

MLA (Modern Languages Association) Documentation Style

MLA documentation style, also known as “name-page parenthetical style,” is used for disciplines (such as **English and the humanities**) in which being able to find the author and the precise location of a citation are the most important consideration in documentation.

Documentation: acknowledging your sources by giving complete and accurate information so that your readers can find the sources you have used. You must document your sources to avoid PLAGIARIZING someone else's thoughts and words.

Proper documentation in MLA has TWO PARTS:

1. an **in-text citation** that is placed in the body of your essay immediately after you use the source. This in-text citation refers the reader to
2. a **bibliography**, which lists your sources in ALPHABETICAL ORDER at the end of the paper.

In MLA format, the bibliography is called "**Works Cited**," or, if you are listing books that you have not cited in your essay but still used in your research, "**Works Cited and Consulted**."

1. IN-TEXT CITATIONS

The first part of MLA documentation is the **parenthetical reference** (if you are used to footnotes, you would do a parenthetical reference where you would put a footnote). **Immediately after** the material you have cited, put the AUTHOR and PAGE NUMBER. Remember that you should put a page reference **every time you refer to specific information from a text, even if you have not quoted**.

E.g. Miss Emily is described as looking “like a body long submerged in motionless water” (Faulkner 1651).

E.g. Miss Emily tells the committee to talk to Colonel Sartoris about her taxes (Faulkner 1651).

Make sure that the page reference comes after the **total** information, not halfway through, so that your reader knows specifically what information you are sourcing:

NOT: Miss Emily (Faulkner 1651) is described as looking “like a body long submerged in motionless water.”

If you have indicated the author in a preceding phrase (a “signal phrase”), you may give only the page number in your parenthetical reference, because the author is obvious:

E.g. Faulkner depicts Miss Emily as “like a body long submerged in motionless water” (1651).

The **first** time you use a source, you should use a signal phrase to indicate the author's full name and qualifications. For each subsequent reference to the same source, use only the author's last name.

E.g. **Renowned Canadian author Adele Wiseman says that fellow writer Margaret Laurence often found public appearances “onerous” (Wiseman 6). Wiseman and Laurence were lifelong friends, and their correspondence, now published, sheds light on the private side of Laurence’s public persona.**

Footnotes

Do NOT use footnotes for documentation in MLA. In MLA, footnotes are used for extra information (see “What to Document” below for an example).

What to Document

Document **all** material that you have **quoted, summarized, or paraphrased** from your sources **and** any **idea, theory, fact, or statistic** that you obtain from a source. If the fact is not common knowledge, you will need to give a reference.

EVEN IF YOU PUT THE MATERIAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS, YOU MUST GIVE A SOURCE!

You do not need to document facts and ideas that are considered shared or common knowledge. “Common knowledge” includes facts that any given person may not have memorized, but that are easily verifiable in any general reference book, such as dates that well-known wars began and ended, when Neil Armstrong first landed on the moon, or when Margaret Atwood wrote *The Robber Bride*.

Once you get into specific details that are not easily verifiable, and especially when you get into ideas, opinions, and theories, you must document. **When in doubt, document;** it is always better to be safe than to be a plagiarist. **Be aware that not everything that you know is “common knowledge.”**

If in the course of your research you find that your ideas are similar to someone else's, you should acknowledge the similarity, either within your essay or in a footnote, depending on what you want to do with the information or source. If the person's idea is integral to your argument or to how you will build your argument, you must cite this idea in your essay. If, however, you simply wish to acknowledge that someone else has thought of this idea, you can reference it in a footnote or endnote.

E.g. Equally, though, we must not forget, as Gretchen Mieszkowski so clearly explains in her 1971 study, that the Criseyde figure was a negative type of feminine faithlessness both before and after Chaucer's contribution to the legend. [refers to the whole book, so a page reference not necessary, but you should include Mieszkowski in your "Works Cited and Consulted"]

E.g. Familiar with Boccaccio's *Criseida*, who is herself a product of a literary tradition that can be traced through Benoit de St-Maure's 1160 *Roman de Troie* and Guido delle Colonne's 1287 Latin prose redaction of Benoit,¹ Chaucer's audience would instantly have associated the name of Criseyde with that of an unquestionably faithless woman. [uses a footnote below to give more detail.]

¹ See Mieszkowski (1971) for an excellent overview of the Criseyde story in medieval Europe.

[The essay text does not need a page reference because it does not refer to anything specific, but in the footnote you give your reader somewhere to go for further information if he/she is interested. Include the source in your "Works Cited and Consulted."]

Using Sources Properly

a) Plagiarism

Plagiarism is taking another person's words (written or spoken), ideas, theories, facts (not common knowledge), statistics, **sentence structure**, artwork, reproductions of text/artwork, etc., and representing them as your own.

Guidelines to avoid plagiarism:

1. Take notes carefully using the documentation style that you will use in your paper. Make sure that you have correct and complete bibliographical information for each source as you take notes. Take notes for every source you consult, even if you don't expect to use the source directly; otherwise, those ideas and turns of phrase may creep unacknowledged into your own argument.
2. When you borrow another person's words, use quotation marks around those words and include a complete reference.
3. When you paraphrase or summarize another person's ideas -- i.e., use the ideas but put them into different words -- you must give a reference.
4. Paraphrase properly. Do not borrow phrases without putting them in quotation marks. **Just substituting a few words does not constitute acceptable paraphrase, and DEFINITELY does not constitute your own idea.**

Examples of Plagiarism:

Original source:

Over time technology has been instrumental in increasing industrial and agricultural production, improving transportation and communications, advancing human health care and overall improving many aspects of human life. However, much of its success is based on the availability of land, water, energy, and biological resources of the earth. (2)

Pimental, David. "Population Growth and the Environment: Planetary Stewardship." *Electronic Green Journal* 9 (Dec. 1998). June 22, 1999. <http://egj.uidaho.edu/egj09/piment1.html>

Unacceptable uses of this source:

Research has shown that *technology has been instrumental in increasing industrial and agricultural production, improving transportation and communications, advancing human health care and overall improving many aspects of human life. However, much of its success is based on the availability of land, water, energy, and biological resources of the earth.*

- uses original wording without quoting or citing

Research has shown that the advancement of technology **has been the prime factor in increasing industrial and agricultural production, developing transportation and communications, and improving health care and many aspects of human life** (Pimental 2).

- Uses many of the author's words without quotation marks
- Uses the author's sentence structure and just substitutes a few synonyms (e.g. "developing" instead of "improving")

Acceptable uses of this source:

In his article on the effects of population growth on the environment, David Pimental admits that "technology has been instrumental in increasing industrial and agricultural production, improving transportation and communications, advancing human health care and overall improving many aspects of human life" (2). He cautions, however, that technological progress is dependent on natural resources (2).

- Acknowledges the author, quotes the words and phrases being used, and gives a paraphrase of the second part of the argument that still acknowledges the author, but does not use the original wording.

According to David Pimental, technology has greatly improved our standard of living, but he cautions that technological progress depends on natural resources (2).

- Summarizes the important points without using the author's original words
- Credits the source of the ideas.

b) Integrating Quotations

When you use quotation marks, you are indicating that you are citing **exact** words from a source. Quotations must be integrated smoothly into your text in terms of grammar and logic. Quoting does NOT absolve you of the need to write a grammatically correct sentence, nor does it absolve you of the need to make your own point. Introduce quotations and comment on them. Avoid quoting as substitute for your own words; unless the wording is particularly distinctive, it is better to paraphrase or summarize.

NO: Sommer says personal space for people is "like the porcupines in Schopenhauer's fable, people like to be close enough to obtain warmth and comradeship but far enough away to avoid pricking one another" (26). [grammatically incorrect]

YES: Concerning personal space, Sommer says that "like the porcupines in Schopenhauer's fable, people like to be close enough to obtain warmth and comradeship but far enough away to avoid pricking one another" (26).

YES: Romeo calls Juliet "the sun" (2.2.3).

To test if a sentence in which you quote something works, read the entire sentence to yourself as though the quotation marks weren't there. The sentence should make logical and grammatical sense.

c) Some tips for quoting effectively and correctly

Use a variety of techniques to introduce and integrate quotations into your paper. Using colon after colon to introduce quotations makes for dull and mechanical prose.

1. Don't just plunk a quotation into your text without introduction. You should always **introduce** a quotation with a signal phrase or sentence in which you refer to the author or provide some kind of context for the quotation. Make your **own** point, and then use a quotation or reference to illustrate, support, or provide an example for that point. Don't just put the quotation there and expect it to make the point for you.

NO: Although the bald eagle is still listed as an endangered species, its ever-increasing population is very encouraging. "The bald eagle seems to have stabilized its population, at the very least, almost everywhere" (Sheppard 96, qtd. in Hacker 264-65). [the quotation is dropped in without any transition or introduction from the previous sentence]

If the author is an expert in the field, specify his or her occupation in order to indicate his or her authority. You could also briefly summarize the source's idea, and provide the quotation to support or elaborate upon your point. Use verbs in signal phrases to indicate what the source is doing (e.g. maintains, concedes, argues, admits, insists, concludes, adds, suggests):

E.g. Although the bald eagle is still listed as an endangered species, its ever-increasing population is very encouraging. According to ornithologist Jay Sheppard, "The bald eagle seems to have stabilized its population, at the very least, almost everywhere" (Sheppard 96, qtd. in Hacker 264-65).

2. If you can not integrate the quotation into your sentence, introduce it with **independent clause** and a **colon**. Do not put a colon after a verb.

E.g. According to Canadian author Miriam Waddington, Margaret Laurence advocated social change: "her life bore continual witness to the artist's role as citizen, a citizen who urged her community to move in a forward direction" (27).

NOT: Miriam Waddington argues: "her life bore continual witness to the artist's role as citizen" (27).

3. After a verb, use a comma to introduce a quotation.

E.g. Miriam Waddington states, "[Margaret Laurence's] life bore continual witness to the artist's role as citizen" (27).

*NOTE: Square brackets ([]) are used to indicate **editorial intervention**, i.e. to indicate that you as the person copying the quotation have added or changed something.*

4. Integrate the quotation smoothly, without punctuation (e.g. as a subordinate clause).

E.g. Miriam Waddington suggests that Margaret Laurence's "life bore continual witness to the artist's role as citizen" (27).

Quotation format

Short quotations: use quotation marks to enclose direct quotations of four lines or less of prose (three lines or less of poetry).

Long quotations: For more than four typed lines, **do not use quotation marks**. Introduce it with a signal phrase and a colon, and then indent each line of the quotation ten spaces from the left margin (or five spaces each from the left and right margins). You must still give a parenthetical reference, but do not put a period after it.

E.g. Lady Macbeth counsels Macbeth to put on a show of loyalty for the king:

Your face, my thane, is as a book, where men
May read strange matters. To beguile the time,
Look like the time; bear welcome in your eye,
Your hand, your tongue: look like the innocent flower,
But be the serpent under it. (1.5.69-73)

Other points to remember

1. Use **single** quotation marks for quotations within quotations:

ORIGINAL: The whole campus was buzzing. Who had been responsible for releasing eight thousand bees into the library that October night? "It certainly is one honey of a problem!" declared Ms. Arthro, the busy librarian.

QUOTATION: The author has an evident flair for puns: "The whole campus was buzzing. Who had been responsible for releasing eight thousand bees into the library that October night? 'It certainly is one honey of a problem!' declared Ms. Arthro, the busy librarian" (Smith 26).

2. Use quotation marks for **direct discourse/quotations** only.

E.g. The mayor said that he did not intend to vote against the proposal (Perry 30).

NOT: The mayor said that "he did not intend to vote against the proposal." (Perry 30)

3. Use an **ellipsis** mark (a set of 3 dots with spaces in between them) to show that you have omitted material from the middle of a quotation. Be careful that the omission does not distort your source. Surround the ellipsis with square brackets.

E.g. Lady Macbeth counsels Macbeth to put on a show of loyalty for the king: "Your face, my thane, is as a book, where men may read strange matters. [. . .] look like the innocent flower, but be the serpent under it" (1.5.69-73).

4. **Square brackets** indicate editorial intervention in a quotation. You may intervene to provide context, to improve grammar, or to indicate an error in the original (using the Latin "**sic**"). You should keep editorial intervention to a minimum; for instance, if the grammar of a quotation doesn't fit your sentence, you may want to consider setting the quotation after a colon rather than altering it drastically. *Never change a quotation in any way without indicating the change.*

E.g. Lady Macbeth counsels Macbeth to put on a show of loyalty for the king: "Your face, my thane, is as a book, where men may read strange matters. [. . .] look like the innocent flour [sic], but be the serpent under it" (1.5.69-73).

2. WORKS CITED (BIBLIOGRAPHY)

The parenthetical reference in your text refers to an entry in your “Works Cited” list, so you need to make sure that **whatever you put in your parenthetical reference shows up as the FIRST TERM of your bibliographical entry**. Therefore, if you have referred to a shorter work that comes from a book, you need to show the shorter work in your bibliography and show where it comes from. **Remember to put quotation marks for short works and underlining/italicizing for long works**. Leave ONE SPACE between your entries, and indent either the first line or all but the first line of each entry.

E.g. Elfenbein, Andrew. “Byron at the Margins: Emily Brontë and the Fate of Milo.” *Byron and the Victorians*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995. 126-68.

The basic information that you need to have for any text is:

- Author
- Title
- City and date of publication
- Publisher
- Editor (if applicable)
- Page range (for shorter texts in magazines or books) – *NOTE that the page range does NOT refer to the pages you have used, but the pages in which the shorter text appears in the longer work.*
- For online material, date last updated (first) and date you accessed (second)

Here is a list of different types of texts and how to enter them in your bibliography. **Your format must be exact (punctuation, spaces, etc.).**

For more information about MLA style, see Purdue University’s Online Writing Lab at <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>

The following material was excerpted from The Nepean Style Guide at http://www.nepeanhighschool.com/library/style_guide.doc and is based on the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, Sixth Edition (2003).

BOOK -- ONE AUTHOR:

Berton, Pierre. 1967: The Last Good Year. Toronto: Doubleday, 1997.

TWO BOOKS -- SAME AUTHOR:

Austen, Jane. Pride and Prejudice. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998.

---. Emma. New York: Bantam, 1991.

BOOK -- TWO AUTHORS:

Leder, Sharon and Andrea Abbott. The Language of Exclusion: The Poetry of Emily Dickinson and Christina Rossetti. New York: Greenwood Press, 1987.

BOOK -- THREE OR MORE AUTHORS:

Girman, Sander, et al. Hysteria Beyond Freud. Berkley: U of California P, 1993.

BOOK -- NO AUTHOR:

Holy Bible: New International Version. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1984.

BOOK -- EDITOR(S) NO AUTHOR:

If three or more, use the "et al." format given above for authors.

Gagan, David P. and Anthony W. Rasporich, eds. Confederation, 1854-1867. Toronto: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1972.

BOOK – EDITOR(S) AND AUTHOR:

Shakespeare, William. Hamlet. Ed. Edward Hubler. New York: Signet, 1986.

BOOK (MORE THAN ONE VOLUME):

Daiches, David. A Critical History of English Literature. 2 vols. New York: Ronald Press, 1960.

BOOK – CORPORATE AUTHOR:

National Research Council. Beyond Six Billion: Forecasting the World's Population. Washington: Natl. Acad., 2000.

ANTHOLOGY or COMPILATION:

Moses, Daniel David and Terry Goldie, eds. An Anthology of Canadian Native Literature in English. 2nd ed. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998.

ESSAY/STORY/ARTICLE/POEM FROM A BOOK (same author):

Elfenbein, Andrew. "Byron at the Margins: Emily Brontë and the Fate of Milo." Byron and the Victorians. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995. 126-68.

ESSAY/STORY/ARTICLE/POEM FROM A BOOK (different author or book with an editor) – a.k.a. A TEXT IN AN ANTHOLOGY:

Emerson, Ralph Waldo. "The Humblebee." The Mentor Book of Major American Poets. Ed. Oscar Williams and Edwin Honig. New York: Mentor, 1962. 45-46.

INTRODUCTION or FORWARD or AFTERWORD FROM A BOOK:

Stoneman, Patsy. Introduction. Wuthering Heights. By Emily Bronte. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998. vii-xli.

Tolkien, Christopher. Foreword. The War of the Jewels. By J.R.R. Tolkien. Hammersmith, London: Harper Collins. ix-xiv.

TRANSLATION:

Fyodor, Dostoyevsky. The Brothers Karamazov. Trans. David Magarshack. Harmondsworth, England: Penguin, 1964.

BOOK REVIEW:

"The Cooling of an Admiration." Rev. of Pound/Joyce: The Letters of Ezra Pound to James Joyce, ed. Forrest Read. Times Literary Supplement 6 Mar. 1969: 239-40.

Article in an ENCYCLOPEDIA or DICTIONARY (REFERENCE BOOK):

"Gandhi." The New Encyclopedia Britannica: Macropaedia. 15th ed. 2003.

"Justice." The Canadian Oxford Dictionary. 1998.

JOURNAL ARTICLE (PRINT):

Goff, Barbara Munson. "Between Natural Theology and Natural Selection: Breeding the Human Animal in Wuthering Heights." Victorian Studies 27.4 (1984): 477-508.

NEWSPAPER or MAGAZINE ARTICLE (PRINT):

Scofield, Heather. "Manley comments cause stir." Globe and Mail 28 Nov. 2003: B1.

GOVERNMENT PUBLICATION:

Ministry of Education. The Ontario Curriculum Exemplars Grade 9: Canadian and World Studies (Geography). Toronto: Queen's Printer, 2000.

PERSONAL INTERVIEW:

Smith, John. Personal interview. 3 January 2008.

PUBLIC INTERVIEW:

Blackmun, Harry. Interview with Ted Koppel and Nina Totenberg. Nightline. ABC. WABC, New York. 5 Apr. 1994.

LECTURE:

Speaker. Title of lecture, if available. Descriptive label [lecture, reading, address, etc.]. Title of meeting, conference, or sponsoring organization. Location. Date.

Atwood, Margaret. "Silencing the Scream." Address. Boundaries of the Imagination Forum. MLA Convention. Royal York Hotel, Toronto. 29 Dec. 1993.

Johnstone, Laura. Class lecture. ENG 3UE. Earl of March Secondary School. January 23, 2008.

CLASS HANDOUT:

If a class handout has the bibliographical information on it, use that information. If not, you must cite where YOU got it – i.e., the class. If you are in university, you would put "Professor" instead of "Teacher."

"The Gothic." Handout. ENG 3UE. Teacher L. Johnstone. Earl of March Secondary School. January 23, 2008.

ELECTRONIC SOURCES

WEBSITE (SUBTITLE BUT NO AUTHOR):

If there is an author, begin with the author; if not, begin with the title. Remember to use the FIRST ELEMENT of the entry as your in-text citation in your parenthetical reference.

Author. Title of webpage. Title of larger site. Date last updated. Date you accessed it. URL.

“Canada and the Vietnam War.” CBC Radio. 2 Dec. 2003. 10 Sept. 2005.

<http://radio.cbc.ca/programs/asithappens/vietnam/>.

ARTICLE FROM A DATABASE (ONLINE):

Treat it like a print article, and then add the necessary “online” information.

Charles-Philippe, David and Stephanie Roussel. “‘Middle Power Blues’: Canadian Policy and International Security after the Cold War.” American Review of Canadian Studies 82.2 (1998): 131-56. Gale Group. Canadian Periodical Index. ANA109540145. 2 Dec. 2003. http://infotrac.galegroup.com/itweb/cool_nepean.

ENCYCLOPEDIA (ONLINE):

Levant, Victor. “Canada and the Vietnam War.” The Canadian and World Encyclopedia. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1998. 2 Dec. 2003.

www.geocities.com/Athens/Rhodes/1588/.