

What's New in MLA? Changes in the 7th Edition

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Summary: Lists major changes in MLA documentation style from the sixth edition of the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* to the seventh edition of the style manual.

Learning Objectives: To describe two important changes between the sixth and seventh editions: the use of italics both in text and on the works cited page and the inclusion of medium on the works cited page for all sources.

The Modern Language Association published a 7th edition of its style guide *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* in March 2009. This guide identifies important changes between the 6th and 7th editions.

Italics

Arguably the biggest change to MLA is with the use of italics. MLA has traditionally underlined titles of publications and other media sources (e.g. plays, databases, recordings), as well as other elements that needed specification (e.g. words). However, in the new style, italics replace underlining.

Italics are required both in the text and in the works cited list for the names of books, plays, poems published as books, pamphlets, periodicals, Web sites, databases, films, broadcasts, audio recordings (compact discs, cassettes, albums), performances (dance or opera), musical compositions, works of visual art, and the names of vessels (ships, aircraft, spacecraft).

Tea in the Harem (book)

The Doll House (play)

The Song of Roland (poem published as book)

Signs (journal)

Economist (magazine)

JSTOR (online database)

MLA now also dictates the use of italics instead of underlining for designating words used as words.



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Linguistic turn has been compared to *postmodernism* in that it is often used as an umbrella phrase to describe a variety of challenges to traditional frameworks of historical understanding.

Italics should also be used to designate foreign words in an English text.

Nietzsche's philosophical idea of the *übermensch* is often misunderstood and misrepresented.

Medium Designation

MLA is used by a wide array of disciplines. Although the majority of sources used in a MLA style paper will be print or web publications, the use of multiple kinds of sources is not uncommon. Another change in the new *MLA Handbook* is the designation of the medium of the work used as a source. For reader clarity regarding the original source type, the medium of the source consulted by the researcher must now be designated in the works cited list.

The following is a partial list of items that may be cited in the new form. For items that do not appear in the examples below, refer to the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 7th ed.

Note the bold face font indicates the type of source being cited and is not part of the actual citation.

Print Publications

When citing a book, journal article, or other form of printed material, you must include the word *Print* within the citation.

Johnson, Joan Marie. "‘Drill Into Us...The Rebel Tradition’: The Contest Over Southern Identity in Black and White Women’s Clubs, South Carolina, 1898-1930." *Journal of Southern History* 66.3 (2000): 525-562. Print. **(Journal article)**

Kellner, Hans. "Language and Historical Representation." *The Postmodern History Reader*. Ed. Keith Jenkins. London: Routledge, 1997. 14-28. Print. **(Work in an anthology)**

Ruiz, Vicki. *From Out of the Shadows: Mexican Women in Twentieth-Century America*. New York: Oxford UP, 1998. Print. **(Book)**

Web Publications

The new feature of designating the medium has the greatest impact when you cite online sources. MLA has traditionally required that all online source material use the URL as a means of identification. The seventh edition has changed that. The justification is that most items are easily found through a simple web or database search. If there is a possibility that the article or other source material may be difficult to locate through a search, writers should include the URL.

When in doubt regarding the need for a URL, consult with the instructor or use the URL form.



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Burke, Seán. *The Death and Return of the Author: Criticism and Subjectivity in Barthes, Foucault, and Derrida*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1998. *NetLibrary*. Web. 20 May 2009.

(Electronic book with print publication data)

Gordon, Linda. Rev. of *Gender and the Politics of History*, by Joan Wallach Scott. *Signs* 15.4 (1990): 852-53. *JSTOR*. Web. 1 May 2009. **(Online database – book review)**

Sewell, Said. “African American Religion: The Struggle for Community Development in a Southern City.” *Journal of Southern Religion* 4 (2001): n. pag. Web. 29 Jan. 2008.

(Online journal)

When a URL is added to an online source, it should be placed following the access date. The full URL (starting with http:) should be enclosed in angle brackets and should be followed by a period. If the URL must be divided between two lines, it should be done where a slash (/) occurs with no hyphen used to indicate the break.

House of Bishops of the Episcopal Church. “The Sin of Racism: A Pastoral Letter from the House of Bishops of the Episcopal Church.” *Episcopal Church Center*. Web. 1 Nov. 2007. <http://www.episcopalchurch.org/social-justice_7388ENG_HTM.htm>.

(Online source – corporate author)

“Trade Unions in Venezuela: Socialism v Labour.” *The Economist*. The Economist, 2009. Web. 26 May 2009. <http://www.economist.com/world/americas/displaystory.cfm?story_id_13611592>. **(Magazine article online – no author)**

Other Media

The use of other forms of media also requires a note about the source type in addition to the medium. Examples of other types of sources that would require identification include but are not limited to films, radio or television broadcasts, recordings, and digital files.

Note that some media, such as maps and charts, may require two designations – one that shows the source type and the other to indicate the format referred to. For medium types not shown in the following examples, refer to the *MLA Handbook* sections 5.7.1 through 5.7.18.

Biafra, Jello. *Machine Guns in the Clown’s Hand*. Alternative Tentacle, 19 Nov. 2002. CD.

(Recording)

Gauguin, Paul. *Portrait of the Artist with the Idol*. 1893. Oil on canvas. McNay Art Museum, San Antonio. **(Work of visual art)**



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Mind the Gap. Screenplay by Eric Schaeffer. Dir. Eric Schaeffer. Five Minutes Before the
Miracle, 2004. Film. **(Film)**

Raz, Guy. "Scroobius Pip, Commanding Pop Culture in Rhyme." *All Things Considered*. Natl.
Public Radio. KVRT, Victoria, 11 March 2008. Radio. **(Radio broadcast)**

Water Resources of the Edwards Aquifer Region. Map. San Antonio: Edwards Underground Water
District, 1987. Print. **(Map)**

See also . . .

For additional information regarding MLA documentation style, see the *MLA Quick Reference Guide*, available from the Academic Center.



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