

MLA Style

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Introduction

The Modern Language Association (MLA) publishes a style manual used primarily by scholars in literature and the humanities. The most recent edition is *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, 5th Edition*, by Joseph Gibaldi, Modern Language Association of America, 1998.

For more complete information on MLA documentation, please consult this manual. Copies are available at the Writing Center, in the Rensselaer Library, and for purchase in the Rensselaer Bookstore.

MLA style requires that sources be acknowledged in two locations in your document:

- **“Works Cited” page**
- **In-Text Citations**

The Works Cited Page

All sources you use must be listed alphabetically at the end of your document, beginning with a page entitled *Works Cited*, which is centered on the page at the top of the document. The listing begins two lines down from this title. The citations are not numbered. Each citation begins flush to the left-hand margin, with the second and following lines of each entry indented 1/2 inch. The listing is double spaced, both within and between each citation:

Works Cited

Author's last name, first name and middle name or initial (if any). Book Title
(underlined or italicized). City of publication: Publishers, Date of publication.

Next author's last name, first name and middle name or initial (if any). Book Title
(underlined or italicized). City of publication: Publishers, Date of publication.

Materials from different kinds of sources, such as journal articles, books and the Internet, are cited in slightly different ways. Several examples follow, but a more complete listing of variations is available in *The MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 5th ed. Several online resources are also available; consult the Writing Center website at <http://www.rpi.edu/web/writingcenter>. In addition, consultations are available in the Writing Center in 4508 Sage and through AOL Instant Messenger [screen name: instantwriter].

Citing a Book

Format:

Author's last name, first name and middle name or initial (if any). Book Title (underlined or italicized). City of publication: Publishers, Date of publication.

Example:

Gates, Henry Louis, Jr. *Loose Canons: Notes on the Culture Wars*. London: Oxford UP, 1992.

Citing a Book with more than one author

Format:

First author's last name, first name and middle name or initial (if any) and second author's first, middle, and last name. Book Title (underlined or italicized). City of publication: Publishers, Date of publication.

Example:

Gilbert, Sandra M. and Susan Gubar. *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the*

Nineteenth-Century Imagination. New Haven: Yale UP, 1979.

Citing a Journal Article

Format:

Author's last name, first name and middle name or initial (if any). "Title of the article in quotation marks." Name of the Journal (underlined or italicized), Volume number, (Year): page numbers for the entire article.

Example:

Williams, Joan G. "Accelerated Fault Simulation: A Deductive Approach." *Circuits*

Quarterly, 9,

(1992): 212-220.

Citing a Website

Format:

Author's last name, first name and middle name or initial (if any). Descriptor or "Title of article in quotations marks." Internet. (Date the article was posted, if given.) Available: Internet address. Date you accessed the material.

Example:

Honeycutt, Lee. "Communication and Design Course Web Site." Internet. (1997)

Available:

<http://dcr.rpi.edu/commdesign/class1.html>. Jan. 1998.

Citing a Chapter

Format:

Author's last name, first name and middle name or initial (if any). "Title of the chapter in quotation marks." In Book Title (underlined or italicized). First, middle and last name of the editor, Ed. City of publication: Publishers, Date of publication, pages on which the chapter appears.

Example:

Fraser, Kathleen. "The Tradition of Marginality." In *Where We Stand: Women Poets on Literary*

Tradition. Sharon Bryan, Ed. New York: W.W. Norton, 1993, 52-65.

Citing a Government Document

Format:

Government Name. Agency. Publication Title (in italics). Edition and/or identifying number. City of publication: Publisher, date.

Example:

United States. Department of Energy. *The Energy Situation in the Next Decade*. Technical Publication
11346-53. Washington: GPO, 1998.

In-text Citations

Any material in your document which derives from other sources, whether by direct quotation, paraphrase, or inspiration, must be attributed immediately. That is, the sources must be identified through information which is keyed to the references listed in Works Cited. This information must be provided either directly or parenthetically, or in some combination of **direct reference** and **parenthetical reference**.

Direct Reference

If it can be smoothly done, sources may be cited directly in your text.

Examples:

In a stunning scene on page 27, Bronte reveals the source of Heathcliff's inner torment: "in an uncontrollable passion of tears [,] 'Come in! come in!' he sobbed. 'Cathy do come.' "

According to Henry Louis Gates, "[r]ace is the ultimate trope of difference" (49).

Any identifying information not given directly in the text, **must be cited** parenthetically (within parentheses).

Parenthetical Citation

A parenthetical citation must include (if not already given directly in the text)

- the first word of the listing of the source on the Works Cited page (most usually the author's last name) and,
- in the case of paraphrase or quotation, the number of the page on which the material originally appeared.

Example:

To at least one American scholar, "[r]ace is the ultimate trope of difference" (Gates 49).

****No punctuation separates the naming of the source and the page number.**

The title of the work cited need not be named unless you are using two different works by the same author, in which case you would then, in addition to the author, indicate the first word of the title of the specific reference you are making:

Example:

(Gates, Loose 49).

A page number need not be used if you have used an idea more generally contained within the source material, but which you have neither quoted nor paraphrased.

Example:

The word “race” has been used to reduce people to socially constructed categories (Gates).

****A period follows the parenthesis unless you are using a block quotation.**

Block Quotation

If the quotation you are using consists of more than three lines of text, you need to use a block quotation. To accomplish this, indent the lines of quoted text from both the right and left margins.

Example:

Yet consciousness is also an end in itself. Long traditions of working-class self-activity have properly focused on concrete material gains or desired structures of social organization, but only as instruments for enduring alienation and for promoting democracy and justice. (Lipsitz 128)

If your document is double spaced, the block quotation is double spaced as well.

****In a block quotation, the period marking the end of the quotation *precedes* the parenthesis.**