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MLA Quick Reference Guide, Eighth Edition

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Document Summary: Provides a brief overview of MLA guidelines and changes to the eighth edition of the *MLA Handbook*. This document is not intended to be a complete reference, but it does provide guidelines for the most common elements used by students when writing research papers and other essays that require this formatting.

Learning Outcome: Using this resource, students should be able to deploy MLA formatting with a reasonable amount of confidence. Formatting includes in-text citations, crafting the Works Cited page, and documenting alternative sources.

Section I: Elements of the Works Cited Page in MLA

Section II: Works Cited Page

Section III: In-text Citations

Section IV: Tips and Strategies for Writing in MLA Format

Section V: Examples and Templates

Section I: Elements and Definitions

Citing sources is essential to academic respectability and integrity. In order to ensure that sources are being cited correctly, certain elements must be provided in the Works Cited page. Some elements are essential, such as author and title of the source, while others are optional, such as date of access. Whether an element is essential or optional depends upon the element's relevance to your source and to your paper. The elements and their definitions follow below:

****If your instructors guidelines differ from the ones outlined here, follow your instructor's requirements.****

Author: The main creator of an item. This can be a writer, a director, an editor, a translator, etc.

Title of Source: The title of a book, article, TV show episode, movie, etc. For something like a tweet, the entire text is considered the title.

Title of Container: The item that contains the source. An article is contained by a website or journal, a chapter is contained by a book, an episode is contained by a show, a tweet is contained by Twitter, and so on.

Other Contributors (if any): Anyone besides the author who played a very important part in the source's creation. TV shows, for example, are the result of many people working toward a single goal. While the director of an episode is the "author" of that episode, that episode would not exist without the actors.

Version: Journals are usually split into versions, volumes, or editions that contain specific articles. Shows have seasons or arcs.

Number: A step down from version. So if a show has seasons, it also has episode numbers. If a journal is split into volumes, those volumes are split into issues.

Publisher: The publisher of a source. This can be a book publisher or a production company (for shows and movies).

Publication Date: The date the source cited was published or an episode was first aired.

Location: The location of the source within the container. For example, a journal article might start on page 7 and end on page 14 within a journal. This can also be the URL of a website or streaming movie or episode.

Date of Original Publication (optional): If a source has been republished or updated, you can provide the date of original publication.

City of Publication (optional): Helpful for much older works, but not necessary for the eighth edition.

Type of Work (optional): If the type of work you've cited is unconventional, it can be helpful to state what the type of work it is. Sources like lectures, speeches, and transcripts would fall under this.

Date of Access (optional): The date a source was accessed online. Especially for online sources, putting the date of access is valuable for your reader.

Section II: Works Cited Page

This guide attempts to provide a list of the varied kinds of sources you may find for a writing project. However, this list is not exhaustive. Before the examples, this guide provides the general format for each kind of source. You should note that not all sources will have all elements as listed on page 2. You should do your best to locate these elements and then write the works cited entry with the available elements.

*Entries should be alphabetized.

*All entries in the Works Cited page should have a hanging indent if they are longer than one line.

*All entries should conform to the spacing used in the rest of the document. E.g., if a paper is double-spaced, the Works Cited page should also be double-spaced.

Books and Reports

General Format: Author(s). *Title of Source*. Publisher, Publication Date.

For organizations as authors, the author element should be omitted.

One Author

Weir, Andy. *The Martian*. Broadway Books, 2014.

Two Authors

Garcia, Kami, and Margaret Stohl. *Beautiful Creatures*. Little, Brown Books, 2009.

Three or More Authors

Burdick, Anne, et al. *Digital Humanities*. MIT P, 2012.

Corporate Author

United Nations. *Consequences of Rapid Population Growth in Developing Countries*. Taylor and Francis, 1991.

Organization as Author and Publisher

Reading at Risk: A Survey of Literary Reading in America. National Endowment for the Arts, June 2004.

Editor

Nunberg, Geoffrey, editor. *The Future of the Book*. U of California P, 1996.

More Than One Editor

Holland, Merlin, and Rupert Hart-Davis, editors. *Agent of Change: Print Culture Studies after Elizabeth L. Einstein*. U of Massachusetts P / Center for the Book, Library of Congress, 2007.

Journal Articles

General Format: Author(s). "Title of Source." *Title of Container*. Version, Number, Publication Date, Location.

Baron, Naomi S. "Redefining Reading: The Impact of Digital Communication Media." *PMLA*, vol. 28, no. 1, Jan. 2013, pp. 193-200.

Kincaid, Jamaica. "In History." *Callaloo*, vol. 24, no. 2, Spring 2001, pp. 620-26.

Web Articles

General Format: Author(s). "Title of Source." *Title of Container*, Date of Publication, URL.

Guillaume, Jenna. "This 'Game Of Thrones' Theory About Daenerys Is Mind Blowing." *BuzzFeed*, 31 May 2016, <https://www.buzzfeed.com/jennaguillaume/the-mad-khaleesi>.

Blanchard, Olivia. "I Quit Teach for America." *The Atlantic*, 23 Sept. 2013, <http://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2013/09/i-quit-teach-for-america/279724/>.

Senthilingam, Meera. "Does this doctor hold the secret to ending malaria?" *CNN*, 2 June 2016, <http://www.cnn.com/2016/06/01/health/cnn-frontiers-adrian-hill-malaria-vaccine/index.html>.

Social Media / Video Streaming

General Format: Author(s). "Title of Source." *Title of Container*, Date of Publication, URL, Date of Access (optional).

"Name of Episode." *Title of Container (Show)*, season number, episode number, Publisher, Date of Publication, URL, Date of Access (optional).

@Hozay_. "Sir? Excuse me, sir? Sir? Do you have a moment to talk about our Lord and Savior, Cthulu?" *Twitter*, 27 July 2015, 1:06 p.m., https://twitter.com/Hozay_/status/625728971225874432

@kimkardashian. "Wore my new Yeezy Season 2 heels with an orange Pablo shirt yesterday in support of gun violence awareness day. Something has to change." *Instagram*, 3 June 2016, 8:40 a.m., <https://www.instagram.com/p/BGMb0nfOS8>

CollegeHumor. "If Google Was A Guy." *YouTube*, 21 Jan. 2014,
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YuOBzWF0Aws>.

"iPad Pro to Replace iPad mini?" *YouTube*. Uploaded by David Di Franco, 7 Nov. 2014,
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8MQKAY2pqoo>. Accessed 16 February 2016.

"The Runway Club." *Bob's Burgers*, season 5, episode 16, Fox, 22 March 2015. *Netflix*,
<https://www.netflix.com/watch/80099476>. Accessed 15 May 2016.

Movies and TV Shows (non-streaming)

Author(s). *Title of Source*. Publisher, Year of Publication.

Russo, Anthony, and Joe Russo, directors. *Captain America: Civil War*. Marvel Studios, 2016.

Clements, Ron, and John Musker, directors. *The Little Mermaid*. Walt Disney Pictures, Walt Disney Feature Animation, 1989.

"Black." *Supernatural*, directed by Robert Singer, performances by Jensen Ackles and Jared Padalecki, season 10, episode 1, Warner Bros. Television, 7 Oct. 2014.

Section III: In-text Citations

Citations are used to tell a reader which source is being quoted. The citation should match information in the Works Cited page. Generally, you'll use the author's last name and the page number (if the source cited has page numbers). For the eighth edition, abbreviations such as pg. or p. are not needed.

Periods should always follow the parenthetical citation. They should NEVER go within the quotation. Only exclamation points (!) and question marks (?) should be included in the quote.

Additionally, periods should always follow a parenthetical citation at the end of a sentence. The citation NEVER goes after a period.

Note: Some of the examples below feature direct quotes. In examples where quotes are not present, the source has been paraphrased or otherwise summarized. In these latter cases, quotations are not required, but the in-text citation is still mandated.

Single Authors (Books, Articles, and Reports)

According to Naomi Baron, reading is "just half of literacy. The other half is writing" (194).

OR

Reading is "just half of literacy. The other half is writing" (Baron 194).

Two Authors

The authors conclude that loneliness is a construct (Jones and Smith 23).

OR

Jones and Smith conclude that loneliness is a construct (23).

Three or More Authors

The authors begins with a provocative statement: “Mexican Americans were treated as second class citizens” (Martinez et al. 1).

OR

Martinez et al. begin by claiming that Mexican Americans once held second class status (1).

Authors with Same Last Name

In order to differentiate authors with the same last name, you’ll have to include the specific work for each author in the in-text citation.

Reading is “just half of literacy. The other half is writing” (Baron, “Redefining” 194).

In this case, you’ll want to include a shortened version of the source’s title.

Audio Sources (TV shows, movies, YouTube, etc.)

Buffy’s promise that “there’s not going to be any incidents like at my old school” is obviously not one on which she can follow through (“*Buffy*” 00:03:16-17).

In College Humor’s skit, people walk into an office and say nearly incomprehensible phrases like “foot same length Europe?” in order to demonstrate how absurd our use of the search engine can be (“Google” 00:14).

*Instead of citing pages, you have to cite time or range of times for when the quote is said.

Social Media

*There may be instances when using a social media source will be seen as relevant and appropriate. Be aware, though, that social media posts can be deleted or altered at any point after they’ve been cited in a paper. Additionally, social media posts typically lack many of the elements of more traditional sources.

A picture of a cephalopod harassing a diver and the caption “Sir? Excuse me, sir? Sir? Do you have a moment to talk about our Lord and Savior, Cthulu?” draw a connection between Jehovah’s witnesses and Lovecraft’s Lord of Chaos, Cthulu (@Hozay__).

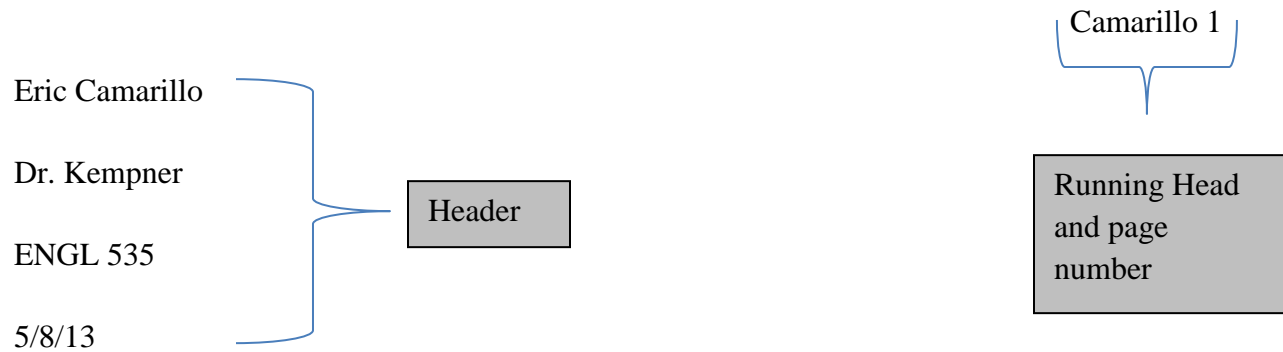
In an Instagram post, Kim Kardashian West recognizes Gun Violence Awareness Day by wearing an orange outfit (“Wore”). However, many people may not see a dress worn on a single day of the year as advocacy.

Section IV: Tips and Strategies

- Create a “working” Works Cited page. This page should include all of the necessary bibliographic information of a text but be separate from the rest of the paper. Then, once you’ve finished your paper, you don’t need to worry about creating a Works Cited page from scratch because you’ll already have it created.
- Make sure to evaluate sources before including them in a paper. You should examine where the source is from, who wrote it, and when it was written. If a source is from a disreputable website or magazine, was written by someone with no expertise in the field, or is too old, the source may not be appropriate for your paper. When in doubt, make sure to ask your professor if using a specific source is okay.
- If you’re worried about punctuation or grammar rules, make sure to check out the Student Success Resource page. This page includes numerous handouts on commas, semicolons, sentence structure, crafting thesis statements, and so on. It can be found here: <http://www.uhv.edu/student-success-center/resources/>
- Make sure that a source is relevant to your paper and that you’re not just trying to include a certain number of quotes because your professor told you. Every source and every quote should have a specific and logical reason for being included in your paper.
- Don’t include too many quotes. It can be tempting to rely on the ideas of others, but professors are looking for the arguments that you can craft and defend. To that end, quotes should be used to bolster your own argument. You shouldn’t be changing your argument to support a quote.
- Come visit the Writing Center in order to receive feedback from an experienced peer writing consultant. They’ll offer recommendations and feedback that will strengthen you as a writer.

Section V: Examples and Templates

Title Page



Giving Up the Ghost:

An Exploration of Boundaries in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*

Toni Morrison's Nobel Prize-winning *Beloved*, tells the story of a once-fugitive slave, Sethe, and the struggles she has with her daughter...

Works Cited Page

Works Cited

Remember, the Works Cited Page is always the last page in a document.

Bhaba, Homi. "The World and the Home." *Social Text: Third World and Postcolonial Issues*.

1992, 141-153, Electronic.

Fowler, Doreen. " 'Nobody Could Make It Alone: Fathers and Boundaries in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*.'" *MELUS*. 36.2, 2011, Electronic.

Gillan, Jennifer. "Focusing on the Wrong Front: Historical Displacement, the Maginot Line, and *The Bluest Eye*." *African American Review*. 36.2, 2002, Electronic.

Goldstein, Phillip. "Black Feminism and the Canon: Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!* and Morrison's *Beloved* as Gothic Romances." *The Faulkner Journal*. 20.1/2, 2004, Electronic.

Holy Bible. King James Version. American Bible Society: New York, 1980, Print.

Miller, J. "Boundaries in *Beloved*." *symploke*. 15, 2007, 24-39, Electronic.

Morrison, Toni. *Beloved*. 1987. Vintage: York, 2004, Electronic.

Wyatt, Jean. "Giving Body to the Word: The Maternal Symbolic in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*." *PMLA*. 108.3, 1993, 474-488, Electronic.

MLA Practice Template

1: Author
2: Title of source.

Container 1
3: Title of container,
4: Other contributors,
5: Version,
6: Number,
7: Publisher,
8: Publication date,
9: Location.

Container 2
3: Title of container,
4: Other contributors,
5: Version,
6: Number,
7: Publisher,
8: Publication date,
9: Location.

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