**What is MLA referencing?**

In all writing the challenge is to find the words, phrases, clauses, sentences, and paragraphs that express your thoughts and ideas precisely and make them interesting to others. The Modern Language Association (MLA) style requires a specific way to give credit to the sources used in your research paper.

**Why cite sources?**

When writing a paper, you often build upon the information and ideas of others. When information is borrowed from others, we must give them credit. Citing sources accomplishes the following:

- Gives proper credit to the sources used in writing the paper
- Enables the reader to find the information for themselves
- Adds credibility and provides strength to your arguments or position

**When to cite sources**

In MLA documentation style, you acknowledge your sources by matching brief parenthetical citations in your text with an alphabetical list of works that appears at the end of the paper (MLA 126). In the body of an essay, you must use in-text references to cite every direct quotation and every idea that you got from a particular source. If you do not cite your sources, you are plagiarizing!

The Works Cited at the end plus the parenthetical citations in the paper work together to give complete credit to the sources used in writing the paper.
Formatting a Paper in MLA Style

- Use standard 8.5 x 11 inch good quality white paper.
- Avoid fonts that are hard to read. The recommended font in MLA style is 12-pt Times Roman, but 12-pt Arial or Courier is allowed.
- Double space throughout the paper.
- Order the resources in the Works Cited list alphabetically by the first author’s last name. See the final page of this handout for an example.
- Left justify your margins. This means the left margin should be flush to the left side of the page and the right margin should be uneven.
- Indent the first line of every paragraph by standard tab key space.
- One space after all punctuation, including punctuation at the end of sentences.
- A title page and abstract are not required. Your essay begins on page one. (see sample in appendix)
- All pages are numbered consecutively, starting on the first page.
- Each paper’s header (which includes the author’s (your) last name and page number) sits ½ inch from the top and 1 inch from the top right corner of the page. One space is sufficient between the author’s last name and page number. Use header and page numbering functions in the word processing program.
- MLA style requires brief references (Author page) in the text of the paper and complete reference information at the end of the paper.

Formatting Titles in Works Cited

✓ In a title, or subtitle, capitalize the first word, last word, and all principal words.

✓ *Italicize* titles when they are from: books, plays, pamphlets, periodicals (journals, magazines, newspapers), films, online databases, compact discs, broadcasts, and paintings.

✓ Use “quotation marks” around titles that are from “articles,” “essays,” “stories,” “poems,” “chapters of books,” “page in a website,” “lectures,” and “songs”
Pay close attention to the spacing and punctuation marks in the sample references.

**Heading and Title**

A research paper in MLA style does not need a title page. Instead, beginning one inch from the top of the first page and flush with the left margin, type your name, your instructors name, the course number, and the date on separate lines, double spacing between the lines. Double space again and centre the title. Double-space again between the lines of the title and the first line of the text. Write your title in regular font and only capitalize the significant words of the title. See the example below. Notice there is no punctuation at the end of your title.

*If your instructor requires a title page, format it according to the instructions you are given.*

**Sample First Page**

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Josephson 1

Laura N. Josephson
Professor Bennett
Humanities 2710
8 May 2008

Ellington’s Adventures in Music and Geography

In studying the influence of Latin America, and Asian music on modern American composers, Music historians tend to discuss such figures as Aaron Copland, George Gershwin, Henry Cowell, Aland Hovhaness, and John Cage.
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In-text Citations

MLA uses the author - page number method for in-text citations. There are no abbreviations for page (i.e.: p. pg. etc.), just the number and no punctuation marks between the author’s last name and the page number; for example (Smith 56). Use these methods for both direct quotations and paraphrased ideas.

*Important* ANY idea you borrow from another source, directly or indirectly, MUST be cited.

There are two ways of citing in-text. One method is to have the author’s last name stated as you are introducing the quote with the page number in brackets, before the period, at the end of the quotation.

*Example:* McCrimmon acknowledges that “most helpful to the writer is the disciplined observation that occurs when one is looking for significant details and relationships between details” (17).

Note that the quotation begins and ends with quotation marks and that the punctuation ending the sentence goes after the page number in brackets.

The other method requires you to mention the author and page number in brackets, after the quotation. Use this method if you do not mention the author’s last name while introducing the quote.

*Example:* It is believed that “the most helpful to the writer is the disciplined observation that occurs when one is looking for significant details and relationships between details” (McCrimmon 17).

Multiple authors

Two authors: *Example* Broer and Holland state “…” (13). Or “…” (Broer, Holland 13).

3+ authors: You have two options;

1) After the first author replace the remaining authors with *et al.* (Armstrong et al. 81) OR
2) List all the authors (Armstrong, Yang, and Cuneo 80-82).

Multiple authors in the same citation: When referring to more than one resource in the same citation, place a semi-colon between each source. For example (Taylor 1; Armstrong, Yang, and Cuneo 80-82; Craner 308; Fukuyama 42). See pg 229 of the MLA Handbook.

The same author, different works

For citing different works by the same author, mention a shortened version of the title (formatted appropriately, see above) along with the normal citation.
For example:

Shakespeare’s *King Lear* has been called a “comedy of the grotesque” (Frye, *Anatomy* 237).

For Northrop Frye, one’s death is not a unique experience, for “every moment we have lived through we have also died out of into another order” (*Double Vision* 85).

The first example shows the author’s last name with the title and the page number. The second example uses the author’s name before the quotation and therefore only requires the title of the work and the page number in brackets. See page 225 of the MLA Handbook for more information.

**Help! I’m missing information!**

Don’t worry, there is a solution for that.

When you are missing the author, move the title into the author’s position and follow the rest of the citation in the correct order. See Journal Article (no author/editor) entry on page 7 for an example.

If you do not have a page number, use the abbreviation no pag.

For no publisher (common with websites), use N.p.

For no place of publication, use n.p. again. (Note the difference in capitalization, it’s lower case on purpose).

For no date of publication, use n.d.

Use these abbreviations as place holders for the missing information and continue the citation as normal.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Source</th>
<th>Works Cited entry</th>
<th>In text citation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
|               |                   | *numbers after the author indicate page number*  
|               |                   | *there is a single space between the author’s last name and page number, NO comma*  
| Single author |                   |                 |
| (MLA 148)     |                   |                 |
| 2 or 3 authors|                   |                 |
| (MLA 154)     |                   |                 |
| 4+ authors    |                   |                 |
|               | *for more than three authors, you may name only the first and add et al. (and others)*  
|               | *Or you may give all names in full in the order in which they appear on the title page.* (MLA 155)  
| (MLA 155)     |                   |                 |
| (MLA 137)     | 121 = volume number  
|               | 1 = issue number.  
|               | Together they look like this: 121.1 |
| **Journal article**  
| (no author/editor)  
| *if no author’s name is given, begin the entry with the title (MLA 145) | “Where Angels no Longer Fear to Tread.” *Economist* 22 Mar. 2008: 89-92. Print. | (“Where Angels” 90)  
| *in text, maintain the quotation marks around the article title (MLA 222) |

| **Newspaper article**  
| *B7 is the page number for the newspaper article |

| **Magazine article**  

| **Reviews of...**  
| (plays, movies, etc.)  

| **A work in an Anthology**  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Source</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Citation</th>
</tr>
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Works Cited


