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**MLA Citation Format**

**SILVER VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL**

**MLA citation format** is a method for formatting your paper and documenting the sources of information you use in your paper. The proper use of a citation format such as MLA can help you avoid plagiarism.

**Parenthetical citations within the text** of your paper let your reader know when you’ve used information from another source. The parenthetical citation corresponds to a source listed on your works cited page (or section at the end of your essay).

**You must cite the source within your text** any time you use others’ work, facts, ideas, statistics, diagrams, charts, drawings, music, or words in your paper. Whether you quote, paraphrase, or summarize a single phrase or a whole chapter, you must acknowledge the original author no matter how much of the source you use or how often you use it.

**When you quote** from a source, be sure to **put quotation marks around the author’s exact words, and be sure the quoted material is copied exactly.** Even if you use just a few words from an author in a sentence that is mostly your own, you still have to use quotation marks around those apt words and cite your source parenthetically at the end of the sentence.

**When you paraphrase**, or put information from a source into your own words, you must change not only the words of the original source, but also the sentence structure, and **you must cite the source within your text.** Even if your whole paragraph is a paraphrase or summary of one source, it is not acceptable to cite only at the end of the paragraph. You must clearly signal where your borrowing begins and cite throughout the paragraph as necessary to make clear to your reader that you are still borrowing from the same source.

**The format of your paper** should follow these guidelines: double space the entire paper, including the heading and title, quotations, and works cited list; set one-inch margins for all sides of the paper; include a header with your last name and the page number one-half inch from the top of the paper and flush with the right margin. Use a readable, 12-point font. (This is for a formal MLA formatted essay paper.)

**Examples of Parenthetical Citation**

1. One critic complains of the authors, “They’re sheep in wolves’ clothing who manage to write about bad things and make you feel good” (Bukiet 35).

[Note that both the author and page number are cited in parentheses.]

2. Most of the reports submitted to the Starbucks Business and Ethics Compliance Department address issues in the category of employee relations ("Business Ethics").

[Even if you paraphrase (i.e. put information from the source into your own words), you still must provide a citation at the end of the sentence. If the source does not list an author, use the first word or two of the title in your parenthetical citation. In this example, the source does not have page or paragraph numbers because it is a web site.]

3. Louis Herman and his colleagues used hand and arm signals to communicate with the dolphins: “For instance, a pumping motion of the closed fists meant ‘hoop,’ and both arms extended overhead (as in jumping jacks) meant ‘ball’” (Morell 54).

[You may use a colon after a full sentence to introduce a quotation. When quotation marks are included in the original text, the internal (or original) quotations marks become single.]

**Quoting, Paraphrasing, and Summarizing**

**Summary:**

This handout is intended to help you become more comfortable with the uses of and distinctions among quotations, paraphrases, and summaries. This handout compares and contrasts the three terms, gives some pointers, and includes a short excerpt that you can use to practice these skills.

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**What are the differences among quoting, paraphrasing, and summarizing?**

These three ways of incorporating other writers' work into your own writing differ according to the closeness of your writing to the source writing.

**Quotations** must be identical to the original, using a narrow segment of the source. They must match the source document word for word and must be attributed to the original author.

**Paraphrasing** involves putting a passage from source material into your own words. A paraphrase must also be attributed to the original source. Paraphrased material is usually shorter than the original passage, taking a somewhat broader segment of the source and condensing it slightly.

**Summarizing** involves putting the main idea(s) into your own words, including only the main point(s). Once again, it is necessary to attribute summarized ideas to the original source. Summaries are significantly shorter than the original and take a broad overview of the source material.

**Why use quotations, paraphrases, and summaries?**

Quotations, paraphrases, and summaries serve many purposes. You might use them to:

* Provide support for claims or add credibility to your writing
* Refer to work that leads up to the work you are now doing
* Give examples of several points of view on a subject
* Call attention to a position that you wish to agree or disagree with
* Highlight a particularly striking phrase, sentence, or passage by quoting the original
* Distance yourself from the original by quoting it in order to cue readers that the words are not your own
* Expand the breadth or depth of your writing

Writers frequently intertwine summaries, paraphrases, and quotations. As part of a summary of an article, a chapter, or a book, a writer might include paraphrases of various key points blended with quotations of striking or suggestive phrases as in the following example:

     In his famous and influential work *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Sigmund Freud argues that dreams are the "royal road to the unconscious" (page #), expressing in coded imagery the dreamer's unfulfilled wishes through a process known as the "dream-work" (page #). According to Freud, actual but unacceptable desires are censored internally and subjected to coding through layers of condensation and displacement before emerging in a kind of rebus puzzle in the dream itself (page #).

**How to use quotations, paraphrases, and summaries**

Practice summarizing, using paraphrases and quotations as you go. It might be helpful to follow these steps:

* Read the entire text, noting the key points and main ideas.
* Summarize in your own words what the single main idea of the essay is.
* Paraphrase important supporting points that come up in the essay.
* Consider any words, phrases, or brief passages that you believe should be quoted directly.

There are several ways to integrate quotations into your text. Often, a short quotation works well when integrated into a sentence. Longer quotations can stand alone. Remember that quoting should be done only sparingly; be sure that you have a good reason to include a direct quotation when you decide to do so. You'll find guidelines for citing sources and punctuating citations at our documentation guide pages.

## Quoting Others

Using the words of others can be tricky business. You typically only want to use a direct quotation in the following situations: if you’re using that statement as a piece of evidence for your own argument, if you’re establishing another’s position, or if another person has said something better and more clearly than you can.

**The main problem with using quotations** happens when writers assume that the meaning of the quotation is obvious.  Writers who make this mistake believe that their job is done when they’ve chosen a quotation and inserted it into their text.  Quotations need to be taken from their original context and integrated fully into their new textual surroundings.  Every quotation needs to have your own words appear in the same sentence.  Here are some easy to use templates\* for doing this type of introduction:

Templates for Introducing Quotations

X states, “\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.”

As the world-famous scholar X explains it, “\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.”

As claimed by X, “\_\_\_\_\_\_.”

In her article \_\_\_\_\_\_\_, X suggests that “\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.”

In X’s perspective, “\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.”

X concurs when she notes, “\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.”

You may have noticed that when the word “that” is used, the comma frequently becomes unnecessary.  This is because the word “that” integrates the quotation with the main clause of your sentence (instead of creating an independent and dependent clause).

Now that you’ve successfully used the quotation in your sentence, it’s time to **explain what that quotations means**—either in a general sense or in the context of your argument.  Here are some templates for explaining quotations:

Templates for Explaining Quotations

In other words, X asserts \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

In arguing this claim, X argues that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

X is insisting that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

What X really means is that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

The basis of X’s argument is that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

## MLA Works Cited Page: Basic Format

According to MLA style, you must have a Works Cited page at the end of your research paper (or a section at the bottom of a shorter essay). All entries in the Works Cited page must correspond to the works cited in your main text.

#### Basic rules

* Begin your Works Cited page on a separate page at the end of your research paper (or at the bottom of a shorter essay). It should have the same one-inch margins and last name, page number header as the rest of your paper.
* Label the page Works Cited (do not italicize the words Works Cited or put them in quotation marks) and center the words Works Cited at the top of the page.
* Double space all citations, but do not skip spaces between entries.
* Indent the second and subsequent lines of citations by 0.5 inches to create a hanging indent.
* List page numbers of sources efficiently, when needed. If you refer to a journal article that appeared on pages 225 through 250, list the page numbers on your Works Cited page as 225-50. Note that MLA style uses a hyphen in a span of pages.

#### Additional basic rules new to MLA 2009

**New to MLA 2009:**

* 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.
* Writers are **no longer required** to provide URLs for Web entries. However, if your instructor or publisher insists on them, include them in angle brackets after the entry and end with a period. For long URLs, break lines only at slashes.
* 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. You do not need to provide subscription information in addition to the database name.

#### Capitalization and punctuation

* Capitalize each word in the titles of articles, books, etc, but do not capitalize articles (the, an), prepositions, or conjunctions unless one is the first word of the title or subtitle: Gone with the Wind, The Art of War, There Is Nothing Left to Lose.
* **New to MLA 2009**: Use italics (instead of underlining) for titles of larger works (books, magazines) and quotation marks for titles of shorter works (poems, articles)

#### Listing author names

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:

Burke, Kenneth

Levy, David M.

Wallace, David Foster

Do not list titles (Dr., Sir, Saint, etc.) or degrees (PhD, MA, DDS, etc.) with names. A book listing an author named "John Bigbrain, PhD" appears simply as "Bigbrain, John"; do, however, include suffixes like "Jr." or "II." Putting it all together, a work by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. would be cited as "King, Martin Luther, Jr." Here the suffix following the first or middle name and a comma.

#### More than one work by an author

If you have cited more than one work by a particular author, order the entries alphabetically by title, and use three hyphens in place of the author's name for every entry after the first:

Burke, Kenneth. A Grammar of Motives. [...]

---. A Rhetoric of Motives. [...]

When an author or collection editor appears both as the sole author of a text and as the first author of a group, list solo-author entries first:

Heller, Steven, ed. The Education of an E-Designer.

Heller, Steven, and Karen Pomeroy. Design Literacy: Understanding Graphic Design.

#### Work with no known author

Alphabetize works with no known author by their title; use a shortened version of the title in the parenthetical citations in your paper. In this case, Boring Postcards USA has no known author:

Baudrillard, Jean. Simulacra and Simulations. [...]

Boring Postcards USA. [...]

Burke, Kenneth. A Rhetoric of Motives. [...]

 **Important Note on the Use of URLs in MLA Works Cited**

MLA no longer requires the use of URLs in MLA citations. Because Web addresses are not static (i.e., they change often) and because documents sometimes appear in multiple places on the Web (e.g., on multiple databases), MLA explains that most readers can find electronic sources via title or author searches in Internet Search Engines.

*For instructors or editors who still wish to require the use of URLs*, MLA suggests that the URL appear in angle brackets after the date of access. Break URLs only after slashes.

Aristotle. *Poetics*. Trans. S. H. Butcher. *The Internet Classics Archive*. Web Atomic and Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 13 Sept. 2007. Web. 4 Nov. 2008. ‹http://classics.mit.edu/›.

**Abbreviations Commonly Used with Electronic Sources**

If publishing information is unavailable for entries that require publication information such as publisher (or sponsor) names and publishing dates, MLA requires the use of special abbreviations to indicate that this information is not available. Use *n.p.* to indicate that neither a publisher nor a sponsor name has been provided. Use *n.d.* when the Web page does not provide a publication date.

When an entry requires that you provide a page but no pages are provided in the source (as in the case of an online-only scholarly journal or a work that appears in an online-only anthology), use the abbreviation *n. pag*.

**Basic Style for Citations of Electronic Sources (Including Online Databases)**

Here are some common features you should try and find before citing electronic sources in MLA style. Not every Web page will provide all of the following information. However, collect as much of the following information as possible both for your citations and for your research notes:

* Author and/or editor names (if available)
* Article name in quotation marks (if applicable)
* Title of the Website, project, or book in italics. (Remember that some Print publications have Web publications with slightly different names. They may, for example, include the additional information or otherwise modified information, like domain names [e.g. .com or .net].)
* Any version numbers available, including revisions, posting dates, volumes, or issue numbers.
* Publisher information, including the publisher name and publishing date.
* Take note of any page numbers (if available).
* Medium of publication.
* Date you accessed the material.
* URL (if required, or for your own personal reference; MLA does not require a URL).

**Citing an Entire Web Site**

It is necessary to list your date of access because web postings are often updated, and information available on one date may no longer be available later. If a URL is required or you chose to include one, be sure to include the complete address for the site. (Note: The following examples do not include a URL because MLA no longer requires a URL to be included.)

Remember to use *n.p.* if no publisher name is available and *n.d.* if no publishing date is given.

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.

*The Purdue OWL Family of Sites*. The Writing Lab and OWL at Purdue and Purdue U, 2008. Web. 23 Apr. 2008.

Felluga, Dino. *Guide to Literary and Critical Theory*. Purdue U, 28 Nov. 2003. Web. 10 May 2006.