OWLS Writing Guides: MLA Style

MLA (Modern Language Association) style is used for papers in most humanities courses. Basic guidelines follow. For more, see the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 8th edition (2016).

I. MANUSCRIPT FORMAT (BODY TEXT)

FONT, MARGINS, AND SPACING:
- Use 12 point Times New Roman (or similar) **font.**
- Set all **margins** to 1 inch.
- Set **paragraph alignment** to Left, creating a 'ragged' right margin.
- **Double-space** the *entire document*. Leave *no extra space* after the header, around the title, or between paragraphs.
- **Indent** the first line of every paragraph 0.5 inch (one tab or 5 spaces).

HEADER, HEADING, AND TITLE:
- Create a **header** that numbers pages consecutively and includes your last name. Set the **header** at 0.5 inch from the top and flush with the right margin.
- At the top left of the *first page only,* type the **heading,** beginning on the first line and flush with the left margin.
- Type your **title** after the header, centered, in Title Case and in normal font/size. Do not use a title page unless your professor requires it.

The beginning elements of your essay should appear as in the example below:

Your Last Name 1

Your Name

Professor's Name

Course title or # (e.g., ENGL T122)

Date of Submission (month/day/year order)

Title of Your Paper

The first line of your essay (indented appropriately) begins here.

QUOTATIONS are incorporated in a couple of different ways, as explained and illustrated here:

The *MLA Handbook* instructs, "If a prose quotation runs no more than four lines [of your text], put it in quotation marks and incorporate it into the text" (75). The rules for a quotation that runs more than four lines of your text are different. These rules follow:

If a quotation extends to more than four lines when run into your text, set it off from the text as a block indented half an inch from the left margin. Do not indent the first line an extra amount or add quotation

marks not present in the original. A colon introduces a quotation displayed in this way except when the grammatical connection between your introductory wording and the quotation requires a different mark of punctuation or none at all. A parenthetical reference for a prose quotation set off from the text follows the last line of the quotation. (76-77)

TITLES OF SOURCES mentioned in your paper: Titles of longer works (books, periodicals) are italicized, while titles of shorter works (articles, parts of a longer work) are placed in quotation marks.

Cite every source you quote or borrow from. Guidelines for in-text citations and the Works Cited list follow.

II. IN-TEXT / PARENTHETICAL CITATION

A complete MLA citation consists of two elements:
1) an entry in the list of works cited, which gives complete bibliographic information for the source
2) a citation within the text at the point where the source material appears

The in-text citation is a brief reference in the text that directs readers to the detailed entry for the source in the list of Works Cited. The in-text citation normally includes the first element in the works cited entry for the source (usually the author's name) and the page number (if available) in parentheses specifying where the cited material may be located within the source.

If the author's name is incorporated into the sentence, give only the page number in parentheses.

> According to Boston University President John Silber, "When our schools fail to teach our children to read and write, they fail essentially and inexcusably; yet they are not held accountable" (49).

If the author is not named in the sentence, place the author's name and the page number in parentheses directly after the source material. Do not insert any punctuation between the name and number, and do not write *page* or *pages* or *p.* or *pp*.
> Too often, our schools are failing to educate children in the basics, yet they are not being made to take responsibility for their failure (Silber 49).

For a source with two authors/editors, give the names in the order in which they appear on the work's title page. Include their names within the sentence in a signal phrase, or in the parenthetical citation, separated by *and* and followed by the page number:
> (Cross and Hoffman 55).

For a source with three or more authors or editors, use the name of the first author followed by "et al." (Latin for 'and others'):
> (Gilman et al. 47).

For a source with a corporate author, give the name of the corporation or organization as author:
> (National Institutes of Health 335).
> Common abbreviations may be used in subsequent references: (NIH 356).

For a source found in an anthology or collection of works by multiple authors, use the name of the author of the shorter work (article, short story, poem, essay, etc. that you are citing), not the author of the collection.

For a source with no named author, give the title in place of the author's name:
> In the report "Why Our Campuses are Safer without Handguns" . . . (3).
Title may be shortened in the parenthetical citation:
> . . . ("Why Our Campuses are Safer" 16).

For a source quoted within another source, use "qtd. in" to indicate the main source (the source that has an entry in the list of Works Cited):

> (qtd. in Evans 211).

For a source without page numbers or other location markers, such as a website, you may omit the parenthetical reference as long as you give the author's name in your sentence. Do not make up page numbers or use page numbers created on any print-out of the source.

For a source that gives clear paragraph or other section numbers instead of page numbers (including online works), give the relevant number or numbers preceded by the appropriate abbreviation (e.g., par./pars. or sec.). If the author's name is given in the parenthetical citation instead of in your sentence, use a comma after the name:

> Chan claims that "Eagleton has belittled the gains of postmodernism" (par. 41).
> . . . (Chan, par. 41).

III. LIST OF WORKS CITED

➢ The list appears on a separate page(s) at the back of the paper.
➢ The list uses the same font as the rest of the paper.
➢ The page includes the **header and page number**, like any other page of the paper.
➢ Everything on the page is **double-spaced**; no extra spaces between title and first entry, or between entries.
➢ The page is **titled** "Works Cited" (centered, in normal font/size, and in title case, NOT in quotation marks).
➢ Each entry uses a **hanging indent** (first line of entry at left margin, and next line(s) indented five spaces).
➢ Entries are **alphabetized** by authors' last names (or the title, if no author is given), NOT numbered.

The beginning elements of the Works Cited page should appear as in the example below:

Header with pg #

Works Cited

Copeland, Edward. "Money." *The Cambridge Companion to Jane Austen*, edited by Copeland and Juliet

McMaster, Cambridge UP, 1997, pp. 131-48.

Davidson, Andrew. *The Gargoyle.* Doubleday, 2008.

Gwynn, R. S., editor. *Literature: A Pocket Anthology*. Longman, 2002.

CORE ELEMENTS: To create entries for the list of Works Cited, writers follow a universal set of formatting guidelines that can be applied to any source, in any field, using nine core elements common to most sources. An entry should include as many of these elements as are available for the source, in the order listed below and punctuated as shown. (Not every source will contain every element. The final element is followed by a period.)

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

Author(s). Title of source. Title of container, Other contributors, Version, Number, Publisher, Publication Date,

Location.

1. AUTHOR.

Single author or editor:

> Davidson, Andrew. *The Gargoyle.* Doubleday, 2008.

> Gwynn, R. S., editor. *Literature: A Pocket Anthology*. Longman, 2002.

Two authors or editors:

> Cross, Susan, and Christine Hoffman. *Bruce Nauman: Theaters of Experience*. Thames & Hudson, 2004.

Three or more authors, list the first name shown, followed by *et al*.

> Gilman, Sander, et al. *Hysteria beyond Freud*. U of California P, 1993.

Corporate Author: (If author and publisher are the same, omit author name)

> *MLA Handbook.* 8th ed., Modern Language Association of America, 2016.

2. TITLE OF SOURCE.

Italicize titles of longer works: books, periodicals, television series, films, websites, etc. Place within quotation marks titles of shorter works: articles, reviews, poems, short stories, pages on a website, episodes of a television series.

> Copeland, Edward. "Money." *The Cambridge Companion to Jane Austen*, edited by Copeland and Juliet

>   McMaster, Cambridge UP, 1997, pp. 131-48.

Any subtitle appears after the main title, preceded by a colon.

> Cross, Susan, and Christine Hoffman. *Bruce Nauman: Theaters of Experience*. Thames & Hudson, 2004.

3. TITLE OF CONTAINER,

If the source is found within another source, or it forms part of a larger whole (an article in a journal, a book in a collection, an episode in a series, etc.), list the title of the larger whole/source—**the container** that holds the source. The title of the container is normally italicized. If the source is a stand-alone, self-contained work, such as a novel or a live performance, no container is listed. **A source may have no container, one container, or more than one container.** For instance, a journal article found through an online database has two containers—the journal itself (container #1) and the digital service through which the article is accessed (container #2). Add the available publication facts about each additional container to the end of the entry for the source.

Source with no container:

> Tartt, Donna. *The Goldfinch*. Little, Brown and Company, 2013.

Source with one container:

> Copeland, Edward. "Money." *The Cambridge Companion to Jane Austen*, edited by Copeland and Juliet

>   McMaster, Cambridge UP, 1997, pp. 131-48.

Source with two containers:

> Lorensen, Jutta. "Between Image and Word, Color, and Time: Jacob Lawrence's *The Migration Series*."

>   *African American Review*, vol. 40, no. 3, 2006, pp. 571-86. *EBSCOHost,*

>   search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=f5h&AN=24093790&site=ehost-live.

TEMPLATE for citing sources with more than one container:

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.

4. OTHER CONTRIBUTORS,

Provide the name of any editor, translator, performer, or other contributor important to the identification of the source or relevant to your research. Precede each name with a description of the role (*edited by, directed by, narrated by, performance by,* etc.). Do not use abbreviations for these common terms.

> Shikibu, Murasaki. *The Tale of the Genji*. Translated by Edward G. Seidensticker, Knopf, 1976.

> *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*. Directed by David Yates, performances by Daniel Radcliffe,
>
> Rupert Grint, and Emma Watson, Warner Bros. Pictures, 2009.

If your research focuses on the work of a specific contributor, such as the director of a film, the conductor of an orchestra, or the translator of a work, begin the citation with the name of the contributor followed by the appropriate title for that person.

> Seidensticker, Edward G., translator. *The Tale of the Genji*. By Murasaki Shikibu, Knopf, 1976.

> Yates, David, director. *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*. Performances by Daniel
>
> Radcliffe, Rupert Grint, and Emma Watson, Warner Bros. Pictures, 2009.

5. VERSION,

If available, list the edition or version, such as *3rd ed., revised ed., abridged version,* and so on.

> Lowi, Theodore, et al. *Analyzing American Government: American Government, Freedom and Power*. 3rd
>
> ed., Norton, 1994.

> *The Bible*. Authorized King James Version, Oxford UP, 1998.

6. NUMBER,

For a source that is part of a numbered sequence of works, give numbers such as volume and issue number for journal article (e.g., *vol. 3, no. 7*), or season and episode number for a television program (e.g., *season 2, episode 5*).

> Myers, Sharon A. "Reassessing the 'Proofreading Trap': ESL Tutoring and Writing Center Instruction." *The*
>
> *Writing Center Journal*, vol. 24, no. 1, 2003, pp. 51-70.

7. PUBLISHER,

Identify the publisher or sponsor of the source (the organization primarily responsible for producing or making the source available). You may omit the publisher's name for a periodical (newspaper, magazine, journal), a self-published work, a website whose title is the same as the name of its publisher, a service such as You Tube or ProQuest that hosts users' content but does not produce the content. City of publication is no longer listed.

> Faulkner, William. "A Rose for Emily." *Literature: A Pocket Anthology*, edited by R.S. Gwynn, Longman,
>
> 2002, pp. 254-263.

8. PUBLICATION DATE,

Use the most recent date of copyright or update.

> Bronte, Charlotte. *Jane Eyre*. Edited by Margaret Smith, Oxford UP, 1998.

9. LOCATION.

Location refers to page numbers or other locator important to identifying the source. Page number(s) specify the location of text within a print container, such as a journal; the location of an online source is specified by the URL or DOI; the location of a physical object or performance experienced first-hand is specified by the name of the venue, such as a concert hall or museum.

> Ransom, Daniel J. "Imprecise Chaucer." *The Chaucer Review,* vol. 43, no. 4, 2009, pp. 376-99.
>
> Bosch, Torie. "Can Your Avatar Make Your Life Better?" *Future Tense,* Slate.com, 9 Sept. 2011,
>
> > www.slate.com/blogs/future_tense/2011/09/09/can_your_avatar_make_your_life_better_.html
>
> Matuozzi, Robert. "Archive Trauma." MLA Annual Convention, 29 Dec. 2007, Hyatt Regency Hotel,
>
> > Chicago.

OPTIONAL ELEMENTS:
Some optional elements may be added after Location (following the period). These include the following:

Date of original publication: When the original publication date is relevant to your use of the source, you may give this date immediately after the source's title.

Medium of publication: Media type is no longer listed for most common sources, but it may be added at the end of a listing for what MLA calls an unexpected type of work (e.g., Address, Transcript), or it may be given when the media type is not clear from the other elements of the listing (e.g., Cartoon, Photograph).

Access date: For online sources, including the date of access is optional but recommended if no publication date is available. Add the date of access after the period following the URL or DOI (e.g., Accessed 20 May 2013).

Prior publication information for reprinted works: If a work was previously published in another form and is reprinted in another source with facts about its original publication, you may include the original publication information. See example under WORK FROM AN ANTHOLOGY OR COLLECTION below.

QUICK LOOK AT CORE ELEMENTS OF A WORKS CITED ENTRY

Author.	Use Last name, First name format for single author or for the first of two authors; then First Name Last Name for second author. Multiple authors' names appear in the order given in the source, not alphabetically. Group or corporate author name goes here, if appropriate.
Title of source.	Italicize titles of longer works: books, periodicals, television series, films, websites, etc. Place within quotation marks titles of shorter works: articles, reviews, poems, short stories, pages on a website, episodes of a television series, etc.
Title of container,	If the source is found within another source, or it forms part of a larger whole (an article in a journal, a book in a collection, an episode in a series), the container is the larger source/whole.
Other contributors,	Provide the name of any editor, translator, performer, or other contributor important to the identification of the source or relevant to your research. Precede each name with a description of the role (*edited by, directed by, narrated by,* etc.). Do not use abbreviations (use *performance by*, not *perf. by*).
Version,	If available, list the edition or version, such as *3rd ed., revised ed., abridged version,* and so on.
Number,	For a source that is part of a numbered sequence of works, give numbers such as volume and issue number for journal article (e.g., *vol. 3, no. 7*), or season and episode number for a television program (e.g., *season 2, episode 5*).
Publisher,	Publisher or sponsor of the source is the organization primarily responsible for producing or making the source available (e.g., publisher of a book, distributor of a film, or network of a television program). Omit publisher's name for a periodical, a self-published work, a website whose title is the same as the name of its publisher, or a hosting service such as You Tube or ProQuest. City of publication is not listed.
Publication date,	Use the most recent date of copyright or update. Dates containing days, months, and years use Day Month Year format
Location.	Location refers to page numbers or other locator important to identifying the source, including page numbers, disc number, URL or DOI, or physical venue.

A blank template for a source with more than one container appears at the end of this handout for you to use as you compile your Works Cited list. Copies of blank templates are available in the SSC Writing Center for your use.

IV. EXAMPLES OF COMMONLY CITED SOURCES:

BOOK

Author(s). *Title of Book*. Publisher,Year.

Davidson, Andrew. *The Gargoyle.* Doubleday, 2008.

BOOK WITH EDITOR OR TRANSLATOR

Author(s). *Title of Book*. Edited by Name, Publisher, Year.

Bronte, Charlotte. *Jane Eyre*. Edited by Margaret Smith, Oxford UP, 1998.

SHORT WORK FROM AN ANTHOLOGY OR COLLECTION

Author. "Title of Short Work." *Title of Book*, edited by Name, Publisher, Year, pages.

Faulkner, William. "A Rose for Emily." *Literature: A Pocket Anthology*, edited by R.S. Gwynn, Longman, 2002, pp.

254-63.

Hoover, Eric. "College's Value Goes Deeper than the Degree." *Practical Argument: A Text and Anthology*, edited by

Laurie G. Kirszner and Stephen R. Mandell, 3rd ed., Bedford/St. Martins, 2017, pp. 680-83. Originally

published in *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 22 April 2015.

ARTICLE FROM A PERIODICAL

Author(s). "Title of Article." *Title of Periodical*, Day Month Year, pages.

Evans, Polly. "Lunch with an Italian Wine Impresario." *Food and Wine,* Oct. 2008, pp. 210-14.

JOURNAL ARTICLE FROM AN ONLINE DATABASE OR SUBSCRIPTION SERVICE

Author(s). "Title of Article." *Title of Journal*, Volume, Issue, Year, pages. *Name of Database*, DOI or URL.

Lorensen, Jutta. "Between Image and Word, Color, and Time: Jacob Lawrence's *The Migration Series*." *African

American Review*, vol. 40, no. 3, 2006, pp. 571-86. *EBSCOHost,* search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?

direct=true&db=f5h&AN=24093790&site=ehost-live.

ENTIRE WEBSITE

Author or creator of website (if available). *Name of Site*. Name of publisher or sponsor (institution/organization

affiliated with the site, if different from the name of the website), date of publication or latest update (if

available), URL, DOI or permalink. Accessed Day Month Year (if applicable).

Purdue Online Writing Lab. Purdue University, 2016, owl.english.purdue.edu/owl. Accessed 8 August 2016.

PAGE OR SHORT WORK ON A WEBSITE

Author(s). "Title of Article." *Title of Website*, Date of Publication or most recent update, URL.

"Pronoun Case." *Purdue Online Writing Lab*. Purdue University, 2016, owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/

resource/595/02. Accessed 8 August 2016.

VIDEO STREAMED ONLINE (incl. YouTube video)

Author (creator of video). "Title of Video." *Streaming Service*, uploaded by (if different from Author), Day Month

Year, URL.

Naked Science. "How Old is the Sun?" *YouTube*, 25 May 2016, www.youtube.com/watch?v=0rO7WknDoAs

TELEVISION SHOW, SINGLE EPISODE STREAMED ONLINE

"Title of Episode or Segment." *Title of Series,* other contributors (if applicable), edition (series, episode), name of

network of production, date aired or created. Name of Database or Website, URL.

"Bait and Switch." *Love & Hip Hop: Atlanta*, season 4, episode 16, VH1, 10 Aug. 2015. *Hulu*,

www.hulu.com/watch/829710.

TELEVISION SERIES

Daniels, Greg and Michael Schur, creators. *Parks and Recreation*. Deedle-Dee Productions and Universal Media

Studios, 2015.

FILM

Title of Film. Directed by Name of Director, performances by Name(s) of Major Performers, Distributor, Year.

Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince. Directed by David Yates, performances by Daniel Radcliffe, Rupert Grint,

and Emma Watson, Warner Bros. Pictures, 2009.

SONG OR ALBUM

Artist. "Title of Song." *Title of Album*, Recording Manufacturer, Date, Location. Container information if applicable.

Snail Mail. "Thinning." *Habit*, Sister Polygon Records, 2016.

Beyoncé. "Pray You Catch Me." *Lemonade,* Parkwood Entertainment, 2016, www.beyonce.com/album/lemonade-

visual-album/.

Rae Morris. "Skin." *Cold,* Atlantic Records, 2014. *Spotify*, open.spotify.com/track/0OPES3Tw5r86O6fudK8gxi.

(updated 2-2019)

OFFICE OF WRITING AND LEARNING SERVICES @ STUDENT SUCCESS CENTER
ML 241, LOYOLA   **UNIVERSITY, 865-2297**

OWLS Writing Guides:
MLA Works Cited Entry Template

1. Author. (Last name, First name)
2. Title of source. (Title of book, article, chapter, etc.)
CONTAINER 1
3. Title of container, (Title of larger collection: periodical, journal, anthology, etc.)
4. Other contributors, (If work has editor, translator, director, etc., with name written normally)
5. Version, (If the work has editions: number, abridged/unabridged, etc.)
6. Number, (Volume, issue, episode, etc., if applicable)
7. Publisher, (Publishing company for books, host website for web pages, etc.)
8. Publication date, (Date of publication or latest update)
9. Location. (page range, DOI, URL, physical venue, etc.)
CONTAINER 2
3. Title of container, (usually a database or website where the above source was found)
4. Other contributors,
5. Version,
6. Number,
7. Publisher,
8. Publication date,
9. Location. URL for database or website

WORKS CITED LIST ENTRY:

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