. Print.

8. Specialized reference book such as a dictionary or encyclopedia (5.5.7):

When citing familiar works, do not give full publication information. Only edition and year are needed.

“Witch.” *Oxford English Dictionary* 2nd ed. 1989. Print.

For all other reference work than the OED, use full publication information.

Allen, Anita A. “Privacy in Health Care.” *Encyclopedia of Bioethics*. Ed. Warren T. Reich. Rev. ed. 5 vols. New York: Macmillan, 1995. Print.

9. Newspaper articles can be signed or unsigned (5.4.5):**Signed (5.4.5):**

Smith, Rena. “Turning Her Life Around.” *Wall Street Journal* 2 Apr. 1995, Midwest ed.: B3. Print.

Unsigned (5.4.9 & 5.4.10):

“Pharmacy Discounts Will Help Elderly.” *Herald & Review* [Decatur, IL] 24 July 2001: A5. Print.

10. Magazine/Periodical articles can be signed or unsigned:**Signed (5.4.6):**

Nelson, Shelton. “Nurturing Diversity.” *Nation's Business* June 1996: 25-27. Print.

Unsigned (5.4.9 and 5.4.10):

“NSCA Offers the First in a Series of New Video Training Tapes.” *Electronic Service and Technology* June 1995: 69. Print.

11. Journal articles - provide volume and issue info for all journals, regardless of pagination.

Hallin, David C. "Sound Bite News: Television Coverage of Election, 1968-1988." *Journal of Communication* 42.2 (1992): 5-24. Print.

12. Pamphlets (cite the same as you would a book: note that some pamphlets do not have authors; thus, begin the citation with the title of the pamphlet, italicized) (5.5.19).

Publication, Advertising, and Publicity Guidelines. Decatur, IL: Richland Community College, 1999. Print.

Note that some pamphlets have organizations as authors and publishers.

Illinois Office on Aging. *Safety Features for the Home*. Chicago: Illinois Office on Aging, 2003. Print.

13. Interview (5.7.7):

Only three pieces of information are for the most common types of interviews: the name of the interviewee, the type of interview (usually "personal," "telephone," or "E-mail"), and the date of the interview.

Gibson, Mel. Personal interview. 20 July 2003.

King, Larry. E-mail interview. 13 Aug. 2003.

Winfrey, Oprah. Telephone interview. 1 Sept. 2003.

14. Television program (MLA 5.7.1)

"Frederick Douglass." *Civil War Journal*. Narr. Danny Glover. Dir. Craig Haffner. Arts and Entertainment Network. 6 Apr. 1993. Television.

15. Databases and Internet Sites:

Database citations follow a format that differs from print citations. The following are examples of citations based on databases accessible at Richland. The following samples are taken from the RCC web site.

Citing Sources from Richland's Subscription Databases

Through subscription services, Richland makes available many databases that allow students to quickly retrieve electronic versions of articles previously printed in periodicals. To cite these sources correctly in MLA format, you'll need to include information about both the original paper publication and the particular electronic version you accessed.

Works Cited entries:

Below is a summary of the MLA guidelines for Works Cited entries for these sources and samples using sources from Richland's databases. For more detailed information, see **5.6.4**. Also, some databases, themselves, offer citation advice through their "Help" links.

For Works Cited entries for these sources, begin with the standard information for the appropriate type of printed source; that is, follow the guidelines and format for a magazine article, a scholarly journal article, or a newspaper article:

- Author (if listed);
- Title of the article, in quotation marks;
- Title of the journal or magazine, italicized;
- For magazines or newspapers, date of the original print publication; for scholarly journals, the volume, issue, and year;
- Original page numbers. Unless in .pdf, articles retrieved from online may not be paginated (e.g., in .html); therefore, use *n. pag.* If page numbers are available, for articles longer than one page, provide the inclusive page numbers, or when pagination is not continuous, provide the first page number and a plus sign (24+).

Following this, add:

- the name of the database, italicized (e.g., *Academic Search Elite* or *WilsonSelectPlus*);
- Web;
- the date the database was accessed (12 Oct. 2009).

Important: *Know where you've been! Since Richland subscribes to several services and each service provides many different databases, be sure to note exactly where you retrieved each article.*

Samples:

"Character Education." Issues and Controversies On File 25 Oct. 2002. FACTS.com. Web. 22 Oct. 2004.

Chase, Kimberly. "Teachers Fight Against Internet Plagiarism." *Christian Science Monitor* 2 Mar. 2004: 12. *NewsFile*. Web. 5 Oct. 2004.

Goldsborough, Reid. "Preventing the Pall of Web Plagiarism." *Community College Week* 13.2 Sept. 2004: 18+. *Academic Search Elite*. Web. 5 Oct. 2004.

Citing Information from Internet Sites:

Citing information from Internet sites can be difficult because of the lack of uniformity in web presentations — not all sites provide all of the information we'd like to have for that source.

Below is a summary of the MLA guidelines for Works Cited entries for these sources and samples. For more complete information, see **5.6.2**.

Works Cited Entries for Internet Sites:

To make a Works Cited entry for information from an Internet site, the general rule is to list the usual information (or its electronic equivalent) you would provide give for a print source, as much as possible:

- author;
- title of the specific article;
- name of the Internet site or online journal or news service italicized;
- version or edition used (if relevant)
- publisher or sponsoring organization of the site; if not available use N.p.
- date of publication or posting (day, month, and year, as available; if nothing is available, use n.d.);
- medium of publication (Web)

To this information add:

- the date you accessed this site (12 Oct. 2009).

Do note that some information (such as the sponsoring organization or the date of posting) may be in less-than-obvious locations, such as in small print at the bottom of Websites, or only on the home page of that site.

Also, note that it is possible to access articles from some periodicals from their own Internet sites, and from our subscription services, and from paper copies. For example, articles from the *New York Times* are available through EBSCO's *Academic Search Elite*, from *newyorktimes.com*, and in paper form in the Kitty Lindsay Learning Resource Center. Each of these would have a different Works Cited entry: you need to follow the citation guidelines for the version you read.

Samples:

Bugeja, Michael. "Using Online Techniques to Thwart Plagiarism." *Character Clearinghouse* 12 Oct. 2000. *collegevalues.org*. Web. 8 Oct. 2004.

Freedman, Morris. "Don't Blame the Internet for Plagiarism." *Education Week on the Web* 31 *edweek.org* 2 Dec. 1998. Web. 8 Oct. 2004.

Haffner, Katie. "Lessons in the School of Cut and Paste." *newyorktimes.com* 28 Jun. 2001. Web. 8 Oct. 2004.

"Plagiarism Today." *Plagiarism.org*. 13 Oct. 2004. Web. 20 Oct. 2004.

Evangelista, Stefano. Rev. of *Victorian and Edwardian Responses to the Italian Renaissance*, ed. John E. Law and Lene Østermark-Johansen. *Victorian Studies* 46.4 (2006): 729-31. *Academic Search Premier*. Web. 12 Mar. 2007.

In-text citations for information from Internet sites:

Follow the same guidelines for in-text citations you would use for a print source. For more complete information, see the guidelines in **5.6.2**.

In general, if the first element of the Works Cited entry (author's name; if no author, then Internet page title) is not included in your sentence, add it to the end of your cited information in parentheses. If the page is numbered on the Internet site, include that number in the parentheses. Usually, however, you will have no page numbers to include with Internet sites. Do not number pages yourself.

Samples from the Works Cited above:

“Perhaps they get a false sense of security, late at night in their rooms, believing no one is watching through Windows of their computers,” speculates Michael Bugeja, highly respected academic ethicist, “when, of course, the reverse is true. Source documents are easier to find than ever on line as more and more databases and articles can be accessed from home computers.”

Some educators see the rise in Internet plagiarism as a reflection of young people's attitudes about the Internet as a public space, with little distinction between public and private ownership of electronic information. For instance, students who share music files without qualms about stealing music may have little trouble taking other electronic intellectual property for their personal use (“Plagiarism”).