

The Writing Center @ JSCC

MLA Format

MLA format is the citation style of the Modern Language Association, and it is used by most of the disciplines in the humanities. Here is information about the most commonly used elements of MLA format.

Basic Formatting in MLA

Formatting - Your MLA essay must include the following pieces:

1. Margins - 1" on all sides
2. Double space throughout, including quotations, notes and lists in works cited
3. No title page
4. First page
 - 4.1. include the following, left justified and double-spaced, in this order:
 - 4.1.1. Your name
 - 4.1.2. Your instructor's name
 - 4.1.3. Course number
 - 4.1.4. Date
 - 4.2. Title, centered (do not underline or use quotation marks)
 - 4.3. Header - include last name and page number right justified in the header on each page
5. Works Cited (list of works used) or Works Consulted (list of works looked at) (See p. 2 for info.)

Numbers

- Spell out numbers written in one or two words - two, ninety-nine, two thousand, four million
- Use numerals for numbers written in more than two words - 2½, 350, 12,543
- Use numerals for numbers that precede technical units of measurement - 2 inches, 3 amperes
- Be consistent in number use - Were 12 of the 127 in attendance?; He sold 3 shoes, 75 slacks, and 123 aprons.
- Spell out any number that starts a sentence - Three hundred forty-two students took the exam.
- Use numerals for page numbers (page 7), percentages (7%), money (\$3.82), and addresses (301 State St.)

Titles

- Underline or italicize* titles of independently published works

*(Check the cover of the work - if the title is on the cover, it is independently published = underlined or italicized.)

- Quotation Marks- for titles of works published within larger work

In-text parenthetical citations

1. Print sources
 - 1.1. With author listed: Author's last name and page number -- (Smith 3)
 - 1.2. No author listed: Substitute a shortened form of the title for the author - (Report 34)
2. Online sources

- 2.1. with paragraphs numbered in original: Author's last name and paragraph number -- (Smith par. 3)
- 2.2. without paragraphs numbered in original: Author's last name only -- (Smith)
3. Indirect source (if you are using a quote that appeared in a source you are using -- in other words, not the original quote, but a quote of a quote)
 - 3.1. source mentioned in your text, use the abbreviation qtd. in -- According to Dewey, "..."
(qtd. in Smith and Jones 318).
 - 3.2. For a source not mentioned in your text, use original source's name and qtd. in -- "..."
(Dewey qtd in Smith and Jones 318).

Sample Works Cited Entries

- All entries should be listed alphabetically by author.
- Use HANGING INDENT (lower arrow in top margin ruler) to indent every line beyond the first in each entry.
- See list of Publishers' Names on p. 272-74 in MLA Handbook, 6th Ed. for abbreviations.
- Omit articles (a, an, the) and business abbreviations (Co., Corp., Inc.) and the words Publishing and Publishers.
- Use U to abbreviate University, P to abbr. Press, and other standard abbreviations.

Book with one author

Roth, Audrey J. The Research Paper: Process, Form, and Content. 4th ed. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1982.

Book with multiple authors

Butterworth, Rod, and Mickey Flodin. Signing Made Easy. New York: Berkley, 1989.

Book with anonymous/no author

The Holy Bible: New International Version. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984.

Work in an anthology

Shakespeare, William. "Othello." Drama: A Critical Collection. Ed. James K. Bowen. 3rd ed. New York: Harper & Row, 1971. 129-248.

Previously published work in an anthology

Douglass, Frederick. Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, Written by Himself. 1845. Slave Narratives. Ed. William L. Andrews and Henry Louis Gates, Jr. New York: Lib. of Amer., 2000. 267-368.

Article in a journal that numbers issues (each issue starts with page number 1)

Fortier, Mark. "Shakespeare: Text & Theater." Renaissance Quarterly 55.3 (2002): 138-49.

Article in a newspaper

Hamill, Sean D. "Ailing Schools Get Earlier Rescue; State Takeover in Round Lake Served as Lesson." Chicago Tribune 17 Dec. 2002, Lake final ed.: 1.

Anonymous Article

"It Barks! It Kicks! It Scores!" Newsweek 30 July 2001: 12.

Government publication

United Nations. Consequences of Rapid Population Growth in Developing Countries. New York: Taylor, 1991.

DVD release of Film

It's a Wonderful Life. Dir. Frank Capra. Perf. James Stewart, Donna Reed, Lionel Barrymore, and Thomas Mitchell. 1946. DVD. Republic, 2001.

Personal interview

Smith, W. Personal interview. 13 Dec. 2002.

Legal source

Health Insurance Portability & Accountability Act of 1996. Pub. L. 104-191. 21 Aug. 1996.

Speech, Lecture, Address, or Reading

Dean, John W. "What If Deep Throat Was a Lawyer?" Public Lawyers & the Public Interest: Do Local Government Lawyers Have Special Ethical Obligations? UC Hastings College of the Law. San Francisco. 20 Sept. 2002.

Online article retrieved through library database (EBSCO, ArticleFirst)

Tolson, Nancy. "Making Books Available: The Role of Early Libraries, Librarians, and Booksellers in the Promotion of African American Children's Literature." African American Review 32 (1998): 9-16. EBSCO. Jackson State Community College. Jackson, TN. 1 Oct. 2005 <<http://www.jstor.org/search>>.

Online article with no author listed

"Murder Charge Filed in Basketball Star's Death." Chicago Tribune. 18 Dec. 2002. 03 Mar. 2005 <<http://www.chicagotribune.com>>.

Website for academic department/hosted website

Cavanaugh, Sheila. Emory Women Writers Resource Project. 1998. Emory University. 18 Dec. 2004 <<http://chaucer.library.emory.edu/wwrp/index/html>>.

Personal Website with title

Hourihan, Meg. Megnut. 02 Mar. 2005. 03 Mar. 2005 <<http://www.megnut.com>>.