

MLA Documentation Style

Introduction:

When you use the words or original ideas of another person in your writing, you **must** cite the sources. If the exact words of the original source are used, quotation marks are necessary. Though paraphrasing or rewording of an original sentence does not require quotation marks, documentation of the source is still required. Failure to cite sources of information is **plagiarism**.

There are several documentation formats. Be sure to use the one suggested by your instructor. This handout explains the MLA (Modern Language Association) format. This method differs from the more familiar footnote/endnote documentation methods by using references in parenthesis rather than numbering the body of the work.

The MLA format requires two things: "**parenthetical documentation**" is used to reference sources of information that are then listed in more detail at the end of the paper on a "**Works Cited**" page.

Parenthetical Documentation: In-Text Citation

Parenthetical documentation should be integrated smoothly into the text of your paper, rather than listed separately. There are two ways for in-text citations. The "General Rule" requires you to **cite each source at the point at which you refer to it by enclosing the author's last name and the page reference in parentheses within the text.**, For example:

At the turn of the century many men worked long hours, which "entitled their absence from the family for most of the day; that was not a rejection of fatherhood but a necessary element of it" (McKee and O'Brien 54).

Child support payments can be withheld from wages in 45 states (Schorr 33).

If the author's name is mentioned in your discussion, you only need to put the page reference in parentheses at the end of the sentence.

For example:

Ross Parke reports that, in general, the fathers' reaction at the moment of birth was more positive than their wives'. This may not be surprising; fathers had experienced no physical pain and had been given no dulling drugs (23).

According to Bernard Faber in *Encyclopedia Americana*, there is a trend towards waiting to marry and toward postponing the birth of the first child (6).

If there are two or three authors, use all the last names in a single phrase or parenthetical citation:

Gortner, Hebrun, and Nicolson maintain that "opinion leaders" influence other people in an organization because they are respected, not because they hold high positions (175).

OR

"Opinion leaders" influence other people in an organization because they are respected, not because they hold high positions (Gortner, Hebrun, and Nicolson 175).

If the author is unknown, use the title of the work or a shortened version in a single phrase or parenthetical citation (e.g. plays, books, television shows, entire websites):

"Hype," by one analysis, is "an artificially engendered atmosphere of hysteria" ("Today's Marketplace" 51).

If the entry is for a periodical, include the underlined title of the periodical and the page number:

"A widespread complaint among sons is the lack of genuine communication with their fathers which leads to unspoken resentments on both sides" (*Uncommunicative Father* 3).

WORKS CITED:

A "Works Cited" list (or bibliography) is a list of all sources that contributed ideas and information to your paper. The heading WORKS CITED is centered one inch from the top of the page. (Most word processing software automatically has the margins set at 1"). The list is arranged in **alphabetical order** by the authors' last names. If the

source doesn't list an author, arrange the entry by the first word in the title (ignoring "A", "An", and "The").

For books with a single author, the generalized citation form on the works cited page requires: Last name, First name. *Title*. publication date, publisher, place of publication. For example:

Fairbank, Carol. *Prairie Women: Images in American and Canadian Fiction*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1986. Print.

For a second book by the same author, the author's name can be left out of the second citation:

The Myth of Deliverance: Reflections on Shakespeare's Problem Comedies Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983. Print.

For books with two or more authors, list the first author, last name first; then list the name(s) of the other author(s) in regular order, with commas between each author:

Appleby, Joyce, Lynn Hunt, and Margaret Jacob. *Telling the Truth about History*. New York: Norton, 1994. Print.

For works with editor or compiler as "Author", Treat an editor as an author, but add a comma and ed. (or eds. for more than one editor):

Wall, Cheryl A., ed. *Changing Our Own Words: Essays on Criticism, Theory, and Writing by Black Women*. New Brunswick: Rutgers UP. 1989. Print.

For articles in scholarly journals, after the author's name put the "Title of the Article" and the *Title of the Journal* followed by the volume number, (year), and page numbers. If the journal numbers each issue separately, put a period and the issue number after the volume number:

Loffy, John. "The Politics at Modernism's Funeral." *Canadian Journal of Political and Social Theory* 6.3 (1987): 89-96. Print.

For articles from monthly magazines, put the month (or months, hyphenated) before the year and page numbers. Do not include volume or issue numbers, add medium of publication.

Weiss, Phillip. "The Book Thief: A True tale of Bibliomania." *Harper's* Jan-June. 1994: 37-56. Print.

For articles from weekly magazines, include the day, month, and year in that order, with no comas between them. Do not include volume or issue numbers: add medium of publication.

Daly, Steve. "Face to Face." *Entertainment Weekly* 20 June 1997: 20-24. Print.

For newspaper articles, give the name of the newspaper, underlined or italicized, as it appears on the front page but without any initial A, An, or The. Add the [city] in brackets after the name if it is not part of the name. Then give the date and the edition (if listed), followed by a colon, a space, the section number or letter (if listed), and the page number(s). If that article appears on discontinuous pages, give the first page followed by a plus sign, add medium of publication.

Markoff, John. "Cyberspace's Most Wanted: Hacker Eludes F.B.I. Pursuit." *New York Times* 4 July 1994, Late ed.: A1+. Print.

For multi-volume works, indicate author last name, first name, title, indicate Ed, editor first and last name, volume cited, city of publication, date of volume, medium of publication, total volumes.

Fosner, Phillip S. *The Black Worker*. Ed. Lucy Moorehead. Vol.3. Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1980. Print. 8 vols.

For web sites, include the name of the person who created the site or title of work (if relevant), the title of the site (italicized). If there is no title, include a description (such as Home Page) not underlined, italicized, or in quotation marks. Put in web if you accessed the information on the web, include date of access.

Classical Myth: The Ancient Sources. *Dept. of Greek and Roman Studies, U of Victoria*. Web. 28 Mar. 1998.

Kim, Angela. Home Page. Web. 9 Oct. 1997.

If you have a type of source that is not covered by the above examples, ask a SLAC Service Team member to show you the ***MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, Fifth Edition*** or you can visit **http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/resdoc5e/RES5e_ch08_s1-0001.html** for further help with citations.

All examples are from Lunsford & Connors' *The New St. Martin's Handbook, Fourth Edition* (Boston: St. Martin's Press, 1999)

Developed by Jennifer Lankenau
Edited by Adam Johnson
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