Quick Tips for MLA Citing
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***This guide is in no way comprehensive and covers only commonly used reference materials. Please see the Purdue Online Writing Lab for a more complete style guide.***
General Formatting Guidelines

Supplies/Lettering
Essays should be typed on 8 ½" x 11" white paper. Unless the instructor requires a specific font, choose one that is standard and easy to read (e.g., Times New Roman, Arial, Calibri, etc.).

Title/Personal ID to appear on first page
While MLA does not require a title page, some instructors do. If the instructor requires a title page, check with him/her about formatting guidelines. For all other essays, in the top left hand corner of the first page, place your name, instructor’s name, the title of the course, and the date the assignment is due. Place this information on separate, double-spaced lines.

Pagination/Continuous Header
In the header, in the upper right hand of the paper, insert a page number preceded by your last name, one-half inch under the top edge of the paper. Use Arabic number (e.g., 1, 2, 3, etc.). Inserting a number rather than typing it in manually will create continuous pagination for your document. This header should begin on page one.

Margins/Spacing/Indenting
Margins should be 1” on all sides. Paragraphs should be left-aligned and tabbed over one space (one-half inch from the left margin). The essay should be double-spaced throughout; be careful not to add extra space above or below paragraphs.

Capitalization/Italics/Quotations
In your title, capitalize all words except articles (a, an, the), prepositions (to, from, between, etc.), coordinating conjunctions (and, but, or, etc.), and the “to” in infinitives—unless they are the first or last word in the title/subtitle. This includes titles that appear in all lower case or upper case on the source. Italicize the titles of larger works including books, films, periodicals, etc. Use quotation marks for titles of short works including short stories, poems, article titles, etc.

Long Quotations
A long quote, sometimes referred to as a block quote, is more than four lines of typed text in prose or three lines of verse. The long quote is set off from the text by beginning a new paragraph and indenting the entire quotation one inch from the left margin. The long quote should be double-spaced, as is standard for the rest of the text. Quotation marks are unnecessary in a long quote, and the ending punctuation mark precedes the citation of the source, unlike traditional direct quotes.

Headings
Headings are not required in MLA formatting; however, if your instructor prefers headings, check with him/her for formatting guidelines.
Works Cited List Formatting

List Format
Works Cited entries should be listed in alphabetical order, beginning with the first letter of the entry. If the source has an author, alphabetize the entry using the first author’s last name. If the source does not have an author, use the first word of the title (unless the title begins with a, an, or the), in which case you will alphabetize the entry beginning with the second word. If your research includes two or more works by the same author, use the author’s name in the first entry that appears on your list; for subsequent entries by that author, use three hyphens followed by a period (see “Kim Edwards” example below). List the entries in alphabetical order by the titles.

Indenting
Use a hanging indent for each entry. In other words, do not indent the first line of an entry, but indent subsequent lines one-half inch. This format allows the reader to scan the works cited list more freely.

URLs
- URLs are no longer required in Works Cited entries; however, some instructors prefer them. Check with your instructor for formatting guidelines.
Works Cited List: A Closer Look

- A student should begin his/her Works Cited list on a separate page at the end of the essay (hit ctrl + enter to insert a page break). The Works Cited page should have one-inch margins and the student’s last name and subsequent page number in the header, as is the format for the entirety of the paper.
- Center the words Works Cited at the top of the page. Do not italicize, boldface, underline, or put Works Cited in quotation marks.
- Double space all citations, just as you have for the entirety of the essay. Eliminate extra spaces between paragraphs.
- For every works cited entry, you must determine the medium of publication. Most entries will likely be listed as Print or Web sources, but other possibilities include Film, CD, or DVD.
- When citing an article retrieved from an online database (originally found in print), you should include the name of the online database in italics.
- Use italics (instead of underlining) for titles of larger works (e.g., books, magazines, newspapers, television shows, movies, etc.) and quotation marks for titles of shorter works (poems, articles, short stories, episodes, etc.)

— Books and Media

Citations for books require three pieces of information regarding the **author**, **title**, and **publication information**.

**A Book by One Author**


**A Book with Two or More Authors**

(If you have four or more authors, list the first author, followed by **et al.** See “Anderson” below)


**A Work in an Anthology**


**A Film or DVD**


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— Articles

**Articles from Print Sources**

Below you will find the basic format for citing journal articles. You do not need to supply the volume and issue number for magazine articles. See the “Crowley” example below.


**Article in Scholarly Journal**


**Article in a Magazine**


**Article in a Newspaper**


**Articles from Library Databases**

Below you will find the basic format for citing articles from a library database.


*Database Name*. Web. Access Date.

**Academic Search Premiere**


**CQ Researcher**


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**LexisNexis Academic**


— **Internet Resources**

Often times, Internet sources do not have authors; if this is the case, omit author information and begin the citation with the title of the article/webpage (not the entire website, unless you are citing the entire website rather than just one article/webpage). Below you will find the basic format for citing Internet resources.

Last Name, First Name. "Article/Webpage Title." *Title of Entire Website*. Publisher/Sponsor of Website, Publication date. Web. Date you accessed the site.

**Internet Source with Author**


**Internet Source without Listed Author**


**Entire Website**


**Online Video**


**Electronic Book (e-book)**


**Blog Entry**


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In-Text Citations: A Closer Look

There are several different ways to incorporate resource information in the text with variances on citations. For example, students may use parenthetical notes or signal phrases which include author and article details. In either case, readers should find similar information.

**Signal Phrase:**

Robert Frost’s poem, “The Road Not Taken,” offers readers insight on choices and consequences (36).

**In-Text:**

“The Road Not Taken” offers readers insight on choices and subsequent consequences (Frost 36).

**Why cite?**

Writers must cite borrowed information because it tells readers where the information originally came from, allowing them the opportunity to examine the original author’s reliability and the ability to read the original source. Writers must always give credit to the original author(s) for their hard work.

**General Format when Integrating Sources**

- First, the source is introduced using a signal phrase which names the author of the original source and perhaps his/her qualifications/attributes.
- The cited information should be followed by a page number in parenthesis (unless there is no page number assigned to the source—most often found in Internet sources), preceding a final punctuation mark (unless citing a long quote—see above information on this).
- At the end of the document, authors must include a Works Cited list, naming each reference source he/she used.

**Direct Quotes, Paraphrasing, and Summarizing**

Authors should limit their use of direct quotations and long quotes, and instead summarize and paraphrase the original source information. However, be sure to cite any and all information borrowed from another source, even if you have put the information in your own words.

**Quick Tips for Citing Sources**

- Dropping a quote without any warning. Introduce your quotes with a signal phrase.
- When the citation ends with a page number, the punctuation should go on the outside of the close parenthesis. When the citation does not have a page number, the punctuation should go inside the close quote. For example:
  - Dr. Sanchez of the Family and Life Association states, “Financial problems and miscommunication are two known causes for divorce” (67).
  - Dr. Sanchez of the Family and Life Association states, “Financial problems and miscommunication are two known causes for divorce.”
    - The first example creates the assumption that this is a print source or from an online journal. The second example may come from the Internet. When the reader examines the Works Cited page, he/she should be able to distinguish between the two.
- A comma is not necessary before the citation, nor is it necessary within the citation.
  - Incorrect: Mr. Smith believes his disease was brought on by poor nutrition and several years of smoking, (Smith, 29).
  - Correct: Mr. Smith believes his disease was brought on by poor nutrition and several years of smoking (Smith 29).
When citing an article without an author or a page number, include an abbreviated version of the article title either in the signal phrase or in the in-text citation, not the title of the website itself.

Incorrect: American Red Cross says, “During platelet donation, a small portion of your blood (about ¼ pint at a time), is drawn from your arm and pass through a sophisticated cell-separating machine.”

Correct: “Platelet Donation,” an article published by the American Red Cross website, states that, “During platelet donation, a small portion of your blood (about ¼ pint at a time), is drawn from your arm and pass through a sophisticated cell-separating machine.”

Correct: “During platelet donation, a small portion of your blood (about ¼ pint at a time), is drawn from your arm and pass through a sophisticated cell-separating machine” (“Platelet Donation”).

--- In-Text Citations

**One Author**

(Smith 29).

**Two Authors**

(Smith and Robertson 36).

**Three Authors**

(Brighton, Smith, and Robertson 54).

**Four or More Authors**

(Brighton et al. 67).

**Organization as Author**

(American Management Assn.)

**No Author**

(“It Feels Good to Give Blood”) or the abbreviated form (“It Feels Good”)*

**Indirect Source** (the author of your source is quoting another source)

(qtd. in Coleman 35).

*Omit a page number if one is not given on the source. Do not use the numbers listed on your printout of the source.

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