

MLA Quick Reference Guide



This handout covers basic principles of MLA format, based on the *MLA Handbook*, 9th edition (2021). Your professor has the right to modify these guidelines; carefully follow your professor's requirements

Research Paper General Format

(style.mla.org)

- Use one-inch margins on all sides
- Use an easily readable font such as Times New Roman 12-pt.
- Double-space everything, including block quotations, references, titles, and headings.
- Place your last name and page number in the header, half an inch from the top aligned on the right margin.
- Do not right justify the text.

First Page

- Research papers do not need a title page
- Type your name, instructor's name, course number, and date on separate lines aligned on the left margin.
- The title of the paper should follow the date and be centered; it should not be italicized, bolded, or in all capital letters.
- Indent the first line of each new paragraph ½ inch.

Goodwin 1
Jayden Goodwin
Professor Lee Tooke
Psych 307
12 January 2017
Academic Writing: An Art
Since the dawn of time, man has had an innate desire to express himself. Throughout the years, language has evolved from a series of grunts and growls to an intricate expression of language layered with emotion and hidden meanings. To adequately express oneself is one of the most critical skills to master in order to excel in the ranks of mankind. Those who fail at this basic form of communication are ignored in today's society and are unable to present themselves as intelligent human beings.

Figure 1: Sample Front Page

In-Text Citations

(MLA Handbook 227-87)

In-text citations should be brief and unobtrusive:

- Place the **author's last name and page number** in parentheses at the end of the sentence *before the period* as close as possible to the material it documents.
- If the **author has already been referenced in the text**, include parenthetical page numbers at the end of the sentence (without the use of p. or pp.).

Example sentences:

Reading is "just half of literacy. The other half is writing" (Baron 194).

According to Naomi Baron, reading is "just half of literacy. The other half is writing" (194).

For two authors, combine both authors with "and" but no comma.

Ex. (Wellek and Warren 310-15).

For three or more authors, use only first author followed by et al.

Ex. (Wellek et al. 247)

If no author is found, but a corporate author is listed, (meaning it was written collectively by an organization), list the corporation.

Ex. (United Nations Development Program 109).

If no author or corporate author is found, use the source title shortened to the first few words and format according to source.

Book example (*The Victorian Age* 5).

Article example ("How to Write MLA" 2014).

If no page number is found, only use existing numbered parts of a paper; e.g. paragraphs, sections, or chapters. They are abbreviated as follows (singular/plural): par./pars., ch./chs., sec./secs.

Ex. (Chan, par. 41).

Works Cited

All sources you cite are listed on a separate Works Cited page placed at the end of your paper.

- Center “Works Cited” (NOT bolded) at the top and the whole page should be double spaced.
- Organize your sources alphabetically in hanging indent format (the first line of each source should be aligned on the left margin and subsequent lines should be indented ½”).

General Format

MLA has shifted emphasis from specific instructions (book, web source, etc.) for reference list entries to a simple template for all types of sources. This template determines the format of reference list entries. Insert all available information and create the entry in hanging indent format.

1 Author. (Last name, First name.)
2 Title of source. (Title of article, website, etc.)
3 Title of container, (Title of journal, website, book, etc.)
4 Other contributors, (Additional editors/translators,)
5 Version, (Version used: ex. King James, unabridged,)
6 Number, (Volume, issue: vol. #, no. #,)
7 Publisher, (Name of publisher or company,)
8 Publication date, (Date published,)
9 Location. (page numbers used, DOI, URL, etc.)

Book:

Author. Wouk, Herman.
Title of source. *War and Remembrance*.
Title of container,
Other contributors,
Version,
Number,
Publisher, McMillan,
Publication date, 1971.
Location.

Wouk, Herman. *War and Remembrance*. McMillan, 1971.

Journal Article:

Author. Brown, Eden, and John A. Smith.
Title of source. “Apples in the Moonlight Glow.”
Title of container, *Horticulture in Asia*,
Other contributors, edited by Francis L. Top,
Version,
Number, vol. 35, no. 17,
Publisher,
Publication date, 2017,
Location. pp. 124-39.

Visit <http://jhsswriting.byu.edu/> for style guides, handouts, and help with writing, research and more.
Revised Oct. 2021

Print:

Brown, Eden, and John A. Smith. “Apples in the Moonlight Glow.” *Horticulture in Asia*, edited by Francis L. Top, vol. 35, no. 17, 2017, pp. 124-39.

Website:

Chan, Evans. “Postmodernism and Hong Kong Cinema.” *Postmodern Culture*, vol. 10, no. 3, May 2000. *Project Muse*,
<https://doi.org/10.1353/pmc.20000.0021>.

Online Works

(MLA Handbook 48-53)

- Use DOI (digital online identifier) when available
- If no DOI is found, include URL without brackets, or use http://
- Including the date when an online source was accessed is optional (p. 53)

Common Abbreviations

(MLA Handbook 95-101)

Months

In the Works Cited, months are abbreviated. May, June, and July are exceptions; they are not abbreviated. Within the actual text of your paper, months should be spelled out.

Jan. Feb. Mar. Apr. Aug. Sept. Oct. Nov. Dec.
Exceptions: May June July

Publishers' Names

- Omit common business abbreviations: (ex: Co., Corp., Inc., Ltd.). Ex. ~~Macmillan Publishing Co.~~ Macmillan
- Replace “Press” with P; If the publisher is a University Press, then follow the name with the abbreviation UP
Ex. John Hopkins ~~University Press~~ John Hopkins UP

Abbreviations with Capital Letters

- If abbreviation is made up of mostly capital letters, don’t add periods in between (ex: PhD, US, UT)