The Writing Center
of
Green River Community College

Presents

An MLA Documentation Module
Zen and the Art of MLA Documentation

Or

How to Document Your Essays and Keep Your Peace of Mind
# Table of Contents

**MLA Citations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>4-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercise 1</td>
<td>7-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercise 2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercise 3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercise 4</td>
<td>11-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to Make</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercise 5</td>
<td>14-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercise 6</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**MLA Works Cited List**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>17-18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic Forms</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercise 7</td>
<td>20-22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercise 8</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Answer Key**                                      | 24-25   |
Introduction

Like most other forms of documentation, the main purposes of MLA documentation, which is used in English, literature, humanities, and foreign language classes, are to provide necessary reference information to the reader and to help the author (you) avoid plagiarism. Because both of these purposes are important to any writer, this module will give you the essential information about MLA documentation and provide you with activities that will help you retain the information and use it well.

There are many systems of documentation, including: author-date, number, endnotes, and footnotes, among others. The MLA recommends using a parenthetical system of documentation, in which citations appear in parentheses at the end of a sentence that includes a reference.

MLA parenthetical citations often include either just a page number reference or both an author and page number. Depending on the information that is included in the citation sentence, you will use one of many different formats for the citations.

The following examples (found in dianahacker.com) show both the kind of information included and how the in-text citation corresponds directly to the list of works cited.

Example of an in-text citation:

Matt Sundeen notes that drivers with cell phones place an estimated 98,000 emergency calls each day and that the phones "often reduce emergency response times and actually save lives" (1).

Example of an entry in the list of works cited


As you can see by the examples, the in-text citation and the list of works cited directly correspond with the important connection being the referenced author’s name. As you can also see, the information in the in-text citation does not interrupt the flow of the text because it appears at the end of the sentence and is quite brief.

An interested reader who wants to follow up on the reference can simply locate the referenced author’s name in the alphabetical list of works cited, which appears at the end of an article and contains all of the relevant information for the reader. A reader will also be able to follow up on concerns about plagiarism. Providing these follow-up opportunities to the reader fulfills your purposes for using the MLA documentation.
Now that you have a general idea about MLA documentation, it is time to move onto the body of the module, which contains more specific information on MLA documentation, focusing on parenthetical citations and lists of works cited, and many activities to help you understand and retain the information.

**MLA parenthetical citations**

**How to cite books, articles, and other sources parenthetically in your paper**

Depending on the information that you provide in a sentence that contains a citation, you will need to put different information in that citation (inside the parentheses). For example, if you state the author’s name in the sentence, you will need only to provide the page numbers in parentheses.

Use the list and explanations below (found on the dianahacker.com web site) to learn the basic rules for how to format various types of MLA parenthetical citations. This is just a partial list to go over the basic rules.

1. **Author named in a signal phrase**
   Ordinarily, introduce the material being cited with a signal phrase that includes the author’s name. In addition to preparing readers for the source, the signal phrase allows you to keep the parenthetical citation brief.

   **Christine Haughney reports that shortly after Japan made it illegal to use a handheld phone while driving, “accidents caused by using the phones dropped by 75 percent” (A8).**

   The signal phrase—"Christine Haughney reports that"—names the author; the parenthetical citation gives the page number of the newspaper article in which the quoted words may be found.

2. **Author named in parentheses**
   If the signal phrase does not name the author, put the author’s last name in parentheses along with the page number.

   **Most states do not keep adequate records on the number of times cell phones are a factor in accidents; as of December 2000, only ten states were trying to keep such records (Sundeen 2).**

   Use no punctuation between the name and the page number.
3. Author unknown
Either use the complete title in a signal phrase or use a short form of the title in parentheses. Titles of books are underlined; titles of articles and other short works are put in quotation marks.

As of 2001, at least three hundred towns and municipalities had considered legislation regulating use of cell phones while driving ("Lawmakers" 2).

CAUTION: Before assuming that a Web source has no author, do some detective work. Often the author's name is available but is hard to find. For example, it may appear at the end of the source, in tiny print. It may, however, appear on another page of the site, such as the home page.

This convenient partial list is one example of the many that are readily available in print and online. Because of the availability, it is unnecessary for you to memorize any but the simplest citation formats, for you will always be able to look up the forms that you are uncertain about.
Exercise 1

You have just learned about three types of MLA in-text citations. Now it is your turn to locate other categories of MLA in-text citations and the format rules for those categories. Look in any of the following locations to find this information and then write it in the blank spaces.

Online sources

http://www.dianahacker.com/resdoc (online source for A Writer's Reference)
http://www.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar (Capital Community College’s site)
http://owl.english.purdue.edu (Purdue University’s Online Writing Lab)

Books

A Writer’s Reference, 5th edition
MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers
The Bedford Reader, 9th edition

After locating a new category in one of the above sources, first name the new category of MLA citation and then write an example of its format by filling in the parentheses.

Example

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Form example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Author named in a signal phrase</td>
<td>(A8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Form example</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Exercise 2

Using the online and print sources from the previous exercise, look at the format examples below and identify the type of MLA citation for which the format is used. Write the citation type in the blank next to the format.

*Example*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Format</th>
<th>Citation type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(&quot;Lawmakers&quot; 2)</td>
<td>Author unknown</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. (Blaine et al. 35)  

2. (qtd. in Kilgannon A23)  

3. (2: 279)  

4. (D. Smith 7)  

5. (Rychnovsky 40; Seidensticker 114; Williams 30)  

6. ("Man" B4)  

7. (lines 5-8)  

8. (Sundeen 2)  

9. (Stockwell, "Man" B4)  

10. (Holy Bible, Prov. 25.21)  

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9
Exercise 3

Now that you have practiced locating and identifying specific kinds of MLA citation categories and formats and have seen many different examples, it is time to answer some questions about MLA citations. You may refer back to the online and print citation lists.

1. In what part of the source content do all of the parenthetical citations appear?

________________________________________________________________

2. Where do all of the parenthetical citations appear in relation to the period?

________________________________________________________________

3. What kind of punctuation appears between the author’s last name and the page numbers?

________________________________________________________________

4. What kind of abbreviation is used for the word “pages” in the parenthetical citations?

________________________________________________________________

5. What other kinds of words or abbreviations are included in the citations?

________________________________________________________________

6. For what kind of source content must the parenthetical citations contain the author’s last name?

________________________________________________________________

7. When is it ok to eliminate the parentheses from the citation?

________________________________________________________________

8. When is the font of the parenthetical citation different from the rest of the text?

________________________________________________________________

By correctly answering the above questions, you should have a good sense of the typical form for MLA parenthetical citations.
Exercise 4

A. Using any of the suggested lists and explanations for comparison, look at the following list of citations and mark the blank with a “C” if they are correct and an “I” if they are incorrect.

Note: For the purposes of this exercise, the citations and periods are bold. Do not bold your own citations.

1. Lewis was the fastest sprinter of the decade (Riley 52). __________
2. Potera argues that Internet addiction affects thousands. 1 __________
3. “Above the South Col, up in the Death Zone, survival is to no small degree a race against the clock” (227 Krakauer). __________
4. Toufexis says that “substances swamping the newly smitten are chemical cousins of amphetamines” (103). __________
5. This is what Pirsig calls an a priori motorcycle. (Zen and the Art Of Motorcycle Maintenance, 5th Printing, Bantam Books, New York). __________
6. The critic calls the movie a “disappointment” (Ansen, p. 76). __________
7. Eminem is, in comparison, one of the most “over-hyped” (Wong 121) singers today. __________
8. Newman argues that social networks are essential to finding a job (194). __________
9. On page twenty-seven, the author states that too much competition early in life affects children. __________
B. Use this space to suggest corrections to any of the incorrect citations that you found in the above exercise.

1. ________________________
2. ________________________
3. ________________________
4. ________________________
5. ________________________
6. ________________________
7. ________________________
8. ________________________
9. ________________________
10. ________________________
How to Make a Parenthetical Citation

Now that you’ve seen many different examples of citations and have answered questions about them, you should be able to make your own. Before doing so, read the following:

Let’s say that you want to include the following quote in a sentence and that you want to use the appropriate citation format when you do so.

“It was certainly an odd monster that one made up by reading the historians first and the poets afterwards – a worm winged like an eagle; the spirit of life and beauty in a kitchen chopping up suet.” Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One’s Own*, pg. 46

The first thing that you need to decide is how you are going to include the quote. One way that you might include it is by using it for an entire sentence. If you were going to do that, you could come up with the following.

“It was certainly an odd monster that one made up by reading the historians first and the poets afterwards – a worm winged like an eagle; the spirit of life and beauty in a kitchen chopping up suet” (Woolf 46).

As you can see, the quotation is copied verbatim and then the parenthetical citation is included at the end of the sentence, placing the author’s last name before the page number period on the outside of the parentheses.

If you were to use just a portion of the quotation and also name the author in the sentence, the parenthetical citation would have a different look:

Woolf says “it was certainly an odd monster that one made up by reading the historians first and poets afterwards” (46).

If you are using more than one Woolf text, you will need to include the title, or an abbreviation of it, in the citation.

Woolf says “it was certainly an odd monster that one made up by reading the historians first and poets afterwards” (*A Room* 46).
Exercise 5

Now it’s time for you to try creating your own citations. Using the information that you have about citations, complete the citations inside of the parentheses.

1. This quote appears on page 182 of Into Thin Air by John Krakauer.
   “For all of April the jet stream had been trained on Everest like a fire hose, blasting the summit pyramid with hurricane-force winds” (__________________________).

2. This is the same quote by Krakauer, but the sentence is different.
   Krakauer points out that the jet stream was “blasting the summit with hurricane-force winds” (__________________________).

3. This is the same quote by Krakauer, but this time the citation must be completed as if you are using more than one source from Krakauer.
   Krakauer points out that the jet stream was “blasting the summit with hurricane-force winds” (__________________________).

4. This quote appears on page 351 of Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance by Robert Pirsig.
   “Technology is blamed for a lot of this loneliness, since the loneliness is certainly associated with the newer technological devices – TV, jets, freeways and so on – but I hope it’s been made plain that the real evil isn’t the objects of technology but the tendency of technology to isolate people into lonely attitudes of objectivity.”
   The author says that loneliness is “certainly associated with the newer technological devices” (__________________________).

5. Make your own sentence and citation using the Pirsig quote.
   ____________________________________________________________________________  (____________________).
Here are a few quotes to be used for the remainder of the exercise.

“Anybody who has ever seen the Angels on the run will agree that rural Californians are likely to reject the spectacle as not right for their way of living. It is a human zoo on wheels.” Hunter S. Thompson, *Hell's Angels*, page 148

“Time is but the stream I go a-fishing in. I drink at it; but while I drink I see the sandy bottom and detect how shallow it is.” Henry David Thoreau, *Walden: or Life in the Woods*, page 71

“Before moving into the area of public victory, we should remember that effective interdependence can only be built on a foundation of true independence.” Stephen R. Covey, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, page 185

Create five of your own sentences with citations using the quotes above.

1. ______________________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________________
Exercise 6

Final questions about in-text parenthetical citations

Using any of the suggested lists and your own knowledge, answer the following questions.

1. When are quotation marks acceptable within a citation?

______________________________________________________________________________

2. How can more than one author be included in a citation?

______________________________________________________________________________

3. For what kind of citation is it necessary to use an author's first initial?

______________________________________________________________________________

4. For what kind of citation is it necessary to use the abbreviation “qtd. in”?

______________________________________________________________________________

5. How is it possible to cite more than one source in a citation?

______________________________________________________________________________

6. For what kind of citation would an author use the abbreviations “bk.” or “ch.”?

______________________________________________________________________________

7. How does an author cite a well-known historical document?

______________________________________________________________________________

8. For what kind of citation is the word “lines” used?

______________________________________________________________________________

9. When is it necessary to use a semi-colon in a citation?

______________________________________________________________________________

10. When is it necessary to use a colon in a citation?

______________________________________________________________________________
Works Cited List

A works cited list is the MLA equivalent of a bibliography. It contains information about all of the references cited in a paper. All of the references in the works cited list must appear in the paper and all of the references cited must appear in the paper. A works cited list looks like the following, which was found on the Reference Guide for Students web site:

Works Cited


As you can see, the information in the works cited list lists items alphabetically; uses a hanging indent (only indenting the second line of information for any given source); follows a specific format for listing information, which changes according to the type of source; and is double spaced with no extra spaces between items.
The Online Writing Laboratory at Purdue University provides the following useful information about creating a works cited list.

List Format

- Begin your works cited list on a separate page from the text of the essay under the label Works Cited (with no quotation marks, underlining, etc.), which should be centered at the top of the page.
- Make the first line of each entry in your list flush left with the margin. Subsequent lines in each entry should be indented one-half inch. This is known as a hanging indent.
- Double space all entries, with no skipped spaces between entries.
- Keep in mind that underlining and italics are equivalent; you should select one or the other to use throughout your essay.
- Alphabetize the list of works cited by the first word in each entry (usually the author's last name).

Basic Rules for Citations

- Authors' names are inverted (last name first); if a work has more than one author, invert only the first author's name, follow it with a comma, then continue listing the rest of the authors.
- If you have cited more than one work by a particular author, order them alphabetically by title, and use three hyphens in place of the author's name for every entry after the first.
- When an author appears both as the sole author of a text and as the first author of a group, list solo-author entries first.
- If no author is given for a particular work, alphabetize by the title of the piece and use a shortened version of the title for parenthetical citations.
- Capitalize each word in the titles of articles, books, etc. This rule does not apply to articles, short prepositions, or conjunctions unless one is the first word of the title or subtitle.
- Underline or italicize titles of books, journals, magazines, newspapers, and films.
- Use quotation marks around the titles of articles in journals, magazines, and newspapers. Also use quotation marks for the titles of short stories, book chapters, poems, and songs.
- List page numbers 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.
- 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 provide enough information so that the reader can locate the article either in its original print form or retrieve it from the online database (if they have access).
Basic Citation Forms for MLA Works Cited Lists

Just as the in-text citations have different forms for different types of sources, the citations in a works cited list also have different forms, depending on the type of source. In addition, just as the in-text citation forms are listed many places online and in print, the lists of citation forms for works cited lists can also be found in many places. The following partial list is from The Online Writing Laboratory at Purdue University.

Books

General form

Author(s). Title of Book. Place of Publication: Publisher, Year of Publication.

Book with one author


Two books by the same author

(After the first listing of the author's name, use three hyphens and a period for the author's name. List books alphabetically.)


Book with more than one author


With a source having more than three authors, you may list only the first author followed by the phrase et al. (the abbreviation for the Latin phrase "and others") in place of the other authors' names, or you may list all the authors in the order in which their names appear on the title page.
Exercise 7

You have just learned about three types of citations for an MLA works cited list. Now it is your turn to locate other categories of MLA works cited citations and the format rules for those categories. Look in any of the following locations to find this information and then write it in the blank spaces.

Online sources

http://www.dianahacker.com/resdoc (online source for A Writer’s Reference)
http://www.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar (Capital Community College’s site)
http://owl.english.purdue.edu (Purdue University’s Online Writing Lab)

Books

A Writer’s Reference, 5th edition
MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers
The Bedford Reader, 9th edition

After locating a new category in one of the above sources, first name the new category of MLA works cited citation and then write an example of its format by filling in the parentheses.

Example

Category

Book with one author

Form

1. Category ____________________________
   Form ____________________________

2. Category ____________________________
   Form ____________________________

3. Category ____________________________
   Form ____________________________

4. Category ____________________________
   Form ____________________________

5. Category ____________________________
   Form ____________________________
For this part of the exercise, the category will be written and you are to locate that category in one of the suggested lists and find the appropriate form for it.

1. Article from a reference book

Form

2. Essay in a journal with continuous pagination

Form

3. An article on a web site

Form

4. Essay in a collection

Form

5. Pamphlet

Form
Exercise 8

Now that you have a sense of the different forms for MLA citations in the works cited list, look at the following works cited and decide whether the citations are correctly written. If they are correct, mark a “C” in the blank. If they are incorrect, describe why in the blank. Note: the citations are numbered for the exercise, but should not be numbered in your list.


Answer Key

Answers to Exercise 1 will vary.

Answers to Exercise 2

1. Four or more authors
2. Indirect source
3. Multivolume work
4. Authors with same last name
5. Two or more works
6. Two or more works by same author
7. Verse plays and poems
8. Author named in parentheses
9. Two or more titles by same author
10. Sacred texts

Answers to Exercise 3

1. Citations always appear at the end of the sentence.
2. Citations always appear before the end punctuation, not after.
3. There is no punctuation between the author’s name and the page numbers.
4. There are no abbreviations for page numbers used in the citations.
5. Titles and chapter, paragraph, and section abbreviations.
6. A sentence that contains a signal phrase with the author’s name.
7. Never.
8. Never.

Answers to Exercise 4

1. C
2. (1) The page number must be in parentheses.
3. (Krakauer 227) The author’s last name comes before the page number.
4. C
5. (page number) Remove all information in parentheses and add a page number.
6. (Ansen 76) Remove the comma and page abbreviation.
7. Move the parenthetical citation to the end of the sentence.
8. C
9. (27) Take out the text about the page number and put the numbers in parentheses at the end of the sentence.
10. (Nelson 12) Add a page number to the citation.

Answers to Exercise 5

1. (Krakauer 182)
2. (182)
3. (Into 182)
4. (Pirsig 351)

Answers to Exercise 6
1. Original title of article of short work
2. Separate two names with “and,” three or more with commas
3. Two authors with same last name
4. Indirect source
5. Separate sources with semi-colon
6. Novels with numbered divisions
7.
8. Plays or poems
9. Between multiple sources
10. Multivolume work

Answers to Exercise 7 will vary

Answers to Exercise 8
1. Incorrect, author’s name first
2. Incorrect, underline periodical
3. Correct
4. Incorrect, author’s last name first
5. Correct