

Modern Language Association (MLA) Style Guidelines Overview



Introduction

This poster overviews *basic* guidelines for using MLA style. To supplement this poster, consult the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* (7th edition). Publishing scholars and graduate students should also consult the *MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing* (3rd edition). The MLA handbooks are available in most writing centers, libraries, and bookstores. You may also reference the Purdue University OWL for information on using MLA style: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>.

Poster by Kate Bouwens and Allen Brizee. © 2009 The Writing Lab & OWL at Purdue University.

Formatting

Type MLA essays on white 8.5 x 11 inch paper. Margins should be 1 inch on all sides. All text should be double-spaced. Use a legible font (e.g. Times New Roman) in 10 to 12 pt. size. In the upper left-hand corner of the first page, list your name, your instructor's name, the course, and the date.

Headers should contain your last name and page numbers (1, 2, 3...) in the upper right-hand corner, one-half inch from the top and flush with the right margin. Double space between the essay's title (not bolded, underlined, etc.) and the first line of the text. Indent the first line of each paragraph one half-inch (five spaces or press tab once) from the left margin.



Works Cited Page Format

Begin the Works Cited list on a separate page at the end of your essay. Maintain MLA formatting standards. Title the page Works Cited and center the title.



In-Text Citations

One Author

Use parenthetical citation to cite outside sources in your text. The page number(s) of your outside source should always appear in the parenthetical citation. The author's name of the outside source may appear in the sentence itself.

Wordsworth stated that Romantic poetry was marked by a

"spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" (263).

Or the author's name can go in the parentheses following the quote.

Romantic poetry is characterized by the "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" (Wordsworth 263).

Multiple Authors

For a source with three or fewer authors, list the authors' last names in the text or in the parenthetical citation.

Smith, Yang, and Moore argue that tougher gun control is not needed in the United States (76).

The authors state "Tighter gun control in the U.S. erodes Second Amendment rights" (Smith, Yang, and Moore 76).

For a source with more than three authors, use the work's bibliographic information as a guide for your citation. Provide the first author's last name followed by "et al." or list all the last names.

Jones et al. counter Smith, Yang, and Moore's argument by noting that the current spike in gun violence in America compels law makers to adjust gun laws (4).

No Known Author

For a source with no known author, use a shortened title of the resource in the parenthetical citation.

Many global warming hotspots exist in North America because this region has "comprehensive programs to monitor the environment" ("Impact of Global Warming" 6).

Citing Multivolume Works

If you cite from different volumes of a multivolume work, always include the volume number followed by a colon.

. . . as Quintilian wrote in *Institutio Oratoria* (1: 14-17).

Internet Sources

For Internet sources, include the author's name and the title of the page. You do not need a page or paragraph number in the parenthetical citation.

One online film critic stated that *Fitzcarraldo* is ". . . a scary critique of obsession" (Garcia, "Herzog: a Life").

Works Cited

Basics

List citations by author's last name (for entire edited collections, editor names) in alphabetical order. Type last name first, then the middle names or middle initials. Indent subsequent lines for a hanging indent.

Book with One Author

Gleick, James. *Chaos: Making a New Science*. New York:

Penguin, 1987. Print.

Book with More Than One Author

The first given name appears in last name, first name format; subsequent author names appear first name, last name.

Gillespie, Paula, and Neal Lerner. *The Allyn and Bacon*

Guide to Peer Tutoring. Boston: Allyn, 2000. Print.

Book with No Known Author

Encyclopedia of Indiana. New York: Somerset, 1993. Print.

Articles in Periodicals (Magazines and Newspapers)

For magazines, cite by listing the article's author, then the title of the article in quotation marks, then the italicized periodical title. Follow with the date of publication. Abbreviate the month.

Poniewozik, James. "TV Makes a Too-Close Call." *Time* 20

Nov. 2000: 70-71. Print.

Cite newspaper articles as you would magazine articles, but note the different pagination in a newspaper (late edition, A1).

Krugman, Andrew. "Fear of Eating." *New York Times* 21 May

2007 late ed.: A1. Print.

Article in a Scholarly Journal

Author(s). "Title of Article." Title of Journal Volume.Issue

(Year): pages. Medium of publication.

Internet Sources

MLA no longer requires URLs in citations. However, if your instructor requires URLs, list them after the date of access.

The Purdue OWL Family of Sites. The Writing Lab and OWL at

Purdue and Purdue U, 2008. Web. 23 April 2008.

For an individual page on an Internet site, list the author if known, followed by the information covered above for entire sites. Use n.p. if no publisher name is available and n.d. if no publishing date is given.

"How to Make Vegetarian Chili." eHow.com. eHow, n.d. Web. 24

Feb. 2009.