

Making reference to works of others in your text

Referring to the works of others in your text by using MLA style is covered in chapter seven of the *MLA Style Manual*, and chapter five of the *Handbook for Writing Research Papers*. Both chapters include extensive examples, so it's a good idea to read them over if you want to become familiar with the guidelines or if you have a particular question.

In MLA style, referring to the works of others in your text is done in two ways. When you make reference to someone else's idea, either through paraphrasing or quoting them directly, you:

- provide the author's name (or the title of the work) and the page (or paragraph) number of the work in a **parenthetical citation**
- provide full citation information for the work in your **Works Cited list**

This allows people to know which sources you used in writing your essay and then be able to look them up themselves, so that they can use them in their scholarly work. Here are some basic guidelines for referring to the works of others in your text. For additional help with citing the works of others, see our [additional resources](#) section.

Parenthetical Citations

MLA format follows the author-page method of citation. This means that the author's last name and the page number(s) from which the quotation is taken must appear in the text, and a complete reference should appear in your works cited list (see Your Works Cited Page, below). The author's name may appear either in the sentence itself or in parentheses following the quotation or paraphrase, but the page number(s) should always appear in the parentheses, not in the text of your sentence.

For example:

Wordsworth stated that Romantic poetry was marked by a "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" (263).

Romantic poetry is characterized by the "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" (Wordsworth 263).

Wordsworth extensively explored the role of emotion in the creative process (263).

If the work you are making reference to has no author, use an abbreviated version of the work's title. For non-print sources, such as films, TV series, pictures, or other media, or electronic sources, include the name that begins the entry in the Works Cited page.

For example:

An anonymous Wordsworth critic once argued that his poems were too emotional ("Wordsworth Is A Loser" 100).

Sometimes you may have to use an indirect quotation. An indirect quotation is a quotation that you found in another source that was quoting from the original. For such indirect quotations, use "qtd. in" to indicate the source.

For example:

Ravitch argues that high schools are pressured to act as "social service centers, and they don't do that well" (qtd.in Weisman 259).

Sometimes more information is necessary to identify the source from which a quotation is taken. For instance, if two or more authors have the same last name, provide both authors' first initials (or even her or his full name if different authors share initials) in your citation. If you cite more than one work by a particular author, include a shortened title for the particular work from which you are quoting to distinguish it from the other works by that same person.

For example:

Two authors with the same last name:

Although some medical ethicists claim that cloning will lead to designer children (R. Miller 12), others note that the advantages for medical research outweigh this consideration (A. Miller 46).

Two works by the same author:

Lightenor has argued that computers are not useful tools for small children ("Too Soon" 38), though he has acknowledged that early exposure to computer games does lead to better small motor skill development in a child's second and third year ("Hand-Eye Development" 17).

For more about using parenthetical citations, visit [MLA In-Text Citations](#) (at Research and Documentation Online) or [MLA Documentation: Citations in Text](#) (from the University of Wisconsin-Madison Writing Center), or see our [additional resources](#) section.

Quotations

When you directly quote the works of others in your paper, you will format quotations differently depending on whether they are long or short quotations. Formatting quotations using MLA style is covered in section 3.9 of the *MLA Style Manual* (which begins on

page 102), and section 2.7 of the of the *Handbook for Writing Research Papers* (which begins on page 80). Here are some basic guidelines for incorporating quotations into your paper.

Short Quotations

To indicate short quotations (fewer than four typed lines of prose or three lines of verse) in your text, enclose the quotation within double quotation marks and incorporate it into your text. Provide the author and specific page citation (in the case of verse, provide line numbers) in the text, and include a complete reference in the works-cited list. Punctuation marks such as periods, commas, and semicolons should appear after the parenthetical citation. Question marks and exclamation points should appear within the quotation marks if they are a part of the quoted passage but after the parenthetical citation if they are a part of your text.

For example:

According to some, dreams express "profound aspects of personality" (Foulkes 184), though others disagree.

According to Foulkes's study, dreams may express "profound aspects of personality" (184).

Is it possible that dreams may express "profound aspects of personality" (Foulkes 184)?

Cullen concludes, "Of all the things that happened there/ That's all I remember" (11-12).

Long Quotations

Place quotations longer than four typed lines in a free-standing block of typewritten lines, and omit quotation marks. Start the quotation on a new line, indented one inch from the left margin, and maintain double-spacing. Your parenthetical citation should come after the closing punctuation mark. When quoting verse, maintain original line breaks. (**You should maintain double-spacing throughout your essay.**)

For example:

Nelly Dean treats Heathcliff poorly and dehumanizes him throughout her narration:

They entirely refused to have it in bed with them, or even in their room, and I had no more sense, so, I put it on the landing of the stairs, hoping it would be gone on the morrow. By chance, or else attracted by hearing his voice, it crept to Mr. Earnshaw's door, and there he found it on quitting his chamber. Inquiries were made as to how it got there; I was obliged to confess, and in recompense for my cowardice and inhumanity was sent out of the house. (Brontë 78)

In her poem "Sources," Adrienne Rich explores the roles of women in shaping their

world:

The faithful drudging child

the child at the oak desk whose penmanship,

hard work, style will win her prizes

becomes the woman with a mission, not to win prizes

but to change the laws of history. (23)

Adding or Omitting Words In Quotations

If you add a word or words in a quotation, you should put brackets around the words to indicate that they are not part of the original text.

For example:

Jan Harold Brunvand, in an essay on urban legends, states: "some individuals [who retell urban legends] make a point of learning every rumor or tale" (78).

If you omit a word or words from a quotation, you should indicate the deleted word or word by using ellipsis marks surrounded by brackets.

For example:

In an essay on urban legends, Jan Harold Brunvand notes that "some individuals make a point of learning every recent rumor or tale [...] and in a short time a lively exchange of details occurs" (78).

If there are ellipsis marks in the quoted author's work, do not put brackets around them; only use brackets around ellipsis marks to distinguish them from ellipsis marks in the quoted author's work.

Citing the Bible

In your first parenthetical citation, you want to make clear which Bible you're using (and italicize or underline the title), as each version varies in its translation, followed by book (do not italicize or underline), chapter and verse. For example:

Ezekiel saw "what seemed to be four living creatures," each with faces of a man, a lion, an ox, and an eagle (*New Jerusalem Bible*, Ezek. 1.5-10).

All future references can then just cite book, chapter, and verse, since you've established which edition of the Bible you will be using.

Your Works Cited List

The works cited list should appear at the end of your essay. It provides the information necessary for a reader to locate and be able to read any sources you cite in the essay. Each source you cite in the essay must appear in your works-cited list; likewise, each entry in the works-cited list must be cited in your text. Preparing your works cited list using MLA style is covered in chapter six of the *MLA Style Manual*, and chapter four of the *Handbook for Writing Research Papers*. Here are some guidelines for preparing your works cited list.

List Format

- Begin your works cited list on a separate page from the text of the essay under the label Works Cited (with no quotation marks, underlining, etc.), which should be centered at the top of the page.
- Make the first line of each entry in your list flush left with the margin. Subsequent lines in each entry should be indented one-half inch. This is known as a hanging indent.
- Double space all entries, with no skipped spaces between entries.
- Keep in mind that underlining and *italics* are equivalent; you should select one or the other to use throughout your essay.
- Alphabetize the list of works cited by the first word in each entry (usually the author's last name),

Basic Rules for Citations

- Authors' names are inverted (last name first); if a work has more than one author, invert only the first author's name, follow it with a comma, then continue listing the rest of the authors.
- If you have cited more than one work by a particular author, order them alphabetically by title, and use three hyphens in place of the author's name for every entry after the first.
- When an author appears both as the sole author of a text and as the first author of a group, list solo-author entries first.
- If no author is given for a particular work, alphabetize by the title of the piece and use a shortened version of the title for parenthetical citations.
- Capitalize each word in the titles of articles, books, etc. This rule does not apply to articles, short prepositions, or conjunctions unless one is the first word of the title or subtitle.
- Underline or italicize titles of books, journals, magazines, newspapers, and films.
- Use quotation marks around the titles of articles in journals, magazines, and newspapers. Also use quotation marks for the titles of short stories, book chapters, poems, and songs.
- List page numbers efficiently, when needed. If you refer to a journal article that appeared on pages 225 through 250, list the page numbers on your Works Cited page as 225-50.
- If you're citing an article or a publication that was originally issued in print form but that you retrieved from an online database, you should provide enough information so that the reader can locate the article either in its original print form

or retrieve it from the online database (if they have access). For more about this, see our discussion of [electronic sources](#).

For more about formatting your works cited page, visit [MLA List of Works Cited](#) (from Research and Documentation Online), view a [Sample Works Cited Page](#) (from A Research Guide for Students), or visit some of the links in our [additional resources](#) section.

Basic Forms for Sources in Print

The MLA Style Manual provides extensive examples of print source citations in chapter six; *The MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* provides extensive examples covering a wide variety of potential sources in chapter six. If your particular case is not covered here, use the basic forms to determine the correct format, consult the *MLA Handbook*, visit the links in our [additional resources](#) section, talk to your instructor, or call the Writing Lab (765-494-3723) for help.

Books

Author(s). Title of Book. Place of Publication: Publisher, Year of Publication.

Book with one author

Henley, Patricia. The Hummingbird House. Denver: MacMurray, 1999.

Two books by the same author

(After the first listing of the author's name, use three hyphens and a period for the author's name. List books alphabetically.)

Palmer, William J. Dickens and New Historicism. New York: St. Martin's, 1997.

---. The Films of the Eighties: A Social History. Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 1993.

Book with more than one author

Gillespie, Paula, and Neal Lerner. The Allyn and Bacon Guide to Peer Tutoring. Boston: Allyn, 2000.

If there are more than three authors, you may list only the first author followed by the phrase et al. (the abbreviation for the Latin phrase "and others") in place of the other authors' names, or you may list all the authors in the order in which their names appear on the title page.

Book with a corporate author

American Allergy Association. Allergies in Children. New York: Random, 1998.

Book or article with no author named

Encyclopedia of Indiana. New York: Somerset, 1993.

"Cigarette Sales Fall 30% as California Tax Rises." New York Times 14 Sept. 1999: A17.

For parenthetical citations of sources with no author named, use a shortened version of the title instead of an author's name. Use quotation marks and underlining as appropriate. For example, parenthetical citations of the two sources above would appear as follows: (Encyclopedia 235) and ("Cigarette" A17).

Anthology or collection

Peterson, Nancy J., ed. Toni Morrison: Critical and Theoretical Approaches. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1997.

A part of a book (such as an essay in a collection)

Author(s). "Title of Article." Title of Collection. Ed. Editor's Name(s). Place of Publication: Publisher, Year. Pages.

Essay in a collection

Harris, Muriel. "Talk to Me: Engaging Reluctant Writers." A Tutor's Guide: Helping Writers One to One. Ed. Ben Rafoth. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2000. 24-34.

Cross-referencing: If you cite more than one essay from the same edited collection, you should cross-reference within your works cited list in order to avoid writing out the publishing information for each separate essay. To do so, include a separate entry for the entire collection listed by the editor's name. For individual essays from that collection, simply list the author's name, the title of the essay, the editor's last name, and the page numbers. For example:

L'Eplattenier, Barbara. "Finding Ourselves in the Past: An Argument for Historical Work on WPAs." Rose and Weiser 131-40.

Peeples, Tim. "'Seeing' the WPA With/Through Postmodern Mapping." Rose and Weiser 153-167.

Rose, Shirley K, and Irwin Weiser, eds. The Writing Program Administrator as Researcher. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1999.

Article from a reference book

"Jamaica." Encyclopedia Britannica. 1999 ed.

An article in a periodical (such as a newspaper or magazine)

Author(s). "Title of Article." Title of Source Day Month Year: pages.

When citing the date, list day before month; use a three-letter abbreviation of the month (e.g. Jan., Mar., Aug.). If there is more than one edition available for that date (as in an early and late edition of a newspaper), identify the edition following the date (e.g. 17 May 1987, late ed.).

Magazine or newspaper article

Poniewozik, James. "TV Makes a Too-Close Call." Time 20 Nov. 2000: 70-71.

Trembacki, Paul. "Brees Hopes to Win Heisman for Team." Purdue Exponent 5 Dec. 2000: 20.

An article in a scholarly journal

Author(s). "Title of Article." Title of Journal Vol (Year): pages.

"Vol" indicates the volume number of the journal. If the journal uses continuous pagination throughout a particular volume, only volume and year are needed, e.g. Modern Fiction Studies 40 (1998): 251-81. If each issue of the journal begins on page 1, however, you must also provide the issue number following the volume, e.g. Mosaic 19.3 (1986): 33-49.

Essay in a journal with continuous pagination

Allen, Emily. "Staging Identity: Frances Burney's Allegory of Genre." Eighteenth-Century Studies 31 (1998): 433-51.

Essay in a journal that pages each issue separately

Duvall, John N. "The (Super)Marketplace of Images: Television as Unmediated Mediation in DeLillo's White Noise." Arizona Quarterly 50.3 (1994): 127-53.

The Bible (specific editions)

The New Jerusalem Bible. Susan Jones, gen. ed. New York: Doubleday, 1985.

For more about citing print sources in your works cited page, visit [Works Cited in MLA Style](#) (from A Research Guide for Students), [an MLA List of Works Cited](#) (from Research and Documentation Online), view a [Sample Works Cited Page](#) (from A Research Guide for Students), or visit some of the links in our [additional resources](#) section.

Basic Forms for Electronic Sources

The MLA Style Manual provides extensive examples of electronic source citations in chapter six; *The MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* provides extensive examples covering a wide variety of potential sources in chapter six. If your particular case is not covered here, use the basic forms to determine the correct format, consult the

MLA Handbook, visit the links in our [additional resources](#) section, talk to your instructor, or call the Writing Lab (765-494-3723) for help.

If no author is given for a web page or electronic source, start with and alphabetize by the title of the piece and use a shortened version of the title for parenthetical citations.

A web site

Author(s). Name of Page. Date of Posting/Revision. Name of institution/organization affiliated with the site. Date of Access <electronic address>.

It is necessary to list your date of access because web postings are often updated, and information available at one date may no longer be available later. Be sure to include the complete address for the site. Also, note the use of angled brackets around the electronic address; MLA requires them for clarity.

Web site examples

Felluga, Dino. Undergraduate Guide to Literary Theory. 17 Dec. 1999. Purdue University. 15 Nov. 2000 <<http://omni.cc.purdue.edu/%7Efelluga/theory2.html>>. Purdue Online Writing Lab. 2003. Purdue University. 10 Feb. 2003 <<http://owl.english.purdue.edu>>.

An article on a web site

It is necessary to list your date of access because web postings are often updated, and information available at one date may no longer be available later. Be sure to include the complete address for the site. Also, note the use of angled brackets around the electronic address; MLA requires them for clarity.

Author(s). "Article Title." Name of web site. Date of posting/revision. Name of institution/organization affiliated with site. Date of access <electronic address>.

Article on a web site

Poland, Dave. "The Hot Button." Roughcut. 26 Oct. 1998. Turner Network Television. 28 Oct. 1998 <<http://www.roughcut.com>>.

"Using Modern Language Association (MLA) Format." Purdue Online Writing Lab. 2003. Purdue University. 6 Feb. 2003 <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_mla.html>.

An article in an online journal or magazine

Author(s). "Title of Article." Title of Journal Volume. Issue (Year): Pages/Paragraphs. Date of Access <electronic address>.

Some electronic journals and magazines provide paragraph or page numbers; include them if available. This format is also appropriate to online magazines; as with a print version, you should provide a complete publication date rather than volume and issue number.

Online journal article

Wheelis, Mark. "Investigating Disease Outbreaks Under a Protocol to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention." Emerging Infectious Diseases 6.6 (2000): 33 pars. 5 Dec. 2000 <<http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/eid/vol6no6/wheelis.htm>>.

An Online Image or Series of Images

Artist if available. "Description or title of image." Date of image. Online image. Title of larger site. Date of download. <electronic address>.

Smith, Greg. "Rhesus Monkeys in the Zoo." No date. Online image. Monkey Picture Gallery. 3 May 2003. <<http://monkeys.online.org/rhesus.jpg>>.

E-mail (or other personal communications)

Author. "Title of the message (if any)" E-mail to person's name. Date of the message.

This same format may be used for personal interviews or personal letters. These do not have titles, and the description should be appropriate. Instead of "Email to John Smith," you would have "Personal interview."

E-mail to you

Kunka, Andrew. "Re: Modernist Literature." E-mail to the author. 15 Nov. 2000.

Email communication between two parties, not including the author

Neyhart, David. "Re: Online Tutoring." E-mail to Joe Barbato. 1 Dec. 2000.

A listserv posting

Author. "Title of Posting." Online posting. Date when material was posted (for example: 18 Mar. 1998). Name of listserv. Date of access <electronic address for retrieval>.

Online Posting

Karper, Erin. "Welcome!" Online posting. 23 Oct. 2000. Professional Writing Bulletin Board. 12 Nov. 2000
<<http://linnell.english.purdue.edu/ubb/Forum2/HTML/000001.html>>.

An article or publication retrieved from an electronic database

If you're citing an article or a publication that was originally issued in print form but that you retrieved from an online database that your library subscribes to, you should provide

enough information so that the reader can locate the article either in its original print form or retrieve it from the online database (if they have access).

Provide the following information in your citation:

- Author's name (if not available, use the article title as the first part of the citation)
- Article Title
- Publication Name
- Publication Date
- Page Number/Range
- Database Name
- Service Name
- Name of the library where service was accessed
- Name of the town/city where service was accessed
- Date of Access
- URL of the service (but not the whole URL for the article, since those are very long and won't be able to be re-used by someone trying to retrieve the information)

The generic citation form would look like this:

Author. "Title of Article." Publication Name Volume Number (if necessary) Publication Date: page number-page number. Database name. Service name. Library Name, City, State. Date of access <electronic address of the database>.

Here's an example:

Smith, Martin. "World Domination for Dummies." Journal of Despotry Feb. 2000: 66-72. Expanded Academic ASAP. Gale Group Databases. Purdue University Libraries, West Lafayette, IN. 19 February 2003 <<http://www.infotrac.galegroup.com>>.

Article in a reference database on CD-ROM

"World War II." Encarta. CD-ROM. Seattle: Microsoft, 1999.

Article from a periodically published database on CD-ROM

Reed, William. "Whites and the Entertainment Industry." Tennessee Tribune 25 Dec. 1996: 28. Ethnic NewsWatch. CD-ROM. Data Technologies. Feb. 1997.

For more about citing electronic sources, check out [MLA Documentation: Citing Electronic Sources](#) (from the University of Wisconsin-Madison Writing Center), [Using MLA Style to Cite and Document Internet Sources](#) (from Bedford St. Martin's *Online!*), [MLA Style: Electronic Formats](#) (from Dr. Mary Ellen Guffey), and [Citing Electronic Sources-- MLA](#) (from Middlebury College). The Gale Group also has a page about how to [cite publications retrieved from their databases](#) in MLA format that includes examples of different kinds of publications.

Other Types of Sources

The MLA Style Manual provides extensive examples of other source citations in chapter six; *The MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* provides extensive examples covering a wide variety of potential sources in chapter four. If your particular case is not covered here, use the basic forms to determine the correct format, consult the *MLA Handbook*, visit the links in our [additional resources](#) section, talk to your instructor, or call the Writing Lab (765-494-3723) for help.

Government publication

United States Dept. of Health and Human Services. Healthy People 2010: Understanding and Improving Health. Washington: GPO, 2000.

Pamphlet

Office of the Dean of Students. Resources for Success: Learning Disabilities and Attention Deficit Disorders. West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University, 2000.

Interview that you conducted

Purdue, Pete. Personal Interview. 1 Dec. 2000.

A lecture or a speech

To cite a lecture or a speech, "give the speaker's name, the title of the lecture or speech (if known) in quotation marks, the meeting and the sponsoring organization (if applicable), the location [including place and city, if available], and the date. If there is no title, use an appropriate descriptive label (e.g., Lecture, Address, Keynote speech), neither underlined nor enclosed in quotation marks" (*MLA Handbook*, 206).

Harris, Muriel. "Writing Labs: A Short History." 2003 Writing Center Conference. National Writing Centers Association. La Swank Hotel, Seattle. 28 March 2003.

Advertisement

Lufthansa. Advertisement. Time 20 Nov. 2000: 151.

Television or radio program

"The Blessing Way." The X-Files. Fox. WXIA, Atlanta. 19 Jul. 1998.

Sound recording

U2. All That You Can't Leave Behind. Interscope, 2000.

Film

The Usual Suspects. Dir. Bryan Singer. Perf. Kevin Spacey, Gabriel Byrne, Chazz Palminteri, Stephen Baldwin, and Benecio del Toro. Polygram, 1995.

TV Advertisement

Staples. Advertisement. CBS. 3 Dec. 2000.

Quoting, Paraphrasing, and Summarizing

There are three ways of incorporating other writers' work into your own writing. You will want to carefully blend source material you find through your research with your own writing. Make sure that your own voice is heard.

Quotations

Quotations must be identical to the original source. Quote only words, phrases, lines, and passages that are particularly interesting or unusual and keep all quotations as brief as possible. Changes must not be made in the spelling, capitalization, or punctuation of the quote. You must attribute all quotes to the original author. Avoid over quoting. Weaving quotes into your own writing will ensure that your voice is heard.

Paraphrasing

Paraphrasing involves putting a passage –phrase by phrase– from your source into your own words. Your paraphrase should be of equal or shorter length than the original passage. Remember: a paraphrase is a *complete rewriting*, not just a rearrangement of the words. A paraphrase must also be attributed to the original source.

Summarizing

Summarizing involves putting the main idea(s) of a passage into your own words. Summaries are significantly shorter than the original because they are limited to only the main ideas. You must be careful not to change or distort the meaning of the original work. Again, it is necessary to attribute summarized ideas to the original source.

Some Important Reminders:

- Never leave a quote or paraphrase by itself – you must introduce it, explain it, and show how it relates to your thesis.
- You need not always reproduce complete sentences. Sometimes you may want to quote just a word or phrase as part of your sentence.
- A colon usually precedes quoted material if it is formally introduced. Otherwise, a comma precedes a quotation if it is integrated into your sentence.
- If a quotation runs to more than four lines in your paper, set it off from your text by beginning a new line, indenting one inch from the left margin and typing it double-spaced, without adding quotation marks.
- If you find the same information in three or more different sources you can conclude that this information is “common knowledge.” Common knowledge information does not require documentation. If you are not sure whether particular information is common knowledge, give credit to your source with a citation!

- Direct quotations should be used selectively; the majority of your paper should be written in your own words.

