

WRITING CENTER

Documentation: MLA Style

Note: This tip sheet was based on the 8th edition of the MLA handbook.

All college-level students will need to use documentation when writing papers for university classes. There are several styles of documentation; the most common are APA and MLA.

This handout will briefly describe some basic MLA documentation procedures. It is not intended to be inclusive, nor is it intended to replace the handbook.

- MLA (Modern Language Association) style is most often used in humanities courses, such as literature, composition, cross-cultural studies, and sometimes history. It is always best to consult your professor for his or her preference before using any specific type of documentation.
- If you are required to use MLA style, you may want to purchase *The MLA Handbook*.
- The URL for the MLA website is <http://www.mla.org>

How to create citations within the text:

- **If you've used the author's name in your sentence**, put only the page numbers in parentheses after the segment you are citing.

Example: Johnson argues for the continuation of . . . (189-94).

- **If you have not named the author in your sentence**, put both the name and page numbers in parentheses at the end of the sentence.

Example: Tess' character is often described as . . . (Johnson 189-94).

- **Quoted material in your text:** Enclose quotations of less than four lines in double quotation marks.

Example: Johnson describes Tess as "a wonder of the real world" (294).

- **If you do not have page numbers**, put only the author's last name at the end of the sentence.

Example: Two-thirds of voters stated... (Xing).

- **If you do not have page numbers or an author**, put only the shortened title at the end of the sentence.

Example: Voter registrations are to be postmarked... ("Register to Vote")

Guidelines for writing a Works Cited section:

- Place the words **Works Cited** in the center of the first page of this section, an inch from the top.
- Double-space all lines.
 - *Note: To save space, the examples on the back of this tip sheet are not double-spaced.*
- Begin the first line of all entries at the left margin and indent all subsequent lines ½ inch.
- Alphabetize the list by the last names of authors. If no author is given, alphabetize by title. Ignore articles (*A*, *An*, and *The*).
- Include the author's name as it appears in the publication you are citing. For example, while you would probably list the author of *The Waste Land* as Eliot, T.S., you would list the author of *Beloved* as Morrison, Toni.
- Shorten publisher's names. You can find a more detailed guide on how to do this in section 1.6.3 of the *MLA Handbook*.

Examples of how to list selected materials:

Books

Typically include the relevant information in this order: Author. "Article Title." *Book Title*, Editor, Edition, Publisher, Year, Page numbers.

Book with one author:

Clark, Irene. L. *Writing in the Center: Teaching in a Writing Center Setting*, Kendall/Hunt, 1998.

Moncrieff, A.R. *Myths and Legends of Ancient Greece*. Gramercy, 1995.

Book with two or three authors:

Broadhead, Glenn J., and Richard C. Freed. *The Variables of Composition: Process and Product in a Business Setting*. Southern Illinois UP, 1986.

Article in an encyclopedia:

"International Working-class Movement." *Great Soviet Encyclopedia*. Edited by A.M. Prokhorov, 31 vols, McMillan, 1977.

Article or chapter in a book:

Hartwell, Patrick. "Grammar, Grammars, and the Teaching of Grammar." *A Sourcebook for Basic Writing Teachers*. Edited by Theresa Enos, 2nd ed., McGraw-Hill, 1987, pp. 348-372.

Periodicals

Typically include the relevant / available information in this order: Author. "Article Title." *Periodical Title*, Other contributors, Version, Number, Publisher, Publisher Date, Location (pp.). (For daily or weekly publications, use exact dates instead of volume/issue/year.)

Journal article, with continuous pagination:

Elbow, Peter. "Ranking, Evaluating, and Liking: Sorting out Three Forms of Judgment." *College English* vol. 55, 1993, pp. 187-206.

Journal article, paginated by issue (i.e. includes both volume and issue numbers):

White, John R. "The Way to Use APA: Insider's Guide." *Writing Center Market* vol. 12, no.3, 1999, pp. 21-23.

Magazine article:

Himes, Geoffrey. "Back in the Saddle." *Rolling Stone*, 18 April 1996, pp. 34-36.

Newspaper article:

Smith, James. "The APA Recovery Guide." *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 10 Mar. 1999, p. B2.

Web sites:

Typically include as much of the following information as possible in this order: Author (may be an organization). "Article Title." *Title of Website*. Version number, Name of institution/organization affiliated with the site (sponsor or publisher), date of resource creation (if available), URL, DOI or permalink. Date of access (if applicable).

Professional site:

Felluga, Dino. Guide to Literary and Critical Theory. Purdue U, 28 Nov. 2003, www.cla.purdue.edu/english/theory/. Accessed 10 May 2006.

Scholarly journal:

Dolby, Nadine. "Research in Youth Culture and Policy: Current Conditions and Future Directions." *Social Work and Society: The International Online-Only Journal*, vol. 6, no. 2, 2008, www.socwork.net/sws/article/view/60/362. Accessed 20 May 2009.

Article from an Online Database:

Langhamer, Claire. "Love and Courtship in Mid-Twentieth-Century England." *Historical Journal*, vol. 50, no. 1, 2007, pp. 173-96. ProQuest, doi:10.1017/S0018246X06005966. Accessed 27 May 2009.

This information can be located in the following publication:

MLA. *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. 8th ed., Modern Language Association of America, 2016.