

MLA Quick Reference Guide, 7th ed.

Author/Creation: Academic Center staff. **Revision:** Amy Hatmaker, May 2009.

Summary: Provides an overview to MLA documentation style as described in the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* (Seventh Edition). Section I explains MLA documentation in text. Section II shows how to format the title page and works cited page(s) of an MLA paper. This guide is not intended to be a complete reference, but it does provide guidelines for the most common elements used by students writing research papers.

Learning Objectives: To write proper in-text citations in MLA documentation style. To format reference entries and the title and works cited pages correctly in MLA documentation style.

Section I

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

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Section II

This section of the MLA Quick Reference Guide provides information and examples of the different sections of an MLA paper:

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*Page eight includes tips for citing electronic sources.

A plagiarism supplement appears at the end of this guide. For questions regarding your paper, please schedule an appointment with an Academic Center tutor at <http://www.rich37.com/uhv/> or email your questions to tutor@uhv.edu.

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.

Quick Tips:

- 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 213 through 219, you would cite this as (213-19); however, if the page numbers are less than ninety-nine, the full range must be given. For example, 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" (47-48).

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

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). **(In an actual paper, the following text would be double-spaced.)**

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. **(The examples in the following text would be double-spaced if they appeared in the text of an actual paper.)**

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.

When the names of the authors are included in a parenthetical reference rather than the sentence, the name of the last author should be connected with the word *and*. (Do not italicize the word and in the text.)

Following the emancipation of slaves, white Texans were resistant to accepting any form of civil or social equality due to long standing beliefs regarding the place of blacks in society (Crouch and Schultz 44).

As the example below illustrates, if the work has more than three authors, you may provide the first author's last name followed by *et al.* without any intervening punctuation, or you may provide all of the last names. (Do not italicize the words et al.)

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).

See sections 5.5.4 and 6.2 in the *MLA Handbook* for more complete information about handling citations with three or more authors.

Works with No Authors

If a source has no author, use the first two or three words of the title if you refer to the source within the parentheses. To mention the source within the text, provide the full title, as illustrated in the example below. Italicize the title if it is a book, and use quotation marks if it is an article. **(The examples in the following text would be double-spaced if they appeared in the text of an actual paper.)**

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. **(In an actual paper, the following text would be double-spaced.)**

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 the 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. **(In an actual paper, the following text would be double-spaced.)**

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.

If the writers share the same first initial, use the full first name.

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. **(The examples in the following text would be double-spaced if they appeared in the text of an actual paper.)**

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, italicize the title if it is a book and place it in quotation marks if it is an article.

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(s) 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.

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, refer to the original source (the primary source who originally 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. **(In an actual paper, the following text would be double-spaced.)**

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.** (The examples in the following text would be double-spaced if they appeared in the text of an actual paper.)

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. **(The examples in the following text would be double-spaced if they appeared in the text of an actual paper.)**

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.

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 fewer of a poem or play, you can do so in text. Use a slash (/) with space on either side of the slash to separate the lines of poetry or the lines of the play and include the line number(s) that you are citing. For the initial citation, the word *line* or *lines* should be used. Subsequent references should use only the numbers. Note though that if other types of citations are used between references to poetry lines, the designation *line(s)* should be resumed. **(In an actual paper, the following text would be double-spaced.)**

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" (lines 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.

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. . . . (lines 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.

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. **(In an actual paper, the following text would be double-spaced.)**

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 this *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 nine 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 your last name and a page number. 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, italicize 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.

Parts of the basic print entry

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

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. If the piece is from a scholarly journal or other periodical that is not apt to change, the entry only need add the publication medium and retrieval date in addition to the information for the basic entry. However, if the source may be hard to locate, the URL should be included in addition to publication medium and retrieval information:

Parts of the basic electronic entry

Author(s). Title(s). Print publication data (varies depending upon type of print source). Web. Access data (including date of retrieval and URL if needed).

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 5.6.1 –5.6.4 in the seventh 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 this *Quick Reference 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 2009

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.

Do not include a footer on
your paper.

Works Cited

- Alighieri, Dante. *The Divine Comedy*. Ed. Maynard Mack. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1965. Print. Vol. 1 of *World Masterpieces*. 2 vols.
(Multivolume work)
- Babcock, Eleanor D. "Blaming the Female: Social Commentary in 20th Century Literature." *Journal of Women's Studies* 17 (1998): 482-507. Print. **(Journal article, continuous pagination: page numbers do not start over every issue)**
- Diffendorf, Chad G. "Textual Idioms in African American Women's Literature." *Linguistics and Literature* 14.3 (1999): 79-84. Print. **(Journal article, discontinuous pagination: page numbers start over every issue)**
- Faircroft, Janice L., and Michael D. Lang. *Conflicting Ideas of Women in the Text*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1996. Print. **(Book with Two Authors)**
- . *Conflicting Ideas of Women Revisited*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1999. Print. **(2nd Book, Same Authors)**
- Gilson, Lauren. "Inner Dialogue and Narrative Discourse in American Novels." *The Value of the Novel*. Ed. Julane Haltman. New York: Dodson Publications, 1998. 451-483. Print. **(Work in an Anthology)**
- Joiner, Jennie J. "The Ghostly Presence of Evangeline: Faulkner's Exorcism and the Revision of the Feminine Ideal." *Journal of Southern Cultures* 59.3-4 (2006): 525-41. *MLA*. Web. 13 November 2006. **(Article from an Online Database)**
- Kelter, Shana R. "Women's Texts, Women's Issues." *New York Times on the Web*. New York Times, 28 May 1999. Web. 30 May 1999. <<http://newyorktimes.com/1999/05/28>>. **(Internet Article in a Newspaper)**
- Klinker, David C. Personal interview. 3 Sept. 1999. **(Interview)**
- Lancer, Richard S. "Re: Women's Dystopias." Message to Jillian Elderson. 28 July

Do not include a footer on your paper.

2008. E-mail. **(E-Mail Communication)**

Larrison, Shelby, and Jenkins B. Morecroft. "Dialogues in Women's Studies."

Humanist Issues 7.23 (1999): n. pag. Web. 25 November 1999.

(Internet Article in a Scholarly Journal)

National Research Council on Women's Issues. *Women's Ideology in the Late 20th*

Century. New York: Random, 1999. Print. **(Book, Corporate Author)**

Patterson, Andrew. "Morrison and Walker: Women's Relationships in Narrative

Fiction." *New Yorker* 2 April 1999: 27-35. Print. **(Newspaper Article)**

"Resurrecting the Text: Analysis of Morrison's Novels." *Time* 7 Feb. 1998: 28-32.

Print. **(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.

Do not include a footer on your paper.

Notes

Plagiarism Supplement to the MLA Quick Guide

Author/Creation: Summer Leibensperger, 2003. **Revised:** 2005.

Summary: Provides a definition of plagiarism and discusses repercussions for the offense at UHV. Also provides instruction about what needs to be cited and what common strategies for avoiding plagiarism are.

Learning Objectives: To define plagiarism. To list examples of what needs to be cited. To discuss what does not to be cited (common knowledge) and identify issues that may be involved in defining common knowledge for an audience. To list strategies to avoid plagiarism. For UHV students, to demonstrate awareness of potential consequences for plagiarism as defined in the *UHV Student Handbook*.

What is plagiarism?

Plagiarism is the use of information (words, sentences, and/or ideas *and* even the structure of sentences and/or ideas) from another source that is not properly credited. Plagiarism may be unintentional and may occur even if a source is credited but is done so improperly.

Why should I be concerned about plagiarism?

All plagiarism, even if unintentional, can result in serious consequences. The *UHV Student Handbook* (2001-2002) * indicates, “students who are trying conscientiously to learn and to demonstrate what they know need not worry about academic dishonesty and should feel free to use any assistance available in advancing their knowledge. Education and scholarly research depend, after all, upon shared assistance. On the other hand, no one should claim credit for the work of others, misrepresent or misappropriate the work of others, or try to gain unfair advantage over others” (p. 17). Essentially, plagiarism is a form of academic dishonesty with disciplinary actions ranging from a reduced grade for the assignment or course to expulsion.

The *UHV Student Handbook* further indicates, “students also have a responsibility to fulfill, and indeed an investment to protect, in helping to ensure that academic achievement is characterized by honesty and fair play” (p. 17). Remember, it is your responsibility to be conscientious about avoiding plagiarism.

*More information about academic dishonesty is available in the *UHV Student Handbook*.

What needs to be cited?

Robert Harris (2002), in *Using Sources Effectively*, provides a list of what you would need to cite. He indicates,

you must cite someone else’s words you quote, words you summarize, words you paraphrase, idea (interpretation, opinion, conclusion), data, graph, photograph, drawing, table of information, experiment, example, unique concept, apt phrase, expression of common knowledge, solution to a problem, speech, video source (film, TV program), [and] the structure or sequencing of facts, ideas. or arguments. (p. 18)

Harris' list, though not extensive, shows that plagiarism may involve not only the 'borrowing' of words or sentences but also tables and graphics.

Harris, Robert A. *Using Sources Effectively: Strengthening Your Writing and Avoiding Plagiarism*. Los Angeles: Pyczak Publishing, 2002. Print.

What is common knowledge?

Above, Harris mentions that you have to cite an "expression of common knowledge." You may or may not have to cite common knowledge (which Harris explains later in his chapter).

Common knowledge may consist of commonly known dates and factual information (i.e. the Alamo fell on March 6, 1836, to Santa Anna; or the chemical composition of water is H₂O) or common sayings like proverbs or clichés (i.e. A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush; or strike while the iron is hot.).

Common knowledge also may exist when you and your reader(s) share the same perspective. For example, if you're writing a research report on the Victoria, Texas, Public School System and your audience is the citizens of Victoria, you probably wouldn't need to cite that Victoria is in the coastal bend region or that Victoria has a consolidated school district. On the other hand, if you live in North Dakota and are writing a research paper on consolidated school districts, you may need to cite information that lists the school districts in Texas that are consolidated.

You *will* need to cite *opinions* related to the facts. It may be a well-known fact that the Alamo fell on March 6, 1836, and that in Victoria the school district is consolidated, but you will need to cite someone's opinion or interpretation of those facts. Also, your sources may present both opinion and factual information. Because that factual information is part of an opinion, you will need to cite the source.

If in doubt, cite the source.

What are some strategies to avoid plagiarism?

Attention to detail will help you avoid plagiarism.

1. Take careful notes when you research and clearly document whether you've directly quoted, paraphrased, or summarized the material in your notes.
2. Keep photocopies of each source for easy reference.
3. Borrow from the source correctly. (The handout titled *Decide when to Quote, Paraphrase, and Summarize* may be helpful in borrowing from the source correctly.)
4. Credit the source of any ideas, whether directly quoted, paraphrased, or summarized in your paper. For information on how to cite your sources, please consult the proper manual. The Academic Center offers an *APA Quick Reference Guide* and an *MLA Quick Reference Guide*, and, while these guides are not comprehensive in nature, they do answer basic questions about documentation. (The Academic Center handout titled *Signal the Use of a Source* may be helpful also.)
5. Make sure all cited information has an entry in your bibliography or works cited page.
6. Give an adequate signal to your reader to show you are using someone else's words. (For more information on signaling, please pick up a copy of the *Signal the Use of a Source* handout.)
7. Review your paper and consider your use of documentation carefully.

**Remember that it's your responsibility to avoid plagiarism.
If in doubt, cite it.**