

The Modern Language Association (MLA) Style Formatting and Documentation

This handout does not cover the entire set of rules governing MLA style, but it does provide some general guidelines that apply to many writing situations. For more complete information, refer to the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, 5th ed., available in the Writing Center and at the reserve desk at the Chester Fritz Library. The MLA also maintains a Web page at <http://www.mla.org>

Basic Text Format

- **Margins:** One-inch on the top, bottom, and sides of each page.
- **Page Numbering:** Place page numbers on each page (including the first page) in the upper right hand corner, one-half inch from the top, and preceded by the writer’s last name.
- **Title Page:** MLA style does not require a title page; instead, the first page of the paper should begin with four lines, double spaced, indicating: writer’s name, name of the course instructor, name of the course, and the date.
- **Spacing:** Double-space every line (including long quotes and the citations on the Works Cited page).
- **Indenting:** Indent the first line of every paragraph five spaces (one “tab”). Indent long quotations ten spaces (two “tabs”).
- **Font and Typeface:** Use a 12-point font in a traditional typeface such as Times Roman or Courier.

Here is the beginning of a paper written by a UND student for *English 120: Academic Research*:

Note: Most examples in this handout are reduced in size to fit a two-column format; the size of margins, indents, and fonts are thus proportionally smaller than what is required by the guidelines.

Trude 1

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 English 120
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Censorship as an Act of Freedom

On September 22, 1995, within the same year that the film titled The Indian in the Cupboard, debuted in the United States, Lynne Reid Banks’ award-winning book of the same title was banned from the Bemidji, Minnesota school district. I first discovered this case of book banning on a web page that also describes other cases. The viewer is invited to click on a buried pumpkin and “harvest” books that have been banned.

In-Text Citations

There are two options for citing sources of information in the body of an MLA-style paper:

1. Mention the source in your paraphrase (or, for quotations, in a phrase that introduces the quotation) and place the relevant page number(s) in a parenthetical reference at the end of the paraphrase or quotation (but before the end punctuation):

In “Hunger as Ideology,” Susan Bordo claims that women are inundated with advertisements in which “food is constructed as a sexual object of desire, and eating is legitimated as much more than a purely nutritive activity” (150).

Notice that short quotations (four lines or less) are set off with quotation marks; for longer (block) quotations, use a block indent instead of quotation marks (see below).

2. Cite both the information source and the page number(s) in a parenthetical reference at the end of the paraphrase or quotation (but before the end punctuation):

Gender roles are constructed in ads in our culture just as “food is constructed as an object of sexual desire, and eating is legitimated as much more than a purely nutritive activity” (Bordo 150).

Long Quotations (more than four lines)

- Set off quotations that take up more than four lines of text by indenting the entire quotation 10 spaces (two “tabs”) from the left hand margin. (Do not indent from the right-hand margin.)
- Do not use quotation marks
- Place the parenthetical reference outside the final punctuation.
- Example of a ‘block’ (long) quotation:

Hemingway’s first novel already demonstrated mature writing:

The Sun Also Rises was Hemingway’s first serious venture into the craft of the novel, and in some ways the 1926 novel may be his best. The style is wonderfully controlled; there is no self-consciousness, [. . .] and there is the feeling if not the certainty of multiple levels of meaning to the story. (Lewis 19)

Citing a source written by two or more authors

- If the information source you are citing is a work written by two authors, use both last names in the parenthetical reference. For example: (Benson and Mumford 26).
- If there are more than two authors, use “et al.” after the initial last name. For example: (Johnson et al. 42).

Citing a source with no author

- If a source has no named author, use the title of the work in your text or in the parenthetical reference. You may use a shortened version of the title as long as it directs the reader to the correct entry in the Works Cited page, for example: (Longman Guide 137). (The complete title is The Longman Guide to the Web.)

Citing two or more works by the same author(s)

- If you cite more than one work by the same author(s), reference the title of each work in your text or in the parenthetical reference, followed by the page number(s). For example, if you refer to Renaissance Writers in England and The German Romantics and Their English Contemporaries, both written by Jacob Shaw, but you do not mention the titles in your text, the parenthetical references would read: (Renaissance Writers 14) and (German Romantics 25)

If you mentioned neither the author’s name nor the title of the work in your text, the author’s last name, followed by a comma, should be placed first in the parenthetical reference:

(Shaw, Renaissance Writers 14) and (Shaw, German Romantics 25)

The Works Cited Page

The Works Cited page provides readers with an alphabetical list of all the sources referred to in your paper.

General Format

- Continue the page numbering sequence from the main body of your paper.
- Center the words “Works Cited” one inch from the top of the page.
- Continue double-spacing
- Alphabetize the works you cite by the last name of the author or, if there is no known author, the first word in the title of the work other than “a,” “an,” or “the”.
- If the citation takes up more than one line of the page, indent the remaining line(s) five spaces (one “tab”).
- Underline the names of books, journals, and magazines. (Your instructor may allow you to use italics.)
- Enclose with quotation marks the titles of articles within books, journals, and magazines.

Examples of citations in the Works Cited page

- Following are some examples from a variety of sources that show how to format citations for the Works Cited page. (Also see the sample Works Cited page shown on last page of this handout).

Books

A book by one author

Frye, Northrup. *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays*. Princeton: UP, 1957

Note: If you cite another work by the same author(s), use three dashes in the second citation to indicate the same last name:

Frye, Northrup. *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays*. Princeton: UP, 1957
 ---. *Creation and Recreation*. Buffalo: U Toronto P, 1980.

A book by two authors

Tennyson, G.B., and Donald Gray. Victorian Literature: Prose. New York: Macmillan, 1976.

A book by three or more authors

- If there are more than three authors, you have the option of naming all of the authors (in the order that they appear on the title page) or naming just the first author and adding “et al.”

Gilman, Sander, et al. Hysteria Beyond Freud. Berkeley: U of California P, 1993.

A book with no author

Major League Baseball Players. New York: Macmillan, 1989.

A work in an anthology

- Begin with the author and title of the work in the anthology (enclosing the title in quotation marks). Follow with information about the anthology as a whole, then the page numbers for the work you are citing.

LaFleur, William R. “Abortion’s Place in Society: The Case of Japan.” Comparing Cultures: Readings and Contemporary Japan for American Writers. Ed. Merry I. White and Sylvan Barnet. Boston: Bedford, 1995. 200-206.

A translation

- Begin with the last name of the original author, followed by the title of the work, the name(s) of the translator(s), and the publishing information.

Zoghaib, Henri. Love Poems in Forbidden Time. Trans. Adnan Haydar and Michael Beard. Washington, DC: New Pen Bond, 1991.

Magazines

Magazine article by one author

Walsh, John. “U.S. – Japan Study Aim is Education Refom.” Science. 16 Jan. 1987: 274-75.

Magazine article by more than one author

Betterman, John, and Dave Winthrop. “Skiing the Alps.” Travel. 16 Jan. 1987: 274.

Magazine article with no author named

“Drunkproofing Automobiles.” Time. 6 April 1987: 37.

Newspapers

Newspaper article with author’s name known

Greeley, Andrew. “Today’s Morality Play: The Sitcom.” New York Times. 17 May 1987, late ed., sec. 2: 1+.

Newspaper article with author’s name unknown

“The Drug Epidemic in Our Schools.” New York Times. 10 Oct. 1989, late ed., sec. 2: 1+.

Journals

A journal using continuous pagination

- If a journal uses “continuous pagination” (for example, the pagination for the first page of the February issue picks up from the last page of the January issue, and so on for the following issues of that year), cite just the volume number.

Baum, Rosalie M. “Alcoholism and Family Abuse in Maggie and The Bluest Eye.” Mosaic 19 (1986): 91-105_

A journal that paginates each issue separately

- If the journal does not use continuous pagination but starts each issue with page one, cite both volume and issue number.

Clark, Blue. "American Indian Studies in the New Millenium." North Dakota Quarterly 67.3 (2001): 7-13.

A journal article by more than one author

Robertson, Elizabeth, and Bruce K. Martin. "Culture as Catalyst and Constraint: Toward a New Perspective on Difference." College English. 62 (2000): 492-510.

Personal Interviews

Salter, John. Personal Interview. 15 May 2000.

Note: Your parenthetical reference for a personal interview would include only the last name of the persona interviewed and would not show a page number. For example:

There are several competing theories about why the drum is so important to some cultures (Salter).

Documenting On-Line Sources

In general, guidelines for documentation of electronic sources are the same as for other sources, but readers also may need special or different information in order to efficiently retrieve on-line material. You may have followed a number of "links" to find information on the Internet; it is thus important to take notes during research process in order to keep a record of relevant information that would help a reader retrace the steps of your research.

▪ **Dates**

Cite both the publication date of the electronic source (if available) and the date you accessed it. If the site was originally published in print, show the date of the original printing, if it is available.

▪ **Addresses (URLs)**

Cite the electronic address for the source (URL) as the last item of information in the citation in the Works Cited page. Enclose the full address in angle brackets and followed by a period. For example:

<<http://www.und.nodak.edu/org/ndq>>.

▪ **Parenthetical references**

Cite relevant on-line source information (such as the author, perhaps the name of the work, and the page or paragraph number) in a parenthetical reference (or, if possible, as introductory material in your text) just as you would for other sources of information. Some Web sites show no pagination or paragraph numbering; in these cases simply reference whatever information (such as author, title, sponsoring organization) will lead the reader to the appropriate citation on the Works Cited page. Given the transient nature of network research, web pages may disappear or go under repair for periods of time, so be sure to download or print relevant material as a back-up.

▪ **Examples**

The following are examples of on-line sources together with the kind of information you should include in Works Cited citations from those sources. Also shown are brief examples of parenthetical references.

Scholarly Projects and Information Databases

Within each citation on your Works Cited page, provide the following information (if given) in order:

- Title of the project or database (underlined)
- Name of the editor of the project
- Electronic publication information, including version number (if relevant and not part of the title), date of the electronic publication or of the latest update, an name of any sponsoring institution or organization
- Date of access
- Network address

A scholarly project

Citation in Works Cited page:

Victorian Women Writers Project. Transcribed and encoded by Kathryn Benedict. Ed. Perry Willett. Apr. 1997. Indiana U. 13 March 2000
<<http://www.indiana.edu/~letrs/vwwp>>.

Corresponding parenthetical reference:

Among contemporary literary critics, the works of Victorian women writers have assumed new prominence (Victorian Women).

An information database

Citation in Works Cited page:

CNN Interactive. 28 March 2001. Cable News Network. 29 March 2001 <<http://www.cnn.com/>>.

Corresponding parenthetical reference:

Several news Web sites include pages offering the latest information about both Wall Street and developments in personal finance (CNN Interactive).

Documents within Projects or Databases

Notice that these citations add a specific title and web address corresponding to the relevant document within the project or database.

Cite the following in order (if given the information):

- Author's name
- Title of the document (in quotation marks)
- Title/Name of the overall work/project (underlined)
- Name of the editor
- Electronic publication information, including version number (if relevant and if not part of the title), date of electronic publication or of the latest update, and name of any sponsoring institution or organization
- Date of access
- Network address

Document within a scholarly project

Citation in Works Cited page:

Butler, Josephine. "The Education and Employment of Women (1868)." Victorian Women Writers Project. Ed. Perry Willett. Apr. 1997. Indiana U. 13 March 2000 <<http://www.indiana.edu/~letrs/vwwp-library.html>>.

Corresponding in-text reference:

According to Josephine Butler, "In 1861 there were 80,017 female teachers in England [. . .]."

Document within a database

Citation in Works Cited page:

"Napster not complying." CNN Interactive. 28 March 2001. Cable News Network. 28 March 2001 <<http://cnnfn.cnn.com/2001/03/28/news/napster/>>.

Corresponding in-text reference

According to CNN Interactive, Napster is still not complying with a federal judge's order prohibiting their use of copyrighted material.

Articles in Online Periodicals

An article in a scholarly journal

- Author's name (if given)
- Title of the article (in quotation marks)
- Name of journal (underlined)
- Volume number, issue number, or other identifying number
- Date of publication
- The number range or total number of pages, paragraphs, or other sections, if they are numbered.
- Date of access
- Network address

Citation in Works Cited page:

Ramadonovic, Peter. "Nietzche's Active Forgetting to Blanchot's Writing of the Disaster." Postmodern Culture 11.2 (2001). 20 pars. 15 March 2001 <<http://jefferson.village.virginia.edu/pmc/contests.all.html>>.

Corresponding in-text reference:

Ramadonovic notes: "Nietzche's understanding of forgetting stands in marked contrast to that of Plato" (par. 2).

An article in a newspaper

Citation in Works Cited page:

Pates, Mikkel. "In Critical Condition." Grand Forks Herald Online. 23 June 2000. 12 March 2001
<<http://www.gfherald.com>>.

Corresponding in-text reference:

Mikkel Pates reports that "the central Red River Valley's flooded crops are in critical condition, and only quick drying will save them."

An article in a magazine

- Most on-line magazine articles do not use page or paragraph numbers. In these cases a parenthetical reference is not necessary; simply incorporate the citation within your text. If the article *does* use reference numbers, include them in parenthetical reference.

Citation in Works Cited page:

Kluger, Jeffrey. "Fear Not!" Time. 28 March 2001. 29 March 2001. <<http://www.time.com/time/health/article/0,8599,103759.html>>.

Corresponding in-text reference

In a recent Time magazine article, Jeffrey Kluger cites a report estimating that 50 million people in the United States suffer some form of phobia.

An editorial

Citation in Works Cited page:

"Political Peacekeeping in the Balkans." Editorial. New York Times on the Web. 28 March 2001. 29 March 2001. <<http://www.nytimes.com/2001/03/28/opinion/28WED2.html>>.

Corresponding in-text reference:

A New York Times editorial, "Political Peacekeeping in the Balkans," notes that "the Bush administration has made clear its desire for an early withdrawal of American peacekeeping troops from the Balkans."

Online Books

- Author's name (if given).
- Title of work (when appropriate)
- Title of book (underlined). If only an editor, a compiler, or a translator is identified, cite that person's name, followed by the appropriate abbreviation (ed., comp., trans.)
- Publication information. If the version of the text online has not been published before, give the date of electronic publication and the name of any sponsoring institution or organization. State the publication facts about the original print version if they are given in the source (e.g. city of publication, name of publisher, year of publication).
- Date of access
- Network address

Dickens, Charles. A Tale of Two Cities. Online Literature Library. London, 1859. 29 June 1999. 6 April 2001 <<http://www.literature.org/authors/dickens-charles/two-cities/>>.

Other Online Mediums

An email

Citation in Works Cited page:

Smith, John. "Re: Flooding." E-mail to the author. 20 March 2001.

Corresponding in-text reference:

John Smith observed that the National Weather Service made "variable" predictions for this year's flooding.

A CD-Rom/Diskette Database of Publication

- Author's name. If only an editor, a compiler, or a translator is available, cite that person's name, followed by the appropriate abbreviation (ed., com., trans.).
- Title of the publication (underlined)
- Name of the editor, compiler, or translator
- Publication medium (CD-ROM, Diskette, or Magnetic tape)
- Edition, release, or version
- Place of publication
- Name of publisher
- Date of publication

Citation in Works Cited page:

Thomas, Brandon. Becoming a Teacher. CD-ROM. New York: New Visions, 2000.

Corresponding in-text reference:

Brandon Thomas, professor at the University of Maryland, has developed an interactive CD-ROM on the subject of professional development.

A personal or professional page

- Name of the person who created it (if relevant)
- Title of the site (underlined) or, if there is no title, with a description such as Home Page (not underlined, italicized or in quotation marks)
- The name of the institution or organization associated with the site
- The date of access
- The network address

Citation in Works Cited page:

Dahlberg, M. Margaret. Faculty Home Page. Valley City State University. 10 April 2001
<http://community.vcsu.edu/facultypages/margaret_dahlberg/>.

Corresponding in-text reference:

Professor Dahlberg received her Ph.D. in English from the University of North Dakota, Grand Forks.

Listserv/Newsgroup/Usenet Newsgroup

- Author of the document or posting
- Subject line of the posting (in quotation marks)
- Date item was originally posted
- The words: Online posting
- Name of the listserv, followed by the date the item was accessed
- Network address
- If possible, cite the author within your text rather than in a parenthetical reference

Citation in Works Cited page:

Randall, Peggy. "Re: CLMP's Events Calendar."

Online

Posting. 27 March 2001. CLMP Listserv. 28 March 2001 <<http://litmagslji@egroups.com>>.

Corresponding in-text reference:

According to Peggy Randall, the Council for Literary Magazine Publishers (CLMP) periodically hosts events for the editors of small journals.

A Sample Works Cited Page

Freeman 10

Works Cited

- Clark, Blue. "American Indian Studies in the New Millenium." North Dakota Quarterly 67.3 (2001): 7-13.
- Dahlberg, M. Margaret. Faculty Home Page. Valley City State University. 10 April 2001
<http://community.vcsu.edu/facultypages/margaret_dahlberg/>.
- Frye, Northrup. Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays. Princeton: UP, 1957.
- . Creation and Recreation. Buffalo: U Toronto P, 1980.
- Gilman, Sander, et al. Hysteria Beyond Freud. Berkeley: U of California P, 1993.
- LaFleur, William R. "Abortion's Place in Society: The Case of Japan." Comparing Cultures: Readings on Contemporary Japan for American Writers. Ed. Merry I. White and Sylvan Barnet. Boston: Bedford, 1995. 200-206.
- Randall, Peggy. "Re: CLMP's Events Calendar." Online posting. 27 March 2001. CLMP Listserv. 28 March 2001 <litmagslji@egroups.com>.
- Tennyson, G.B., and Donald Gray. Victorian Literature: Prose. New York: Macmillan, 1976.
- Willis, Ellen. "Our Mobsters, Ourselves." The Nation. 14 March 2001: 1+. 2 April 2001
<<http://www.thenation.com>>.