Introduction to
MLA STYLE FORMAT FOR RESEARCH PAPERS

The format information in this introductory handout is taken from the ***MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers***, **7th ed. (2009).**

Note: This handout is designed to help students get started with common research assignments. It is an introduction only. Although the MLA is the adopted style format for the DeForest Area School District, some course assignments may have specific instructions that differ from those here. When writing any paper, be sure to follow the assignment given by your teacher, and, if you have any questions about what's expected of you, be sure to ask your teacher for clarification. *MLA Handbooks* are available in the LMC and throughout the building for answers to more specific questions.

IMPORTANT: THIS IS HOW IT WORKS!!! (see Chapter 5 in *MLA Handbook*)

MLA (Modern Language Association) documentation is a method (or style) of citing your sources; there are other styles such as APA and Chicago. Documentation is important and necessary in order to avoid plagiarism, the theft of someone else's words and ideas. Any time you use ideas, words, and images that you did not create yourself, you must give credit to the originators by citing your sources. MLA documentation allows you to do this.

In MLA documentation style, a researcher acknowledges sources by inserting brief parenthetical citations into the text with an added alphabetical list of works that appears at the end of the paper. The parenthetical citation that concludes the following sentence is typical of MLA style.

> Ancient writers attribute the invention of the monochord to Pythagoras, who lived in the sixth century BC (Marcuse 197).

The citation "(Marcuse 197)" tells readers that the information in the sentence was derived from page 197 of a work by an author named Marcuse. If readers want more information about this source, they can turn to the Works Cited page, generally found at the end of the research paper where, under the name Marcuse, they would find the following information:

> Marcuse, Sibyl. *A Survey of Musical Instruments*. New York: Harper, 2002. Print.

PARENTHETICAL DOCUMENTATION IN THE TEXT (Chapter 6)

Under the MLA parenthetical documentation system, references in the text must clearly point to specific sources in the list of works cited, and to avoid plagiarism, you must identify the location of the borrowed information as specifically as possible. Keep parenthetical references as brief—and as few—as clarity and accuracy permit. Give only the information needed to identify a source**. Double space all general text. Margins should be set at 1". See page 7 for an example of a properly formatted first page of a research paper.

The following examples from the *Handbook* illustrate alternative ways of identifying authors. Please refer to the *Handbook* itself if you have more specific questions.

> ***Author's name in text***
> Frye has argued this point before (178-85).

or

> ***Author's name in reference***
> This point has been argued before (Frye 178-85).

> ***Two or more authors' names in text***
> Others, like Wellek and Warren (310-15), hold an opposite point of view.

or

Two or more authors' names in reference

Others hold an opposite point of view (e.g., Wellek and Warren 310-15).

Author's name in text with a quotation

It may be true, as Robertson maintains, that "in the appreciation of medieval art the attitude of the observer is of primary importance [. . .] " (136).

or

Author's name in reference with a quotation

It may be true that "in the appreciation of medieval art the attitude of the observer is of primary importance [. . .]" (Robertson 136).

To avoid interrupting the flow of your writing, place the parenthetical reference where a pause would naturally occur (preferably at the end of a sentence), as near as possible to the material it documents. The parenthetical reference precedes the punctuation mark that concludes the sentence, clause, or phrase containing the borrowed material.

In the late Renaissance, Machiavelli contended that human beings were by nature "ungrateful" and "mutable" (124), and Montaigne thought them "miserable and puny" (134).

If a quotation mark comes at the end of the sentence, clause, or phrase, insert the parenthetical reference between the closing quotation mark and the concluding punctuation mark.

Ernst Rose submits, "The highly spiritual view of the world presented in Siddartha exercised its appeal on West and East alike" (74).

When quoting lines of poetry, up to two or three lines, use quotation marks within your text, indicating a line break with a forward slash with a space on either side of the slash. Instead of citing page numbers, cite the line numbers of the poem you quote.

Dickinson claims, "I dwell in Possibility / A fairer House than Prose" (1-2).

If you quote several times from the same page within a single paragraph—and no quotation from another source intervenes—you may give a single parenthetical reference after the last quotation. For quotations longer than four lines of text, special formatting is required. (See section 3.7.2 for prose and 3.7.3 for poetry.)

THE "WORKS CITED" PAGE (Section 5.3)

On (a) separate page(s) at the end of your paper, list alphabetically by author every work cited in your paper, using the basic forms illustrated. Title the page "Works Cited" (not Bibliography). List only those sources you actually cited in your paper. (The rule for referring to material in an indirect or secondhand source—that is, for citing when you have not seen the original but have obtained the information from another document that cited the original source—is to list the source that you have seen, not the original.)

All entries should be arranged in **alphabetical order** by the author's last name. If there is no author or the name is unknown, alphabetize by the title, ignoring any initial *A, An,* or *The*. *Italicize* titles of books and periodicals.

Begin an entry at the left margin; however, **the second line and all other lines in the entry are indented one-half inch (or 5 spaces***)**. Most tabs are set at one-half inch. (This format is called a hanging indent, which you can format in Microsoft Word automatically.) Margins should be set at one inch.

IMPORTANT: The "Works Cited" page should be **double spaced,** both between **and** within citations. See further instructions and an example of a complete "Works Cited" page on page 8 of this packet.

Use the following abbreviations for information you cannot supply:

n.p.	No place of publication given	n.p.: U of Gotham P, 2003	(for books only)
n.p.	No publisher given	New York: n.p., 2003	
n.d.	No date of publication given	New York: U of Gotham P, n.d.	
n. pag.	No pagination given	New York: U of Gotham p, 2003. n. pag.	

NOTE: **For two or more works/sources by the same author**, you may substitute three dashes followed by a period for the author's name. Apply to all entries after the first one (see example on page 8 of this handout). **When a work has more than three authors**, you may name the first and add "et al." An article entitled "Effects of Attractiveness and Nature of Request on Helping Behaviors" has seven authors. Example citation: Juhnke, Ralph et al.

PRINT RESOURCES

BOOKS AND PUBLICATIONS (Section 5.5)

Books

Structure of the Citation:

Author's last name, first name. *Title of the book*. City of publication: Publisher, Year of Publication. Print.

Examples:

Book by a single author

Atlas, James. *Delmore Schwartz: The Life of an American Poet*. New York: Macmillan, 1999. Print.

Book by two or more authors

Ande, Joanne, and Dee Logan. *Essays About Literature*. New York: Scholastic, 1998. Print.

Work in an Anthology (a collection of articles, essays, stories, etc.—include page numbers)

More, Hannah. "The Black Slave Trade: A Poem." *British Women Poets of the Romantic Era*. Ed. Paula R. Feldman. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1997. 472-82. Print.

Book with no Author

Encyclopedia of Wisconsin. New York: Somerset, 1999. Print.

Article in a Reference Book (including encyclopedias, dictionaries, and biographical works)

Structure of the Citation:

Author's last name, first name. "Title of Article." *Title of the Book*. Edition. Year of publication. Print.

Examples:

Familiar reference books that frequently appear in new editions

"Mandarin." The Encyclopedia Americana. 1998. Print.

Less familiar reference books that usually appear in only one edition

Brakeley, Theresa C. "Mourning Songs." *Funk and Wagnalls Standard Dictionary of Folklore and Mythology*. Ed. Maria Leach and Jerome Fried. Vol. 2. New York: Crowell, 1999. Print.

Pamphlet

Structure of the Citation: Treat a pamphlet as you would a book.

Example:

Washington, D.C. New York: Trip Builder, 2000. Print.

ARTICLES IN PERIODICALS (Section 5.4)

Newspaper Article

If the city of publication is not included in the name of a locally published newspaper, add the city in square brackets, not underlined, after the name. Example: *Star-Ledger* [Newark]. For nationally published newspapers (e.g., *USA Today*, *Wall Street Journal*), you do not need to add the city of publication.

Structure of the Citation:

Author's last name, first name. "Title of Article." *Name of the Newspaper* Day Month Year, ed.: Section letter and pages used. Print.

Examples:

Newspaper article

Goldberg, Vicki. "Photographing a Mexico Where Silence Reigned." *New York Times* 23 March 1997, late ed.: 2: 39+. Print.

Murphy, Chris. "Sober Support: Catching Drunken Drivers is Axel Anderson's Game." *The Capital Times* [Madison, WI] 4 Oct. 1999, *** ed.: C1+. Print.

Article in a Magazine

Structure of the Citation:

Author's last name, first name. "Title of Article." *Title of Magazine* Day Month Year: Page(s) referred to. Print.

Examples:

Magazines published every week or every two weeks

Armstrong, Larry. "The Technology Revolution." *Business Week* 28 Feb. 2000: 80-88. Print.

Magazines published every month or every two months

Bender, Mihaly. "The Creative Personality." *Psychology Today* July-Aug. 1999: 36-40. Print.

Magazine article with no author's name

"Notes and Comment." *The New Yorker* 29 Oct. 2001: 29-31. Print.

Review

Example:

Kauffmann, Stanley. "A New Spielberg." Rev. of *Schindler's List*, dir. Steven Spielberg. *New Republic* 13 Dec. 2003: 30. Print.

ADDITIONAL COMMON SOURCES (Section 5.7)

Television or Radio Program

Example:

"Yes…but Is It Art?" *Sixty Minutes.* ABC. WKOW, Madison, WI. 19 Sept. 2002. Television.

Sound Recording

Structure of the Citation:

Artist or artists. "Title of Recording." *Album Title*. Manufacturer, Year of issue (if the year is unknown, write n.d.). Medium (options include Audiocassette, CD, or LP).

Example:

Simon, Paul, and Milton Nascimento. "Spirit Voices." *The Rhythm of the Saints*. Warner Bros., 1995. Audiocassette.

Film or Video Recording

Structure of the Citation:

Film Title. Director's name. Leading performers' names. Original release date (if relevant). Distributor, Date. Medium (options include Film, DVD, Videocassette, Laser disc, Slide program, Filmstrip).

Example:
> *It's a Wonderful Life.* Dir. Frank Capra. Perf. James Stewart, Donna Reed, Lionel Barrymore, and Thomas Mitchell. 1946. Republic, 1998. Videocassette.

Interview
Examples:

Published, recorded, or broadcast
> Atlas, James. Interview with Ted Koppel and Nina Totenberg. *Nightline*. ABC. WKOW, Madison, WI. 5 Apr. 1999. Television.
> Gordimer, Nadine. Interview. *New York Times* 10 Oct. 2001, late ed.: C25. Print.

Personal interview
> Farve, Brett. Personal interview. 5 Oct. 2002.

Map or Chart
Example:
> *Wisconsin.* Map. Chicago: Rand, 2001. Print.

Advertisement
Example:
> The Fitness Fragrance by Ralph Lauren. Advertisement*. GQ.* Apr. 2000: 111-12. Print.

Letter or E-mail received
Example:
> Morrison, Toni. Letter to the author (student). 4 Oct. 1999. E-mail.

Legal Source
Example:
> Brown v. Board of Educ. 347 US 483-96. Supreme Court of the US. 1954. *Supreme Court Collection.* Legal Information Inst., Cornell U Law School, n.d. Web. 3 Aug. 2007.

Digital File
Example:
> Hudson, Jennifer, perf. "And I Am Telling You I'm Not Going." *Dreamgirls: Music from the Motion Picture.* Sony BMG, 2006. MP3 file.

RESOURCES FROM THE COMPUTER

NON-PERIODICAL WEB PUBLICATIONS (Section 5.6)

Here are the possible components of an entry for an Internet publication in the order in which they are generally arranged. If you cannot find all the information required, the *Handbook* advises that you <u>cite what is available.</u> (See pages 184-185 in *Handbook* for more information.)

Structure of the Citation:
1. Author name (last, first).
2. "Title of article, poem, short story, or similar short work in Internet site."
3. *Title of the work or Web site in which the above was originally published.*
4. Version or edition used (if given).
5. Publisher or sponsor for the site; if not available, use n.p.
6. Date of publication (day, month, and year, as available); if nothing is available, use n.d.
7. Medium of publication (Web).
8. Date of access (day, month, year).

Following are specific examples of Internet resources that follow the guidelines above:

An Entire Internet Site
Example :
> *The Humane Society of the United States.* N.p., 2009. Web. 5 Aug. 2009.

A Document from an Internet Site
> Examples:
>> "de Kooning, Willem." *Encyclopaedia Britannica Online*. Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2008. Web. 15 May 2008.
>>
>> Quade, Alex. "Elite Team Rescues Troops behind Enemy Lines." *CNN.com*. Cable News Network, 19 Mar. 2007. Web. 15 May 2008.
>>
>> Salda, Michael N., ed. *The Cinderella Project*. Vers. 1.2. U of Southern Mississippi, Oct. 2005. Web. 15 May 2008.

Online Book
> Follow recommendations in 5.5 for citing books. Add date of access and network address.
> Examples:
>> Whitman, Walt. Leaves of Grass. Brooklyn, 1855. *The Walt Whitman Archive*. Web. 12 Mar. 2007.

PERIODICAL WEB PUBLICATIONS (Sections 5.6.3 and 5.6.4)

> Structure of the Citation:
> 1. Author name (last, first).
> 2. "Title of article, poem, short story, or similar short work in Internet site."
> 3. *Name of the periodical.*
> 4. Series number or name (if relevant).
> 5. Volume number (if a scholarly journal).
> 6. Issue number (if available, for a scholarly journal).
> 7. Date of publication (day, month, and year, as available); if nothing is available, use n.d.
> 8. Inclusive page numbers (if not available, use n.pag.)
> 9. *Title of database*.
> 10. Medium of publication (Web).
> 11. Date of access (day, month, year).

Article in an Online Newspaper or Newswire
> Example:
>> Richardson, Lynda. "Minority Students Languish in Special Education System." *New York Times* 6 Apr. 1994, late ed.: A1+. Pt. 1 of a series, A Class Apart: Special Education in New York City. *Newspaper Source Plus*. Web. 5 Aug. 2009.

Article in an Online Magazine
> Example:
>> Silverman, Stephen M. "They're Home! Laura Ling & Euna Lee Are Back in the U.S." *People*. Time, 5 Aug. 2009. Web. 5 Aug. 2009.

Online Review
> Example:
>> Evangelista, Stefano. Rev. of *Victorian and Edwardian Responses to the Italian Renaissance*, ed. John E. Law and Lene Ostermark-Johansen. *Victorian Studies* 46.4 (2006): 729-31. *Academic Search Premier*. Web. 12 Mar. 2007.

Work from an Online Service (to which libraries typically subscribe—EBSCOhost or Wilson Biography)
> Example:
>> Meiners, Roger E., and Bruce Yandle. "The Legal System Should Regulate Pollution." *Opposing Viewpoints: Pollution*. Ed. Tamara L. Roleff. San Diego: Greenhaven, 2000. N.pag. *Opposing Viewpoints Resource Center*. Web. 5 Aug. 2009.