MLA Style Quick Reference

8th edition

Formatting an MLA Paper
See Purdue University’s Online Writing Lab (OWL)

Elements:

- **First Page**: Do not make a title page unless specifically requested. In the upper left-hand corner of the first page, list your name, your instructor’s name, the course, and the date. Double space your text.
- **Title**: Center the title. Do not underline, italicize, or place your title in quotation marks. Write the title in Title Case (standard capitalization), not in all capital letters.
- **Body**: Double space between the title and the first line of the text.
- **Header**: Create a header in the upper right-hand corner that includes your last name, followed by a space with a page number; number all pages consecutively with Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3, 4, etc.), one-half inch from the top and flush with the right margin.

Sample Paper (Please note that Microsoft Office products provide a template for MLA):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Last</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Name Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title of Paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body of paper.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Works Cited</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In Text Citations: The Basics

See pp. 54-58 of the MLA Handbook

- The goals of the in-text are brevity and clarity, guiding the reader as unobtrusively as possible to the corresponding entry in the Works Cited list.
- MLA format follows the author-page method of in-text citation. This means that the author’s last name and the page number(s) from which the quotation or paraphrase is taken must appear in the text. A corresponding entry must be on the Works Cited page.
- There is no comma between the last name of the author and the page number in a parenthetical citation.
- The author’s name may appear either in the sentence or in parentheses following the quotation or paraphrase.
  - According to Naomi Baron, reading is “just half of literacy. The other half is writing” (194). One might even suggest that reading is never complete without writing.
  - Reading is “just half of literacy. The other half is writing” (Baron 194). One might even suggest that reading is never complete without writing.
- Works written by one author must have the author listed in the citation.
  - (Baron 194)
- Works written by two authors must have both authors represented in the in-text citation, connected by and.
  - (Dorris and Erdich 23)
- Works written by three or more authors must have the first author listed followed by et. al.
  - (Wadsworth et. al. 423)
- When the works-cited entry begins with the title of the work (because no author is listed), your in-text citation contains the title of the work.
  - Reading at Risk: A Survey of Literary Reading in America notes that despite an apparent decline in reading during the same period, “the number of people doing creative writing-of any genre, not exclusively literary works-increased substantially between 1982 and 2002” (3).
  - Despite an apparent decline in reading during the same period, “the number of people doing creative writing-of any genre, not exclusively literary works-increased substantially between 1982 and 2002” (Reading 3).
- When a source has no page numbers or any other kind of part number, no number should be given in a parenthetical citation. Use “par.” Only if the source uses explicit paragraph numbers.
Works Cited Page: The Basics

See pp. 20-53 of the MLA Handbook

- The list titled “Works Cited,” centered, not bolded, quoted, or underlined.
- Core elements of a works cited citation include:
  - Author. Title of source. Title of container, other contributors, version, number, publisher, publication date, location.
  - Each element is followed by the punctuation mark shown unless it is the final element, which should end with a period.
- The Works Cited list should be double spaced, arranged alphabetically by author, and utilize the hanging indent.
- Begin each entry with the author’s last name, followed by a comma and the rest of the name, as presented in the work.
  - Baron, Naomi S.
- Multiple authors should be listed in the order they are presented in the work. For a source with two authors, reverse the first of the names as described above, then follow it with a comma and and, and give the second name in normal order.
  - Dorris, Michael, and Louise Erdrich.
- When a source has three or more authors, reverse the order of the names as described above, and follow it with a comma and et al.
  - Burdick, Anne, et al.
- If the term “author” does not represent the role of the person creating the work’s main content, follow the name with a label that describes the role.
  - Nunberg, Geoffrey, editor.
  - Baron, Sabrina A., et al., editors.
  - Pevear, Richard, and Rubert Hart-Davis, translators.
- A work may be written by a corporate author which is defined as an institution, an association, a government agency, or another kind of organization. When a work is published by an organization that is also its author, begin the entry with the title, skipping the author element, and list the organization only as publisher.
Citing Books

See pp. 20-53 of the MLA Handbook

Basic Format for an Entire Print Book Citation
Last, First. Title of Book. Publisher, Date.

Last, First, editor. Title of Book. Publisher, Date.

Example: Entire Edited Print Book

Example: Entire eBook

Example: Short Story in an eBook Collection

Example: Collection of Essays, Stories, or Poems

Example: Chapter, Essay, Story, or Play in a Larger Collection

Example: A Stand-Alone Work that Appears in a Collection

Example: Issue of a Comic Book or Graphic Novel

Example: Material from a Course Pack

Example: Book with a Subtitle
Citing Periodicals

See pp. 20-53 of the MLA Handbook

Basic Format for an Article Citation
Last, First. “Title of Source.” Title of Container (Journal), vol. #, no. #, Year, pp. #-. Database, URL.

Example: Article found in Print

Example: Article found in a Database with a DOI

Example: Article found in a Database

Example: Article found on a Website

Other Common Sources

See pp. 20-53 of the MLA Handbook

Example: Unnamed Physical Object
Mackintosh, Charles Rennie. Chair of stained oak. 1897-1900, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Example: Email Message

Example: Tweet, or Other Online Untitled Posting
@persiankiwi. “We have report of large street battles in east & west of Tehran now - #Iranelection.” *Twitter*, 23 June 2009, 11:15 a.m., twitter.com/persiankiwi/status/2298106072

Example: Episode of a Television Series on a Streaming Network

Example: Piece of Art Experienced Firsthand

Example: Entire Website
Tips for Proper MLA Format

See pp. 20-53 of the MLA Handbook

• The title of whole book is set in italics.

• An entire collection of essays, stories, or poems is set in italics.

• The title of an essay, a story, or a poem within a collection, as a part of a larger whole, is set in “quotation marks.”

• The title of a periodical (journal, magazine, or newspaper) is set in italics.

• The title of an article within a periodical is set in “quotation marks.”

• The title of a television series is set in italics.

• The title of an episode of a television series is set in “quotation marks.”

• The title of a website is set in italics.

• The title of an article or posting on a website is set in “quotation marks.”