

Formatting an MLA Paper

Papers in MLA format should follow these basic guidelines:

- All parts of the paper should be double spaced, including headings and the works cited page.
- Each page should have a header one half inch from the top of the page with the author's last name and the page number.
- Except for the header, all parts of the paper should have a one-inch margin on all sides of the paper.

Example: Top of the first page of a report

Tyson 1

Mike Tyson

Professor King

English 2010

2 November 2009

A Taste for Ears

Understandably, our society is not a cannibalistic one. While some argue that human flesh has a zesty flavor, others claim that the act of eating one's own kind is immoral.

Notes about the First Page

- Page numbers should begin on the first page of the paper in the page header.
- MLA format does not require a separate title page. Instead, the author's name, professor's name, course number, and date should be typed in the top left corner and double spaced.
- The title of the paper should be centered and typed two spaces below the date.
- Some teachers may have their own guidelines for formatting a paper. It is always best to follow the teacher's directions.

Citing Sources in a Paper

Each time a source is quoted directly or paraphrased in a paper, it needs to be accurately cited in parentheses and then listed on the works cited page. Follow these basic guidelines when citing sources:

- Most in-text citations consist of the author's last name and the page number where the information was found.
- If the author's name is mentioned in the sentence, only include the page number in the citation.
- Always place quotation marks around direct quotes.
- Paraphrasing needs citation but not quotation marks.
- Citations go after quotation marks, but the period goes after the citation: "Put the period after the citation" (Smith 389).

Common Citations in the Text of a Paper

One Author:

(Jackson 1).

Two Authors:

(Jackson and Hess 239).

More Than Three Authors:

(Jackson et al. 23).

No Author:

(Use the first two or three words from title).

"Black hair is better" ("Black Hair" 37).

More Than One Work by the Same Author:

(Add title to citation).

(Bartholomae, "Inventing the University" 635).

Indirect Sources:

(qtd. in Neuhaus 65).

Block Quotes:

When a quote runs four or more lines, use the block quote format. Block quotes usually begin by introducing the source. Double space the quote and start it on a new line, usually after a colon:

Indent the entire quote one inch or two tab spaces as seen here. Do not use quotation marks. Place the citation after the period. (Westing 88)

If the author's name is in the sentence introducing the quote, do not repeat the name in the parentheses.

The Works Cited Page

Each source that is quoted or paraphrased in a paper should be listed on the works cited page. Entries should be in alphabetical order, double spaced, and formatted with a hanging indent.

Example: Top of a works cited page

Tyson 15

Works Cited

Bounder, Marcus. "Typhoon." Boston:

Houghton, 2002. Print.

Common Entries on a Works Cited Page

Book with One Author:

Jackson, Molly. *Good Timing*. Boston: Penguin, 2000. Print.

Book with Two or Three Authors:

Jackson, Molly, and Janet Hess. *Going Crazy*. New York: Doubleday, 1999. Print.

(In sources with more than three authors, either list each author's name or put **et al.** after the first author's name.)

Book with an Editor or Translator:

Gomi, Taro. *Everyone Poops: My Body Science*. Trans. Amanda Mayer. La Jolla, CA: Kane/Miller, 1997. Print.

Work in an Anthology:

Dreiser, Theodore. "Typhoon." *The Heath Anthology of American Literature*. Ed. Paul Lauter. 4th ed. 2 vols. Boston: Houghton, 2002. Print.

Journal Article:

Hagi, George. "Famous Romanian Footballers." *The Wheston Review* 10.2 (1994): 12-17. Print.

Newspaper Article:

Wilson, Tim. "Nitwit Hunt." *The Salt Lake Tribune* 24 Jan. 1982: B1+. Print.

Magazine Article:

Connor, Tom. "Writing in Style." *Writer's Digest*. 12 Aug. 2005: 25-29. Print.

Personal Interview:

Lincoln, Abraham. Personal Interview. 12 Feb. 2003.

Using Online Sources

There are a variety of useful resources available online. Before using online sources, confirming that the information is reputable and reliable is important. Because of the wide variety of material available electronically and online, citing and referencing can often be challenging and a little confusing. The following are examples of some possible references. It is important to note, however, that each element of a reference is not always available for each source.

If the internet site or electronic source does not have all the necessary information, insert place markers: **n. pag.** for “no page,” **n.p.** for “no publisher,” or **n.d.** for “no date.”

An Article in an Online Periodical:

If the article you found online was also printed, first cite it like a printed article and then add information about the electronic version. The reference should include the following:

- Author’s name
- “The Title”
- Information about print publication
- Date of access

White, Sean. “Typing Fast.” *Computer World* 9 (2000): 2-7. Web. 1 May 2010.

An Article in a Newspaper Online:

When citing a newspaper article that was found online, first cite the print information and then cite the electronic information. If page numbers are not available, use n. pag. (no page).

Stone, Charles. “Volcano Erupts.” *The Indiana Times*. 2 Nov. 2010. n. pag. Web. 10 Dec. 2010.

An Entire Internet Site:

Look for the following information about internet sites. If you cannot find everything, cite what is available and insert place markers (listed above) for unavailable information.

- Title of the site (*italicized*)
- Name of the publisher or sponsor (if given)
 - If not given, use n.p.
- Medium (Web)

- Date of access

Foxnews.com. Fox News Network. Web. 3 May 2009.

An Online Subscription Source:

For online subscriptions, such as databases, begin with the standard information about print publication: author’s name, title, name of magazine/newspaper, and date. Then list electronic publication information.

- Name of the database
- Name of the service
- Date of access

Ford, Kate. “Ceilings.” *Money* 2005: 66-67. *Academic Search Premier*. 2 Nov. 2005.

An Online Book:

First list the information about the printed version (if given): author’s name, title, editor, and publication information. Then list electronic publication information.

- Title of internet site (*italicized*)
- Medium (Web)
- Date of access (ex: 23 Oct. 2010)

Austen, Jane. *Pride and Prejudice*. Ed. Henry Churchyard. Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1903. *Jane Austen Information Page*. Web. 6 Sept. 2002.

Corporate Authors

- When citing corporate authors omit any initial article; i.e., *a*, *an*, or *the*.
- Cite the book by the corporate author even if the corporate author is also the publisher.

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

Updated 2010 by **Kyle Rollins**
Created by Ammon Nelson & Tyler Whitby
Weber State University Writing Center
Information compiled from the
MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers. 7th Ed.

MLA DOCUMENTATION

Quick Reference Guide

produced by the

Writing Center

at

**WEBER STATE
UNIVERSITY**

Contact Information

EH 210/212
801-626-6463
weber.edu/writingcenter
(click on the “handouts” link)