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MLA Citation Style

About This Guide

This guide explains the general format of in-text (parenthetical) and works cited citations in the humanities documentation system of the Modern Language Association (MLA). We will also cover a few helpful web resources for MLA style.

In-Text (Parenthetical) Citation Basics

When you paraphrase or directly quote another author's work in your paper, MLA format requires the use of in-text citations, also called parenthetical citations. These citations include the author's last name and a page reference, e.g. (Smith 131-35). The author's name may appear either in the sentence itself or in parentheses following the quotation or paraphrase, but the page number(s) should always appear in the parentheses, not in the text of your sentence. For example:

Wordsworth stated that Romantic poetry was marked by a "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" (263).

Romantic poetry is characterized by the "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" (Wordsworth 263).

Wordsworth extensively explored the role of emotion in the creative process (263).

Works Cited List Basics

Every source you cite in your paper must be included in your works cited list. Begin your works cited list on a separate page at the end of your paper. Label the page "Works Cited" centered at the top of the page. All citations must be in the hanging indent format, with the first line flush to the left margin and all other lines indented.

Entries are listed alphabetically by the author's last name (or, for entire edited collections, editor names). Author names are written last name first; middle names or middle initials follow the first name (e.g. Sedaris, David). Use italics (instead of underlining) for titles of larger works (books, magazines) and quotation marks for titles of shorter works (poems, articles).

For every entry, you must determine the Medium of Publication. Most entries will likely be listed as Print or Web sources, but other possibilities may include Film, CD-ROM, or DVD. You are not required to provide URLs for web entries, but if your instructor insists on them, include them in angle brackets (<>) after the entry and end with a period. If you're citing an article or a publication that was originally issued in print form but that you retrieved from an online database, you should type the online database name in italics.

Following are examples of the basic citation formats for books, for articles in scholarly journals, and for websites. To see more examples of citations for different types of resources, you can consult the MLA style manual or one of the web resources listed in this guide.

This guide is one in a series of Reference and Instruction Guides created by librarians at the Leatherby Libraries. View the series online at www.chapman.edu/library/reference/guides

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Books

Lastname, Firstname. *Title of Book*. Place of Publication: Publisher, Year of Publication. Medium of Publication.

Sedaris, David. *Me Talk Pretty One Day*. Boston: Little Brown & Co., 2000. Print.

Scholarly Journal Articles

Author(s). "Title of Article." *Title of Journal* Volume.Issue (Year): pages. Medium of publication.

Knox, Edward. "I See France: Priorities in Nonfiction." *Twentieth Century Literature* 49.1 (2003): 12-31. Print.

Websites

Editor, author, or compiler name (if available). *Name of Site*. Version number. Name of institution/organization affiliated with the site (sponsor or publisher), date of resource creation (if available). Medium of publication. Date of access.

Felluga, Dino. *Guide to Literary and Critical Theory*. Purdue U, 28 Nov. 2003. Web. 4 Nov. 2010.

Web Resources for MLA Style

Purdue OWL

The Purdue Online Writing lab (<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>) provides a comprehensive formatting and style guide for MLA format, including examples of citations for books, articles, electronic resources and other non-print sources.

Diana Hacker

To view a student paper written in MLA style, go to the Citation/Style Guides page on the Leatherby Libraries website (<http://www1.chapman.edu/library/reference/styles.html>) and click "Diana Hacker" under the "General Style Guide Sites." Click the sample paper icon to the right of "Humanities."

Print Resources for MLA Style

In addition to these web resources, the library has print editions of the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, 7th Edition* available in the Reference Section (LB2369.G53 2009, in-library use only). The library also has the *MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing* (PN147.G444 2008, Reference Section), which includes helpful information for publishing scholars and graduate students.

Additional Research Help

For additional help, please see the Reference Desk on the first floor of the Library. You may also contact the Reference Desk via e-mail at libweb@chapman.edu or phone at (714) 532-7714.

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