



MLA QUICK Reference Guide

This guide contains two sections. Section I shows how to format the paper and works cited list for MLA. Section II shows MLA documentation in an example text. It is not intended to be a complete reference, but it does provide guidelines for the most common elements used by students writing research papers.

The information provided in this guide derives from the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers (Sixth Edition)*. This manual is sold in the college bookstore and online bookstores such as www.amazon.com or www.bn.com and is available for your use in the Academic Center and the library. Academic Center personnel are also familiar with MLA and will help you with questions about documentation.

This guide is intended to provide a source for quickly referencing MLA format. It is a *secondary source*. Refer to the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* to ensure that sources are effectively documented.

Note: If your instructor's guidelines differ from those specified in this guide, follow your instructor's requirements.

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SECTION I

This section of the MLA Quick Reference Guide explains citations in text and how to cite

- Works with one author (page 2)
- Works with two or more authors (page 3)
- Works with no authors (page 3)
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For any further questions regarding your paper, please schedule an appointment with a tutor.

SECTION II

This section of the MLA guide shows how to format

- First page of text (page 6)
- Works cited page (page 6)

MLA Quick Reference Guide: Section I

MLA uses an author-page number method of citation. This method gives readers useful information in the text and helps them locate the citation easily in the alphabetical reference list. Please note

- In MLA citation, you do not put a “p” or “pgs” or a comma between the author’s name and the page number.
- MLA citations do not repeat unnecessary page numbers. For example, if you were using pages 13 through 19, you would cite this as (13-9); if you were using pages 13-20, you would cite this as (13-20).

Let’s look at another example:

Jagerfield indicates that the author's suspension of reality pervades the text. This manipulation of reality sensitizes the reader to the dream imagery provided in the narration. The apparition's repeated tantrums play with the reader's "sense of stability" (47-8).

Works with one author

MLA style uses the author-page method of citation. That is, the surname of the author and the page of reference are inserted at the point in the text where an author's material is used. The author's name can be provided at the beginning of the sentence (textual citation) or at the end of the sentence (parenthetical citation).

Example:

Alderson identifies the dream images in the text as relevant to the character's childhood (43).

or

The dream images in the text appear to be relevant to the character's childhood (Alderson 43).

As indicated in the example above, if the name of the author appears in the beginning of the sentence, include only the page number in the parentheses.

Works with two or more authors

If a source has two or three authors, always cite all names every time the reference occurs, as indicated in the example below.

Example:

Standfield and Jasper contend that the author uses the hardship of African American women to illustrate their "growth without choice" (221). This progression occurs during different stages of the women's spiritual development. According to Standfield and Jasper, even growth in the absence of choice can change the character.

As the example below illustrates, if the work has *more* than three authors, provide the first author's last name followed by "et al." without any intervening punctuation, or provide all of the last names. (See sections 5.6.4 and 6.2 in the *MLA Handbook* for more complete information.)

Example:

Farnsworth, Gadley, Jeters, and Prince note the contrasts in the use of narrative discourse (57).

or

Farnsworth et al. note the contrasts in the use of narrative discourse (57).

Works with no authors

If a source has no author, use the first two or three words of the title if referring to the source within the parentheses. To mention the source within the text, provide the full title, as illustrated in the example below. Underline the title if it is a book, and place it in quotations if it is an article.

Example:

The reverence for the supernatural marks the uniqueness of the text ("Resurrecting" 475).

or

In "Resurrecting Hidden Images," the reverence for the supernatural marks the uniqueness of the text (475).

Works with corporate authors

The names of corporate authors are usually spelled out the first time they are used, and the acronym form directly follows in the parentheses, as indicated in the example below. For subsequent citations of that corporate author, either the full name or the acronym form may be used.

Example:

The National Research Council on Women's Issues (NRCWI) contends that Morrison and Walker portray the women's relationships as unique to the African American women of the 20th century. The NRCWI also indicates that the relationships provide a textual thread for the reader

to identify the social issues that these women experience (287-8).

Authors with same surname

If a works cited list includes publications by two or more authors with the same surname, citations in text include their initials to avoid confusion, even if the publication differs. See the example below.

Example:

A.R. Patterson (97) and R.C. Patterson (221) suggest that Morrison's trilogy connects the unique experience that African American women have lived from the pre-civil war era to the verge of the Civil Rights Movement.

Multiple citations of an author

To cite one of two or more works by the same author(s), put a comma after the last name of the author(s) and add a shortened title of the work and the relevant reference page, as illustrated in the example below.

Example:

The narrative structure within the novel parallels the thought processes of the main character (Faircroft and Lang, Conflicting Ideas Revisited 127).

As noted in the example below, to distinguish multiple citations of an author, underline the title if it is a book and place it in quotations if it is an article.

Example:

Babcock identifies the novel's social commentary as intrinsically connected to society's age-old tradition of blaming the woman for her misery (Social Commentaries 147).

Babcock argues that this tradition of assessing women's value according to their productivity, both physical and biological, creates internal conflicts for the female characters ("Blaming the Female" 488).

If you include both the author's name and the title of the work in the text, indicate only the pertinent page number in parentheses.

Two or more separate works by different authors

When you cite two or more works by different authors within the same parentheses, separate the citations by semicolons, as shown in the example below.

Example:

The uniqueness of women's relationships plays a key role in the portrayal of their values (Patterson 248; Larrison and Morecroft 342).

Indirect (secondary) sources

Sources that are referenced by other authors are considered indirect sources. When possible, always try to locate the original work. Otherwise, cite the original source (the primary source who made the observations) in the text and the indirect source (the source where these observations are mentioned by another author) and the page number from the indirect source in the parentheses.

Also use the words "qtd. in" (short for "quoted in") before the reference to the indirect source (where you found the material), as indicated in the example below. The **indirect source** will then be listed in the works cited list.

Example:

According to Pierson, the apparition's tantrums represent the incessant inner turmoil that the main character experiences after the tragedy (qtd. in Quiroga 183).

In this example, Pierson is the primary source, while Quiroga is the source that you found Pierson in. You will list Quiroga in the works cited list.

Personal interviews

In citing a personally conducted interview, provide the name of the interviewee and the kind of interview (personal interview, telephone interview, etc.) as noted in the example below.

Example:

D. C. Klinker notes the complexity inherent in the two authors' discourse styles (personal interview).

or

D. C. Klinker, in a personal interview, notes the complexity inherent to the two authors' discourse styles.

Note: In MLA, list interviews on the works cited page.

Multi-volume works

When citing multi-volume works, include the volume number and page number(s). The volume number and page number will be separated by a colon and space.

Example:

The anthology contains The Divine Comedy (1: 851-1003) as well as Candide (2: 196-250).

If referring to an entire volume of a multi-volume work, include "vol." in the citation.

Example:

Mackenzie offers a history of the United States during the Vietnam War that shows the enormous political strife during the period (vol. 3).

Poetry and Plays

If you're citing three lines or less of a poem or play, you can do so in text. Use a slash (/) to separate the lines of poetry or the lines of the play and include the line number(s) that you are citing.

Example:

Dante's Paradiso begins, "the glory of Him who moveth all that is/ Pervades the universe, and glows more bright/ In the one region, and in another less" (1-3).

If you're quoting more than three lines of a poem or play, you will want to begin on a new line that is indented ten spaces from the left margin. You'll continue to double space, but you won't include quotation marks. The period goes before the citation.

Example:

Keats' "Ode to a Nightingale" sings praises to the purity of the nightingale's song :

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains
My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,
Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains
One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk. . . . (1-4)

Notice in the example that you attempt to reproduce the poem's spacing as accurately as possible. Also notice the ellipsis—the first period indicates the end of your sentence, and the other three (with a space before each period) indicate that the sentence goes on in the original source.

Example II:

Hamlet charges his mother:

Look here, upon this picture, and on this,
The counterfeit presentment of two brothers.
See, what a grace was seated on this brow;
Hyperion's curls; the front of Jove himself;
An eye like Mars, to threaten and command. (Shakespeare 3.4. 54-9)

Direct quotations

When directly quoting from a source, enclose the material in quotation marks. Except for block quotes, end punctuation follows parenthetical citation, as shown in the example below.

Example:

Gilson identifies the relevance of women's roles as "analogous to those of serfs to lords" (44).

Quotations longer than four typed lines must be blocked and double-spaced. Omit the quotation marks and begin the quote on a new line, indenting each quoted line **ten spaces from the left margin only**. (Do not indent the right margin.) End punctuation follows the quoted material but precedes the parenthetical citation, as illustrated below.

Example:

Faircroft and Lange explain the apparition's role in Beloved:

She floats in with a tremulous air and taints the wind with her gyrations straight from the other world--that dark side that exists in our minds and forces us to deal with our transgressions, both evil and supernatural. This ghost of a character represents all that the main character shoves from her mind, the deleted horrors that were too terrible to remain within the realm of conscious understanding. (45)

This unexamined territory places itself in the forefront of the reader's mind and causes at least one individual to accept the truth.

MLA Quick Reference Guide: Section II

Section II of the Quick Reference Guide shows you about the formatting conventions of MLA style. (Please note that the formatting of the sample pages that follow do not meet exact MLA conventions. These pages are presented to provide a representation of MLA format. To find out about exact spacing requirements, read the information below. Also, **please note** that the "Academic Center/page number" located at the bottom of the page is for reference purposes within this guide. In MLA format, your page numbers will only be at the top of the page in a heading as described below.)

First page of text

Page eight of this quick guide has a sample MLA style first page of text. Please note that in MLA style, research papers do not have title pages; however, your instructor may request otherwise. **Always follow your instructor's guidelines.** In MLA format, the research paper does contain a running head, a heading, and a title. A **running head** is composed of a page number and your last name. Pages should be numbered consecutively (1, 2, 3, etc.). Your page numbers, accompanied by your last name, will go in the upper right hand corner, ½ inch from the top of the page and right justified. Your name will precede the page number (i.e., Smith 4). The **heading** contains your name, the professor's name, the course, and the

date and is located at the top left of the first page. The heading will be one-inch from the top of the page, left justified and double-spaced. You'll double-space between the last element of the heading—the date—and your paper's title. Your **title** should be centered. Generally, you wouldn't put your title in quotes, underline it, or put it in all capital letters, unless you would do so in text (i.e., if the title of a book is also part of your title). Double space between the title and the first line of your text. The text should also be double-spaced.

Works cited page

The purpose of the works cited page is to enable readers to retrieve and use your sources, so the information you provide should be complete and accurate. Entries for sources from print media and electronic media both send readers to the source's location, but electronic source entries have more parts because they require more information:

Parts of the basic print entry

Author(s). Title(s). Publication data.

Parts of the basic electronic entry

Author(s). Title(s). Print publication data (varies depending upon type of print source). Electronic publication data (including name of website, date of last update, publishing organization). Access data (including date of retrieval and URL).

The specific components of the parts of electronic entries are so varied we can't provide them all in this guide. For more specific information see sections 5.9.1 –5.9.9 in the sixth edition of the MLA handbook, available for your use in the Academic Center and the library.

Sample reference pages, including sample references of both print and electronic sources, are included on pages 10-11 of the Quick Guide. The works cited page contains all the works that you've cited in your text. The works cited page will be at the end of the paper, and you will need to begin the works cited page on a new page. You will continue your pagination (for example, if your paper ends on page 5, your works cited page(s) will begin with page 6). Again, your last name and page number should appear ½ inch from the top of the page and right justified. The title Works Cited will be centered on the page and spaced one inch from the top. Entries will be presented in alphabetical order and double spaced throughout. Each entry should begin flush against the left-hand margin with second and subsequent lines of an entry indented ½ inch.

Jillian S. Elderson

Professor Klein

Literature 4340

2 May 1999

Heading

Running head

Elderson 1

Toni Morrison and Alice Walker: Social Commentary on African

American Women

The literature of late 20th century African American authors reflects a common vein of social commentary on the evolution of women's roles in . . .

Note: The ellipses on the sample page indicate that document contains additional text; do not add these ellipses to your paper.

Works Cited

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"Resurrecting the Text: Analysis of Morrison's Novels." Time 7 Feb. 1998: 28-32. **(Magazine Article with No Author)**

Note: Maintain double-spacing on the works cited page, with no extra spaces between citations.

Note: The bold text on the sample pages indicates the type of source being referenced. This bold text should not be included on your Works Cited page.