

MLA Bibliographic Style: A Brief Guide

This handout is designed to be a quick reference guide to the MLA style of documenting sources in research papers. Your “Works Cited” section should appear at the end of your paper and you should arrange the entries works alphabetically by author, or by title, if no author appears in the entry. In this section you should list only works you actually cited. Your teacher may also request a separate list of works consulted. For further information about types of entries not listed here, consult Joseph Gibaldi’s *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 6th edition, which is available at the circulation desk. For further information, consult the official page of the Modern Language Association (<http://www.mla.org>).

Some of your teachers might suggest you use APA, an alternate style used more often in scientific research and developed by the American Psychological Association. You can find advice on using APA style at the Purdue OWL (http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_apa.html) and at the APA site (<http://www.apastyle.org/aboutstyle.html>).

Underlining vs. italics: MLA style traditionally recommends underlining the titles of major works, but some school districts and many publications now utilize italics for this purpose. The MLA website addresses this fascinating controversy! “Most word processing programs and computer printers permit the reproduction of italic type. In material that will be graded or edited for publication, however, the type style of every letter and punctuation mark must be easily recognizable. Italic type is sometimes not distinctive enough for this purpose. . . . If you wish to use italics rather than underlining, check your instructor’s or editor’s preferences.”

OTHER TIPS

- If no author is given, start the citation with the title.
- Abbreviate the names of all months except May, June, and July.
- Use shortened forms of publishers’ names. Leave out articles—A, An, The—and words like Co., Inc., Books, House, Press, Publishers. When citing a university press, add the abbreviations *U* and *P* (Ohio State UP). If the publisher includes a person’s name, cite the surname alone (instead of John Wiley, use Wiley). If the publisher’s name includes the names of more than one person, cite the first surname only.
- Use familiar abbreviations in publisher’s names (MLA or GPO).
- Use *hanging indentation* format. Indent the second line of an entry and all other lines half an inch or 5 spaces (if using a typewriter).
- All parts of a research paper should be double-spaced, including your list of works cited. Double space between and within entries.
- Titles of newspapers, magazines, and journals are not followed by punctuation.

PRINT SOURCES

Format for the Works Cited and Works Consulted Sections

A Book by One Author

English, Carol. The Cliffs Won’t Do: Read the Book. Philadelphia: McGraw Hill, 2004.

Two or More Books by the Same Author

Small, Chris. Please, Help Me Carry My Keys! Topeka: Rand, 2002.

———. Don’t Measure a Chemist by Her Size. New York: Feminist, 2004.

A Book by Two or Three Authors

Drucker, Darla, and Amy Jones. How to Survive Your Wedding. New York: Simon, 2003.

A Book by a Corporate Author

Springfield Township Family and Consumer Science Department. Cooking with Spice.
New York: Scribner, 2003.

A Book with an Editor

Valenza, Joyce, ed. Bagels and Books: An Anthology. Brooklyn, NY: Random House, 2001.

A Work in an Anthology

Smith, James. "The Physics of Sushi." The Fabulous Physics Paper. Ed. Samuel Klein.
Rome: Cambridge UP, 2004. 46-59.

An Edition Other Than the First

Peters, Michael. Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Keeping Your Classroom
Neat and Clean. 4th ed. Philadelphia: Lysol, 2005.

A Signed Article in a Reference Book

Cohen, Sandra. "Zen and Art." Encyclopedia Americana. 2004 ed.

An Unsigned Article in a Reference Book

"Best Beards of All Time." Encyclopedia of Anatomy and Hair. 15th ed. 2003.

An Article in a Journal with Continuous Pagination

Skater, Andrew. "High School Rollerblading." Secondary Education 54(1990): 113-25.

An Article from a Monthly or Bimonthly Periodical

Ramsey, Pamela. "Where's My Smiley Face?" MacWorld Sept. 1997: 86-94.

An Article from a Weekly or Biweekly Periodical

Henry, Mary Ann. "Announcing Bus Changes With Flair." Time 4 July 2001: 17-76.

A Signed Article from a Daily Newspaper

Goldberg, Grace. "The Inside Track: Alumni Life." Trojan Times 10 Oct. 2004: 17.

Smith, Bob. "Schools Losing Ground." USA Today 5 May 2001: 5D.

An Unsigned Article from a Daily Newspaper

"Striking a Pose with Sally Miles." New York Times 15 Oct. 1997, late ed. sec.6: 35+.

A Critical Analysis, Signed Excerpt

Ross, Stephan S. "Tom Wolfe." Contemporary Literary Criticism. Ed. Daniel G. Marowski. 35: 458-60.

Films; Radio and Television Programs

"Starring the Other Peggy Lee." Slightly Off Broadway—The Series. Prod. Sheldon Wang. PBS.
WNET, New York. 6 Aug. 1995.

Creative Bookbinding. Dir. Tom Martin. Videocassette. Clemens, 1997.

Personal or Telephone Interview

Craig, John. Personal interview. 23 Sept. 2004.

Personal Photograph (for your scanned images!)

Begin with a description of the photo. Do not use italics or quotation marks. Indicate who took the photo and the date it was taken.

Grandpa Al at Home. Personal photograph by Susan Student. 28 May 2003.

Citing works within your text (in-text or in-project documentation)

To document your sources, cite the author's name and the page number of the source in parentheses at the end of the sentence, before the final period:

Lowfat cream cheese can save you 300 grams of fat per year (Valenza 35).

If the author's name is used in your sentence, you may just refer to page numbers:

Copaset argues "yellow simply does not interact well with khaki" (45).

If you are referring to the whole work rather than a specific section, you may omit any reference in parentheses:

Through his work, Berger's main thesis is that by using motifs, organic unity is easier to achieve.

CITING ELECTRONIC SOURCES

Uniform standards continue to develop to address dramatic changes in information formats. Web sources often challenge researchers to locate missing pieces of citations. While researchers should make every effort to locate that information, what is most important in documenting electronic resources is to give the reader as much specific information as possible (e.g., author, title, publication data) to identify the source you are citing.

Parenthetical notes: The information in your parenthetical notes must match the corresponding entries in your list of works cited. One of the most frequent questions students asked is "How do I prepare a parenthetical note for a Web page if a Web page has no page numbers?"

The MLA has an answer: "nonprint sources such as films, television programs, recordings, and performances, and electronic sources with no pagination or other type of reference markers cannot be cited by page number. Such works are often cited in their entirety and often by title" (Gibaldi 239).

Do not include hyperlinks in your works cited; they are useful to online readers only. Turn off autofor­mating before you begin your draft, or enter Control Z to undo automatic hyperlinking by your word processor.

World Wide Web (general Web site)

Format:

Author (if known). "Title of Page or Document." Title of Site or Larger Work (if applicable).
Date of electronic publication, last update, or date of posting. Name of any
Associated Institution. Date of download. <http://address/filename>.

Examples:

Valenza, Joyce. "Springfield Township High School Virtual Library." 8 June 2003. Springfield
Township High School. 3 Oct. 2005. <http://mciu.org/~spjvweb>.

or

Smith, George. "Graf Has Look of a Champion." ESPNET SportsZone. 29 Aug. 1996.
<http://www.espn.com/gen/top/0108716001.html>.

Article in an online magazine (not accessed through a subscription service)

Format:

Author. "Title of Article." Title of Magazine Date of electronic publication. Date of access.
<http://address/filename>.

Example:

Smith, Jane. "Who Really Invented the Internet?" Web Weekly 26 Feb 2001. 4 May 2001.
<http://webweekly.com/smithwho/>.

Article in an online encyclopedia

Format:

Author. "Title of Article." Title of Reference Work. Edition or version (if available). Date of electronic
publication. Title of the Database or Online Service. Date of access. <http://address/filename>.

Example:

Cook, Sarah Gibbard. "Berlin, Germany." Encyclopedia Americana Online. Mar. 2003.
Grolier Online. 29 Feb. 1999. <<http://grolier.go.com>>.

Article in an online scholarly journal (available independently)

Format:

Author. "Article Title." Periodical Title Volume. Issue (Year): Pages (if available).
Larger Site or Database Name (if any). Date of access. <<http://address/filename>>.

Examples:

Smith, Winston. "Life in Dystopia." Journal of Utopian Literature Online 23.4 (2004): 20-33.
Project Future World. 20 Feb. 2006. <<http://projectfw.com/julo/distopia.htm>>.

Entire Online Book

Twain, Mark. Adventures of Huckleberry Finn. New York: Harper, 1884. Electronic Text Center.
U of Virginia Library. 20 July 2004. <<http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/toc/modeng/public/Twa2Huc.html>>.

Section of an Online Book

Frost, Robert. "Birches." Mountain Interval. 1920. Bartelby.com: Great Books Online. 25 May 2005.
<<http://www.bartleby.com/119/11.html>>.

Article in an online magazine (available independently)

Format:

Author. "Article Title." Periodical Title Date of print publication (if available): Pages (if available).
Date of access. <<http://addressofarticleorjournalsearchpage>>.

Example:

Orekin, Michele. "Spending It All on the Kids." Time 7 July 2003: 24-25. 2 Aug. 2004.
<<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article917.html>>.

Journal material accessed from a subscription service (EBSCO, eLibrary, GaleNet, CQ Researcher, etc.)

Format:

Author. "Article Title." Periodical Title Date of print publication (if available): Pages. Database Name (if any). Name of Providing Library, Consortium or Library System. Date of access.
<<http://addressofdatabasehomepage>>.

Examples:

Brown, Susan. "Writing the Perfect Paper." High School Weekly 12 Sept. 2004: 22. EBSCOhost.
ACCESS PA. 25 Nov. 2004. <<http://www.epnet.com/>>.

or

Williams, Larry. "Speedy Internet May Spur Innovations." Philadelphia Inquirer 16 Aug. 1996: A03.
Montgomery County Lib. 7 Dec. 2003 <<http://www.phillynews.com/archive.htm>>.

or

Clark, Charles S. "The FBI Under Fire." CQ Researcher 11 April 1997: 315-22. Springfield Township
HS Lib. 3 Sept. 2003. <<http://resource.cq.com>>.

or

Brown, Charlie. "My Life in Cartoons." Cartoon Week 21 Nov. 1999: 7-12. InfoTrac: General Reference Center Gold on Student Resource Center. Gale Group. Springfield Township HS Lib. 15 Dec. 1999. <<http://www.galegroup.com/>>.

SIRS Online Products

Format:

Author. "Article Title." Original Source of Article Date of original source; pages. Product Name.
Name of Providing Library, Consortium or Library System. Date of access.
<<http://address/filename>>.

Example:

Frick, Robert. "Investing in Medical Miracles." Kiplinger's Personal Finance Feb. 1999: 80-87.
SIRS Knowledge Source: Researcher. (May substitute Renaissance or Government Reporter)
Springfield Township HS Lib. 25 July 1999. <<http://sks.sirs.com/>>.

Facts.com

Format:

"Article Title." Original Source of the Article. Date of original source. Product Name. Publisher.
Name of Providing Library, Consortium or Library System. Date of access.
<<http://www.2facts.com>>.

Facts.com examples:

"Safe Drinking Water Act Signed." Facts On File World News Digest 22 Aug. 1996. FACTS.com.
Facts On File News Services. Springfield Township HS Lib. 20 Jan. 2000.
<<http://www.2facts.com>>.

"Issues and Controversies: Racial Disparities." Issues and Controversies on File 13 Jan. 1996.
FACTS.com. Facts On File News Services. Springfield Township HS Lib. 15 Nov. 1999.
<<http://www.2facts.com>>.

GaleNet/Student Resource Center

Format for a periodical reference:

Author. "Article Title." Original Source of the Article Date of original source. Pages of original source.
Specific Database on Student Resource Center. Gale Group. Name of Providing Library,
Consortium or Library System. Date of access. <<http://www.galenet.com>>.

Example:

Brown, Charlie. "My Life in Cartoons." Cartoon Week 21 Nov. 1999: 7-12. General Reference Center Gold on Student Resource Center. Gale Group. Springfield Township HS Lib. 15 Dec. 1999. <<http://www.galenet.com>>.

Format for an article that appeared in a book:

Author. "Article Title." Title of Book. City of Publication: Publisher, Date. Pages. Specific Database on GaleNet or Larger Database. Name of Providing Library, Consortium or Library System. Date of access. <<http://galenet.gale.com>>.

Example:

Hoffman, Baruch, Elaine. "The Golden Country: Sex and Love in 1984." 1984 Reviewed in Our Century. New York: Harper, 1983. 47-56. Republished in Contemporary Literary Criticism Select on Student Resource Center. Springfield Township HS Lib. 20 May 2004. <<http://www.galenet.com>>.

Format for a reference article (not previously published):

Author (if provided). "Article Title." Specific Database on Student Resource Center. Gale Group. Name of Providing Library, Consortium or Library System. Date of access. <<http://www.galenet.com>>.

Examples:

"Classical Greek Civilization, 2000 B.C.-300 B.C." DISCovering World History on Student Resource Center. Gale Group. Springfield Township HS Lib. 12 Oct. 1999. <<http://www.galenet.com>>.

or

"Dean Koontz." DISCovering Authors Modules on Student Resource Center. Gale Group. Springfield Township HS Lib. 3 Dec. 2000. <<http://www.galenet.com>>.

Format for a republished journal essay:

Author (if provided). "Article Title." Original Source of Article. Date of original source: Pages of original source. Specific Gale Database on Larger Database. Gale Group. Name of Providing Library, Consortium or Library System. Date of access. <<http://www.galenet.com>>.

Examples:

Levin, Harry. "Wonderland Revisited." The Kenyon Review Autumn, 1965: 591-93. Contemporary Literary Criticism Select on Literature Resource Center. Gale Group. Springfield Township HS Lib. 13 Oct. 1999. <<http://www.galenet.com>>.

or

Berger, Carol. "Profile of a Basketball Great." Sports in Philadelphia 12 Nov. 1999. Biography Resource Center. Gale Group. Springfield Township HS Lib. 20 Dec. 2004. <<http://www.galenet.com>>.

Format for an article republished from a multi-volume reference series:

Author (if provided). "Article Title." Original Source of Article. Editor. Volume: Pages of original source. Specific Gale Database (if noted) on Larger Database. Gale Group. Name of Providing Library, Consortium or Library System. Date of access. <<http://www.galenet.com>>.

Example:

Sturber, Robert. "Imagery in Great Expectations." Nineteenth-Century Literary Criticism. Ed. Carol Packard. 26: 235-50. Literature Resource Center. Gale Group. Springfield Township HS Lib. 23 Jan. 2003. <<http://www.galenet.com>>.

Wilson Biographies

Format:

Author (if provided). "Article Title." Original Source of Article. Date of original source. Pages of original source (if available). Specific database on WilsonWeb. Name of Providing Library, Consortium or Library System. Date of access. <<http://vweb.hwwilsonweb.com/>>.

Example:

"Edward Albee." Current Biography. 1996. Wilson Biographies Illustrated Plus on WilsonWeb. Springfield Township HS Lib. 15 Dec. 1999. <<http://vweb.hwwilsonweb.com/>>.

Beyond Books

Format:

Corporate Author. "Book: Section: Article Title." Date of Original Source. Name of Database.
Name of Providing Library, Consortium or Library System. Date of access.
<<http://www.beyondbooks.com/>>.

Example:

Beyond Books, New Forum Publishing. "Shakespeare: Shakespeare's London: Women."
13 March 2003. Beyond Books.com. Springfield Township HS Lib. 31 March 2003.
<<http://www.beyondbooks.com/sha91/1f.asp>>.

CD-ROMs, Diskettes, DVDs

Non-periodical (encyclopedias, etc.)

Format:

Name of Author (if given). "Title of Part of Work." Title of Publication. Name of Editor, Compiler,
or Translator (if relevant). Edition or release, if relevant. Publication medium (CD-ROM,
diskette, etc.). City of Publication: Publisher, Year of publication.

Example:

Wallechinsky, David. "Olympic Games." Encyclopedia Encarta. CD-ROM. Redmond, WA: Microsoft, 2003.

Personal Subscription Service (one you might subscribe to at home)

Format:

Author (if available). "Title of Article." Title of Larger Work. Version (if available). Date of source.
Name of Service. Date of access. Keyword: Word.

Example:

Jones, Charles O. "Political Party." World Book Online. 2003. America Online. 12 Jan. 2004.
Keyword: Worldbook.

CD-ROM (periodical)

Format:

Name of Author (if available). "Title of article." Title of Journal or Newspaper Publication
information for printed source. Title of Database. Publication medium (CD-ROM,
diskette, DVD). Name of Vendor (if relevant). Electronic publication date.

Example:

Nethead, Jane. "Email Rules." New York Times 15 Nov. 1995, late ed.: B3. New York Times
Ondisc. CD-ROM. UMI-Proquest. Jan. 2004.

E-mail

Format:

Author's Name. "Subject Line from Posting." Personal e-mail. (or E-mail to recipient's name.)
Date of message.

Example:

Smith, William. "Trial results." E-mail to John Henry. 29 May 1999.

Online mailing list posting

Format:

Author (if given). "Subject of Message." Date of posting. Online posting.
Name of Forum. Date of access. <URL or e-mail address of the list>.

Example:

Williams, Jim. "Computer to T.V. Screen." 6 Aug. 1999. Online posting. Global Technology Discussion Group. 21 Nov. 2003. <<http://www.gtdg.org>> or <listserv@citation.edu>.

Online Chat or synchronous communication

Format:

Name of Speaker. (if available). "Description of the event." Date of session or event.
Forum for the Communication. Date of access. <Web or network address>.

Example:

Yente, Ima. "Online discussion of future fuels." 24 Oct. 2002. EnvironMOO. 28 June 2004.
<<http://IRC@envirosite.edu>>.

Images/Sound/Video Clips/AP Photo Archive

Online images (Photographs, Sculpture, Paintings)

Format:

Artist if Available. Description or Title of Image. Date of image. Physical Source of Image/
Collection (if available). Title of Database or Larger Site. Date of access.
<<http://address.website.org>>.

Examples:

Mars Landing. 3 Nov. 1999. NASA. 4 Oct. 2002. <<http://www.nasa.org>>.

or

Weaver, Bruce. Challenger Explosion. 28 Jan 1986. AP Photo Archive. 30 Jan. 2004.
<<http://accuweather.ap.org/cgi-bin/aplaunch.pl>>.

or

Van Gogh, Vincent. Irises. 1889. Getty Museum. 20 July 2003. <<http://www.getty.edu/art/collections/objects/o947.html>>.

Online Map

Format:

"Title of Map." Map. Date of Map (if available). Title of Larger Site. Organization or Institution.
Date of access. <<http://address.website.org>>.

Example:

"Israel and Neighboring States." Map. 1990. Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection. U Texas.
8 May 2004. <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/israel_nbr90.jpg>.

Online sound

Format:

Creator (if available). "Description or Title of Sound." Date of Sound. Title of Larger Site.
Associated Organization or Institution. Date of access. <<http://address.website.org>>.

Examples:

"Weekly Saturday Radio Address." 25 Oct. 1998. Whitehouse Briefing Room. 23 Oct. 2003.
<<http://www.whitehouse.gov/WH/html/briefroom.html>>.

or

"Conversation 9326 with Defense Secretary Robert McNamara." 20 Dec. 1965. LBJ Whitehouse Tapes Archives. C-SPAN. 20 May 2004. <<http://www.c-span.org/lbj/>>.

Online video clip

Format:

Director (if available). Description or Title of Video Clip. Date of clip. Title of Larger Work or Site. Date of download. <<http://address.website.org>>.

Examples:

Hindenburg Broadcast. 6 May 1937. Encarta Online Deluxe. 4 Nov. 2000. <<http://encarta.msn.com/>>.

Online Television or Radio Program

Silberner, Joanne. "Food Labels." All Things Considered. 11 July 2003. National Public Radio. 12 Aug. 2004. <<http://discover.npr.org/features/feature.jhtml?wflid=1331099>>.