MLA 9 Citation Quick Guide

MLA is one of the most commonly used citation styles at the college level. It is the standard citation style for many disciplines in the humanities, such as literary studies and linguistics. This style requires you to cite your sources intext as you use them and in a Works Cited Page at the end of your paper. This handout will provide you with the basics. For more detail, please visit us in the Writing Center.

In-Text Citations

Every time you use a source, you must cite it in-text.

Citing a Short Direct Quote

A direct quote is **the author's own words**. A short quote may range from a single word to several sentences, but should be as short as possible. To cite a direct quote, follow these steps:

- **Introduction** o Identify where the information comes from by stating the author or authors' full name the first time you use them and their last name(s) every time after. Never use just a first name because this can cause confusion if several authors have the same name.
    - o Include some of your own words to help transition to the quote (ex: According to the author, "…").
- **Quotation** o Place the author's words in quotation marks ("…") and make sure you copy <u>exactly</u> what was said/written in the source, including emphases in the original.
- **Citation**
  Include the first word(s) that appear in the Works Cited page entry for the source, making it easy for your reader to look up. This means that the in-text citation should include the first word that appears for the source on the Works Cited page. In most cases this is the author's last name.
    - o The most basic in-text citation includes the author's last name and the page number(s) where the quote can be found.
        - ✦ **Example (known author with page number):** (Smith 3) o If there are two authors, include all authors' last names. If there are more than two, only use the first author's name and add "et al."
        - ✦ **Example (two known authors with page number):** (Smith and James 5)
        - ✦ **Example (three or more known authors with page numbers):** (Smith, et al. 5) o If no page numbers are available, just use the author's las name.
        - ✦ **Example (known author with no page number):** (Smith) o If the author is unknown, use a shortened version of the title and punctuate it using italics (if a book or longer work) or quotation marks (if an article or shorter work).
        - ✦ **Example (unknown author of book with page number):** (*The Jungle* 74-75)
        - ✦ **Example (unknown author of article with page number):** ("A Modest Proposal" 1)
- **Punctuation**
    - o Place the period after the citation. If the quote ends in an exclamation point or question mark these go inside the quotation marks, but there should still be a period after the citation.
- **Explanation**

○ Tell the reader what the quote means, how it fits with other elements you have discussed, and/or its importance to your claims. A good rule is to include at least 2-3 lines of your own ideas alongside every quote. This shows your audience that you have thought through the information.

Example (quoted sentence as focus): In "Unplugged," the author states, "Over the last decade an estimated $2 Billion has been spent on more than 2 million computers for America's classrooms" (Gelernter 314). In this sentence, he is using specific numbers to emphasize just how much importance education has placed on the use of computers in schools. The repetition of 2 also creates a rhythm within the sentence that makes it more memorable for the reader.

Example (quoted sentence incorporated into writer's ideas): The statement that "Japanese kids blow the pants off American kids in math" is supposed to make the American readers feel a sense of shame about the educational system (Gelernter 315).

Example (quoted phrases incorporated into writer's ideas): Gelernter cleverly uses phrases like "fast, shallow romps" and "candy-coated books" to explain the negative effects that computers have on children and their education (314). (*Note: Here you do not have to include the author's name in the citation because the author is clear; however, if you feel safer using it every time, that is ok*.)

Citing a Long Direct Quote

A long quote (or block quote) is **a quote that is more than four lines**. To cite a long quote, use a complete sentence in your own words leading into it followed by a colon (:). Skip to the next line and write the quote. Do not use quotation marks. Instead, indent the entire quote half an inch (.5"). Put the citation after the final punctuation. Then, continue your paragraph on the next line.

Example:

Such a question would take the reader back to the theories of John Locke and would explain why Fielding sets *The Governess* outside of the classroom. Locke discusses the usefulness of imagination:

> However strict an hand is to be kept upon all desires of Fancy, yet there is one case wherein Fancy must be permitted to speak, and be hearken'd to also. Recreation is as necessary, as Labour, or Food. But because there can be no Recreation without Delight, which depends not always on Reason, but oftener on Fancy, it must be permitted Children not only divert themselves, but do it after their own fashion. (Locke 168) Locke believed that children needed to be allowed to play in order to learn.

Citing a Paraphrase or Summary

Sometimes the author does not provide a perfect quote for you to include. In this case, you will need to distill their ideas into your own words. Even though you are using your words, the ideas still belong to the author and must be cited. To cite a paraphrase or summary, create a framework that marks the beginning and end of the author's ideas.

- Introduce the source at the beginning.
- Write the paraphrase/summary in your own words. Make sure you do not use words from the original. This may be several sentences long.
- Place the citation at the end of the last sentence.

Example:

In "The Uses of Passivity," Kies argues that the critic's reactions to Orwell's writing style in *1984* is wrong. Most critics charge that the novel's style is dry and lifeless, attributing this either to Orwell's career as a journalist or to the novel's dreary topic. Even one critic's modest defense of Orwell's style strikes Kies as weak (229).

Works Cited Citations

In addition to citing sources as you use them, you must also include a Works Cited page at the end of your paper that provides more detailed publication information about each of your sources. Below you will find citation formats for some of the most common sources.

Book (Basic)

Last Name, First Name. *Book Title*. Publisher, Year.

✦ **Example:** Morrison, Toni. *Beloved*. Vintage, 2004.

Book (Work in an edited collection)

Last Name, First Name, and First Name Last Name. "Chapter/Section Title." *Book Title*, edited by First Name Last Name of all editors, # ed., Publisher, Year. First and final page numbers.

✦ **Example:** Leon, Kendall, and Stacey Pigg. "Concimiento as a Path to Ethos: Gloria Anzaldúa's Networked Rhetoric." *Rethinking Ethos: A Feminist Ecological Approach to Rhetoric*, edited by Kathleen J. Ryan, Nancy Myers, and Rebecca Jones, 1st ed., Southern Illinois UP, 2016, pp.257-279.

(*Note: If there are more than two authors, write the first authors name followed by "et al." Example: Leon, Kendall, et al.*)

Academic Journal Article

Last Name, First Name. "Article Title." *Journal Title*, vol.#, no. #, Year, First and final page numbers. *Database*.

✦ **Example:** Canagarajah, Suresh. "The Place of World Englishes in Composition: Pluralization Continued." *CCC*, vol. 57, no.4, 2006, pp. 586-619. *JSTOR*.

Online News Article

Last Name, First Name. "Article Title." *Newspaper Title*, Website, Date Published, URL. Date Accessed.
(*Note: If the newspaper title and website are the same, just use the newspaper title.*)

✦ **Example:** Bloom, Deborah. "NASA finds Evidence of Water on Saturn's Moon." *CNN*, 29Jul. 2014, http://www.cnn.com/2014/07/29/tech/innovation/saturn-geysers/index.html. Accessed 22 Feb. 2017.

Page on a Website

Last Name, First Name. "Page Title." *Website*, Date Published, URL. Date Accessed.

✦ **Example:** "Skateboarding." *Wikipedia*, 4 Oct. 2017, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Skateboarding. Accessed 9 Oct. 2017.

YouTube Video

Creator's username. "Video Title." *Website*, uploaded by, Date Posted, Web Address. Date Accessed.

✦ **Example:** Fleischer-Camp, Dean. "Marcel the Shell with Shoes on." *YouTube*, uploaded by Dean Fleischer-Camp, 15 Oct. 2010. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VF9-sEbqDvU . Accessed 24 Feb. 2015.

Formatting the Works Cited Page

Follow these guidelines for creating the Works Cited Page

- The WC page should be its own page at the end of the essay. Use the "Page Break" feature in Word to make sure it is on its own page.
- Title the page "Works Cited."
- Put all sources in **alphabetical order** based on the first word in the citation.
- Double-space the lines.
- If the citation is more than one line long, use a **hanging indent**. This will indent the second (and third) lines of the citation.

Example:

Works Cited

Bloom, Deborah. "NASA finds Evidence of Water on Saturn's Moon." *CNN*, 29Jul. 2014,

    http://www.cnn.com/2014/07/29/tech/innovation/saturn-geysers/index.html. Accessed 22 Feb. 2017.

Canagarajah, Suresh. "The Place of World Englishes in Composition: Pluralization Continued." *CCC*, vol. 57, no.4,

    2006, pp. 586-619. *JSTOR*.

Fleischer-Camp, Dean. "Marcel the Shell with Shoes on." *YouTube*, uploaded by Dean Fleischer-Camp, 15 Oct.

    2010. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VF9-sEbqDvU . Accessed 24 Feb. 2015.

Leon, Kendall, and Stacey Pigg. "Concimiento as a Path to Ethos: Gloria Anzaldúa's Networked Rhetoric."

    Rethinking Ethos: A Feminist Ecological Approach to Rhetoric, edited by Kathleen J. Ryan, Nancy Myers,

    and Rebecca Jones, 1st ed., Southern Illinois UP, 2016, pp.257-279.

Morrison, Toni. *Beloved*. Vintage, 2004.

"Skateboarding." *Wikipedia*, 4 Oct. 2017, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Skateboarding. Accessed 9 Oct. 2017.