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**E.H. Butler Library**

# *MLA Style*

Modern Language Association  
Documentation Style

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Gibaldi, Joseph. **MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers**. 6th ed. New York: MLA, 2003.

**E. H. Butler Library call number: Ref LB 2369. G53 2003**

The *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* is a guide for writing research papers using the format and standards of the Modern Language Association. For complete details about MLA style and format, consult the actual publication, available in the Reference Room at E. H. Butler Library. (Call number Ref LB 2369.G53 2003)

The *MLA Handbook* provides excellent information about conducting research, the mechanics of writing, compiling bibliographies, and evaluating sources. For writers of theses, scholarly articles, reviews, or manuscripts for publication, see the *MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing*, E. H. Butler Library Call Number Ref PN147. G444 1998.

## **Research Paper Format**

**Printer** Use a high-quality printer

**Paper** Use white, 8 ½ by 11-inch paper

**Margins** Use 1” margins on all four sides

**Indenting** Indent five spaces, or one-half inch, from the left margin for the first word of a paragraph; indent ten spaces, or one inch, from the left margin for set-off quotations.

**Double-space the entire paper, including the list of Works Cited.  
No title page is used with the research paper, unless required by your professor.**

### **First Page of a Research Paper**

Begin the first page with your name typed one inch from the top of the page, flush with the left margin. Double-space between each of the following separate lines, flush with the left margin: professor's name, course number/section, and date. Follow your professor's instructions regarding the numbering of the first page. Some professors request that no number appear on the first page.

Double-space after the date entry and center the title of the paper. Do not underline or place your title in quotation marks. Refer to the rules of capitalization found in the *MLA Handbook*, 6<sup>th</sup> edition, Section 3.6.1 for proper usage of underlined titles or titles in quotations within the title of your research paper. Do not type the title in all capital letters or place a period at the end of the title. Double-space after the title, indent five spaces, and begin typing the text of your paper. (See *MLA Handbook*, 6<sup>th</sup> edition, page 320 for a sample first page in MLA style.)

### Examples

The Castles of Europe

Ghosts and Mystery: Irving's A Prayer for Owen Meany

Robert Lowell's "Skunk Hour"

### **Numbering Pages**

Place page numbers in the upper right-hand corner one-half inch from the top of the paper, flush with the right margin. Type your last name, followed by a space and the page number. Do not add the word "page," the letter "p," or any other symbol. Double-space after the page number and type the first line of text one-inch from the top of the paper.

### **Citations in Text**

The parenthetical documentation found within the text of a research paper should include the author's name and the page number(s) where the information was found. This style was developed to maintain the flow of text for readability, while providing the minimum necessary information for the identification of source material. Readers refer to the Works Cited list to find the bibliographic information listed under cited authors' names.

Unlike the APA and ASA styles, MLA style does not include publication dates within parenthetical documentation.

Examples: Single-spaced to conserve paper

**One author's name in reference**

This research has been validated within the past decade (Wallace 52-57).

**One author's name in text**

Wallace states that this research has been validated within the past decade (52-57).

**Two authors' names in reference**

Much argument has surrounded the presentation of this theory (Rich and Stone 304).

**Two authors' names in text**

Rich and Stone express dismay about the controversy surrounding the theory (304).

**Three or more authors' names in reference**

Professionals from the fields of business and education addressed questions about Japan's national identity (Carlisle et al. 42-45).

**Three or more authors' names in text**

Carlisle, Sharma, and Kaiser discussed questions about Japan's national identity (42-45).

**Electronic Source references without page numbers**

Because most Web documents lack page numbers, you cannot include them in parenthetical references. If paragraph numbers are included, use them in parenthetical documentation, as in the example below:

Telementoring through the Internet has removed physical boundaries of learning and furthered the evolution of distance education (Rice 9).

**Direct quotations**

Whether you quote an author directly or paraphrase an author's ideas, you must document the source.

**Shorter quotes**

If a quotation (prose) runs no more than four lines, put it in quotation marks and include it within the text. You may use the quotation at the beginning, in the middle, or at the end of a sentence. You may divide the quotation with your own words. The period follows the page number, placed in parentheses.

Examples: Single-spaced to conserve paper

“The sternest test of press freedom during the nineteenth century,” wrote Wagman, “came over the issue of slavery with the rise of the abolitionist press” (46).

Dorothea Brooke responds to her sister, “What a wonderful little almanac you are, Celia!” (7).

**Longer quotes**

If your quotation is longer than four lines, set it off by starting a new line and indenting ten spaces from the left margin. Double-space and do not add quotation marks. If you quote a single paragraph or part of one, you do not indent the first line more than the rest. A colon generally precedes the quoted text. Place the author’s name and page numbers in parentheses following the punctuation of the final quoted sentence.

Example: Single-spaced to conserve paper

According to Wagman, the press continues to assert its power to bring news to the people, but events challenge the fine line between personal privacy and freedom of the press:

If libel is the greatest limiter of press freedom, it is far from the only one. Freedom of the press often collides with other constitutional or legal guarantees. The Constitution says that an individual has a right to his privacy, but that privacy often stands in the way of the media reporting a story of importance and interest. (171)

**The Works Cited List**

The Works Cited list is an alphabetically arranged list (by author name) that provides bibliographic information about sources cited in your paper. It is placed at the end of your research paper. Begin the Works Cited list on a new page, continuing the page number sequence of your paper. (See *MLA Handbook*, 6<sup>th</sup> edition, page 321 for a sample first page of a Works Cited list.) **Underline book and periodical titles in Works Cited entries.**

Begin the list by centering the title Works Cited an inch from the top of the page. Each entry starts flush left, with subsequent lines indented five spaces. **The entire list is double-spaced, both between and within entries.**

**Examples in this handout are single-spaced to conserve paper**

Please refer to the *MLA Handbook*, 6<sup>th</sup> edition for other types of materials not represented in this handout.

## **Books**

### **Books - One Author**

Angelou, Maya. Wouldn't Take Nothing for My Journey Now. New York: Random, 1993.

### **Two or more books by the same author**

Use three hyphens followed by a period and the title. The hyphens signify exactly the same names as given in the preceding entry. Titles are arranged alphabetically under the author's name.

Updike, John. A Month of Sundays. New York: Knopf, 1975.

---. Rabbit Redux. New York: Knopf, 1971.

### **Books - Two Authors**

Wesley, Michael, and Allen Gyngell. Making Australian Foreign Policy. New York: Cambridge, 2003.

### **Books - No Author**

**List a book with no author alphabetically by title (ignoring any initial A, An, or The)**

Primary Colors: A Novel of Politics. New York: Random, 1996.

### **Reference Book Article**

Faxon, Alicia Craig. "Metamorphosis." Encyclopedia of Comparative Iconography. Ed. Helene E. Roberts. 2 vols. Chicago: Fitzroy, 1998.

### **Work from an Anthology**

Akira, Abe. "Peaches." Trans. Jay Rubin. Contemporary Japanese Literature.

Ed. Howard Hibbett. New York: Knopf, 1977. 345-348.

*Note: Page numbers follow the period after the publication date. They refer to the entire story, poem, or piece-not just the section you used.*

**Tip⇒ Use abbreviations for publishers' names - See *MLA Handbook* Section 7.5**

Examples: single-spaced to conserve paper

**Edited Anthology**

Safran, Linda, ed. Heaven on Earth: Art and the Church in Byzantium. University Park: Penn State UP, 1998.

**Book with author and editor**

Cather, Willa. Writings from Willa Cather's Campus Years. Ed. James R. Shively. Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1950.

Twain, Mark. Roughing It. Ed. Harriet E. Smith and Edgar M. Branch. Berkeley: U of California P, 1993.

**Citing Indirect Sources**

Whenever possible, use the original source for quoted material. Cite secondhand sources in parenthetical documentation using the qtd. in (quoted in) abbreviation.

Example:

The purge receded in 1939, though an unrepentant Stalin claimed it was “unavoidable and its results were, on the whole, beneficial” (qtd. in Longworth 11: 1429).

The corresponding Works Cited entry would look like this:

Longworth, Phillip. “Purges and Trials.” 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Ed. A.J.P. Taylor et al. 20 vols. Milwaukee: Purnell, 1979.

**Journal, magazine, and newspaper articles**

See the *MLA Handbook*, 6<sup>th</sup> edition, Section 5.7 for information on citing articles from periodicals. Refer to the *Handbook* for descriptions of types of periodicals and more examples.

**Article from a scholarly journal that pages each issue separately**

Mikhlin, A.S. and L.V. Iakovleva. “Some Results of the 1999 Special Census of Convicts.” Russian Politics & Law 41.3 (2003): 51-68.

*Note: In the example above, the volume number is 41 and the issue number is 3. A period is used to separate the volume and issue numbers. The page numbers are 51-68.*

**Article from a scholarly journal with continuous pagination**

Riggio, Heidi R. and Ronald E. Riggio. “Emotional Expressiveness, Extraversion, and Neuroticism: A Meta-Analysis.” Journal of Nonverbal Behavior 26 (2002): 195-218.

Examples: single-spaced to conserve paper

**Article from a weekly or biweekly magazine**

Doyle, Laura. "Being the Breadwinner Almost Wrecked My Marriage." Newsweek 12 May 2003: 53-55.

*Note: Do not give volume and issue numbers for weekly or biweekly magazines. Abbreviate months except for May, June, and July. The 12 in this example refers to the date, May 12.*

**Article from a monthly or bimonthly magazine**

Curgenven, Justine. "Going Solo: One Woman's Expedition to Iceland's West Fjords." Sea Kayaker June 2003: 18-31.

*Note: Do not give volume and issue numbers for monthly or bimonthly magazines.*

**Article from a daily newspaper**

Linstedt, Sharon. "Restoration Aid Set, State Money Would Refurbish Historic Richardson Complex." Buffalo News 8 Mar. 2003, final ed.: A1+.

Greenhouse, Linda. "Opponents Lose Challenge to Government's Broader Use of Wiretaps to Fight Terrorism." New York Times 25 Mar. 2003, late ed.: A12+.

**Citing Electronic Resources**

Citations for electronic resources, like those for print resources, should provide sufficient information to allow a reader to locate the source material. Aim for comprehensiveness in citing electronic resources. Give all relevant publication information in a consistent manner. Refer to the *MLA Handbook*, 6<sup>th</sup> edition, Section 5.9 (page 207) for detailed information about citing electronic publications.

**Tip ⇨ Whenever possible, try to give the URL of the exact document you consulted. If the URL is too long or complicated, give the URL of the site's search page. See section 5.9 of the *MLA Handbook* (page 211) for more details.**

Examples: single-spaced to conserve paper

**Article from an Online Subscription Service –format and examples**

*Fulltext services such as LEXIS-NEXIS, Expanded Academic, FirstSearch, EbscoHost*

Author. "Title of Article." Journal Title. Date of Publication: page numbers if given.  
Name of the database used. Name of the service. Name of the subscribing library.  
Date of access < URL of service's homepage>.

Meehl, Gerald A. "Solar and Greenhouse Gas Forcing Climate Response."  
Journal of Climate. Feb. 2003: 426-45. Academic Search Elite,  
EBSCO. E. H. Butler Lib., Buffalo State Coll. 16 May 2003  
<<http://www.epnet.com/>>

**Online Scholarly Project – format and example**

Title of the project or database. Name of editor if given. Electronic publication  
information, including date or latest update, if available, and name of sponsoring  
institution or organization. Date of access <network address called a URL>.

Pompeii Forum Project. June 2003. Univ. of Virginia and National Endowment  
for the Humanities. 14 May 2003 <<http://www.iath.virginia.edu/pompeii/>>

**Online Book- format and example**

Author. "Chapter." Book title. Date of electronic publication or latest update,  
if given. Name of sponsoring organization or agency. Access date <URL>.

Dreiser, Theodore. "The Spendings of Fancy- Facts Answer with Sneers."  
Sister Carrie. Univ. of Virginia Hypertexts. 12 Aug. 1999  
< <http://www.xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/DREISER/ch04.html>>.

**Article in an Online Periodical- format and example**

*Note: accessed directly from a link to an online publication, not through a service such  
as InfoTrac, LEXIS-NEXIS.*

Author. "Article title." Periodical/magazine title. Publication date.  
Date of access <URL>.

Yin, Sandra. "This is Rec 'n Roll." American Demographics Magazine.  
June 2003. 24 June 2003 <<http://www.demographics.com/publications/toc.htm>>.

**Examples in this handout are single-spaced to conserve paper**

**E-mail communication-format and example**

Name of sender. "Title of message given in subject line." Description of the message that includes the recipient. Date of message.

Wheatley, Amy P. "Re: Test reviews online." E-mail communication to the author. 10 Jan. 2003.

**Discussion List posting-format and example**

Author's name. "Title of document as given in subject line." Online posting. Date. Name of discussion group. Date of access <online address of list or e-mail address of list supervisor>.

Moore, Jeffrey. "Genealogical resources for novices." Online posting. 18 June 2002. Family Trees. 9 Aug. 2002 <LISTSERV@familytrees.net/Get990607>.

**Personal Web Page- example**

Ebert, Gregory W. Home page. 28 Mar. 2003. 15 June 2003 <<http://www.buffalostate.edu/depts/chemistry/people/%7Eebert.htm/>>

**Entire Internet site-example**

Thomas: Legislative Information on the Internet. 19 June 2003. Lib. Of Congress, Washington. 18 May 2003 <<http://thomas.loc.gov/>>

**Tip** ⇨ See the following Web sites for more information:

[www.mla.org](http://www.mla.org)

[www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/DocMLAWorksCited.html](http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/DocMLAWorksCited.html)

**Footnotes and Endnotes**

Footnotes (placed at the bottom of the page) or endnotes (placed on a separate notes page at the end of your paper) may be required for use in the fields of art, music, theater, dance, religion, theology and history. Some professors prefer notes for source documentation rather than a traditional works cited list. **Use endnotes unless specifically instructed to use footnotes.**

**Indentation and spacing**

Rather than hanging indentation characteristic of works cited entries, notes start with the corresponding number placed above (superscript) the text line, indented five (5) spaces (½ inch) from the left margin, with subsequent lines flush to the left margin.

**Examples in this handout are single-spaced to conserve paper**

Notice that periods are not used after author names or titles in notes entries. Double-space between and within endnotes. Double-space between footnotes, if more than one appears on the page, but single-space within footnotes.

**Basic note format**

<sup>x</sup>Author's name in normal order, the title (publication information in parentheses) page reference.

Examples of note format

**Book – one author**

<sup>1</sup>Thomas L. Friedman, The Lexus and the Olive Tree: Understanding Globalization (New York: Anchor, 2000) 15-28.

**Book-two authors**

<sup>2</sup>Patrick J. Michaels and Robert C. Balling, Jr., The Satanic Gases: Clearing the Air About Global Warming ( Washington, D.C.: Cato Institute 2000) 200-17.

**Article from scholarly journal**

<sup>3</sup>John Bell, "Puppets and Performing Objects in the Twentieth Century," Performing Arts Journal 19.2 (1997): 29-47.

**Refer to the *MLA Handbook*, 6<sup>th</sup> edition, Appendix B.1 – B.1.9 for a detailed explanation of the use and format of endnotes and footnotes.**