MLA Style Citation Guide

A Guideline for Citing Sources and In-text Citations

Tomahawk Elementary School

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Introduction

The purpose of this handbook is to provide you with some guidance on how to write your essays in MLA style. In the following pages you will find information about the basics of the style and how to correctly cite your sources. It is important to remember that in the space of this small handbook, only the most important elements of the style are covered; therefore, your teacher may need to share other material with you in order for you to complete your assignments in MLA format.

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1. MLA Style Guide Basics

**What is MLA Style?**

The Modern Language Association (MLA) developed a style guide for academic writing. Part of the style guide deals with standardized ways to document the writer's source materials.

MLA provides guidelines for the creation of a bibliography (called a "Works Cited" page) and the corresponding parenthetical (within the text) citation.

**How do I use this MLA Style Guide?**

Students and teachers in the middle schools are expected to use this MLA style guide when writing pieces that require information to be cited from other sources.

**Why is it important that I Cite Sources?**

As a writer, it is your responsibility to give proper credit to your sources. It is also very important that you give this credit in accordance with MLA style. If you fail to give proper credit to a source, you have committed plagiarism. (See plagiarism).
2. Plagiarism – What is it? How can I avoid it?

What is plagiarism?

If you have not given proper credit to your sources, you have committed plagiarism. Essentially, it is like you are lying to your reader. You have used someone else's ideas without telling your reader where you took it from.

Whether you have intentionally tried to pass off someone else's ideas as your own or, through careless research, you unintentionally "forgot" to cite a source, the charge is plagiarism.

How can I avoid plagiarism?

Basically, any idea or fact that you received from a source needs to be cited. Any idea or fact that is common knowledge does not need to be cited. For example, a fact like the earth rotates around the sun or Abraham Lincoln was assassinated while in office are common knowledge and would not have to be cited.
3. Works Cited Page

What is a "Works Cited" Page?

A "Works Cited" page is the name that MLA gives to a bibliography. It is a listing of all of the sources you cited in the body of your paper.

Rules to follow when creating a "Works Cited" page:

1. The "Works Cited" page is always going to be the last page of your essay or report. You should type the words "Works Cited" and center it on the page.
2. Each entry must be complete and accurate.
3. Each entry reads like one long sentence. What this means is that it does not matter where the second line begins in an entry; it begins on the second line only because you ran out of room on the first line.
4. The second and all lines after are always indented five spaces.
5. The sources are listed alphabetically by the first word or name of the entry. This first word or name should be what you use in your parenthetical citation.
Example of a Works Cited Page:

Works Cited


4. Parenthetical Citation

What is Parenthetical Citation?

Parenthetical citation is when a writer directly puts into the text a note from where he or she got the information. Parenthetical or "in-text" citation allows your reader to know from what source each idea/fact came.

This is how it looks in the text of your paper:

"In 2007, 37 percent of American adults sought medical information from the internet regarding a health problem they were experiencing before consulting a doctor" (Smith 38).

In the example above, notice that the author's name and the page number on which this fact was found are set off from the text within parenthesis. Note also that the punctuation of this parenthetical citation is also important. The reader would understand from this citation that on page 38 of Smith's book, this fact is mentioned. Furthermore, since the words are contained within quotes, the above example illustrates that this is a direct quote from that page.

Here is an example of the same idea presented as an indirect quote:

Instead of going to a doctor right away, a recent study found that 37 percent of Americans are now turning to the internet for medical information (Smith 38).

See the difference between direct and indirect quotes in the glossary section.
5. Examples of Common Forms of Sources for Citation

**NOTE** The details are important in these citations--the order of the information, punctuation, underlining and quote marks all must be exact.

**Print Resources (Viewed in Print Form)**

**Book by One Author**

Last Name, First Name. *Title (written in italic).* City of publication:

Publisher, Copyright Date. Format of Publication.

Example:

Jameson, George P. *Ellis Island the Landing Place for Immigrants.*


**Book by Two Authors**

Last Name, First Name and First Name Last Name. *Title (written in italic).* Place of publication: Publisher, Copyright Date. Format of Publication.

Example:

**Encyclopedia**

(NOTE: The author is usually listed at the end of the article. If an author is not listed, begin the entry with the title of the article.)

Last Name, First Name. "Title of Article." Name of Encyclopedia. Edition Year. Format of Publication.

Example:


**Newspaper Article**

Last Name, First Name. "Title of Article." Newspaper Name (written in italic) Date: page(s). Format of Publication.

Example:


**Magazine Article**

Last Name, First Name. "Title of Article." Title of Magazine Day Month Year of Publication: Pages. Format of Publication.

Example:

Non-Print Resources (Viewed Electronically)

Online Database—Encyclopedia

Author last name, first name (if known). "Title of Article." Name of Encyclopedia. Year. Name of online source (written in italic). Month Year of Publication. Format of Publication. Date Viewed.

Example:


Online Database—Articles provided through Databases (such as Badgerlink or on library database page)

Last Name, First Name. "Title of Article." Original Print Source Title (written in italic). Date Published. Format of Publication. Date Viewed.

Example:

Internet Website

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). Format of publication. Date of access.

Examples:

Snakes Collection, 7 July 2006. Georgia College and State University. Web. 31 August 2006.


YouTube Videos

The MLA does not currently prescribe a citation style for YouTube videos. Based on MLA standards for other media formats, we feel that the following format is the most acceptable for citing YouTube videos:

Author’s Name or Poster’s Username. “Title of Image or Video.” Media Type Text. Name of Website. Name of Website’s Publisher, date of posting. Format of Publication. Date retrieved.

Examples:

Shimabukuro, Jake. "Ukulele Weeps by Jake Shimabukuro." Online video clip.

6. On-line Tools and Resources for Writing Citations in MLA Format

See those listed on the library page!

Remember: YOU need to correct and check the tools for accuracy.
7. Glossary

**Bibliography**—a listing of sources that a student used to write his/her essay or report.

**Citation**—is the identification of a specific idea or quote taken from a source.

**Direct Quote**—is a quote in which the author uses words from a source exactly as they were written. The words are taken verbatim. A direct quote is indicated by putting the words in quotation marks (" "). A direct quote must be cited.

**Paraphrase**—is a quote in which an author paraphrases, or puts into his/her own words, an idea from a source. A paraphrase or indirect quote must be cited.

**Parenthetical Citation**—is when you use the authors ideas or words to support your ideas in your writing. When you do this it is in the form of a direct quote or paraphrase.

**Works Cited**—is the name that MLA gives to a bibliography. It is the last page of an essay or report. It lists all of the sources the student has used in his/her writing.