MLA Style Quick Guide

What is MLA? What does MLA style mean?
MLA is a particular style or format (a set of rules, essentially) for structuring an essay or a research paper. The style helps your professor see exactly where you found the research that you add to the paper and lays out exactly how the paper should look (margins, titles, page numbers, etc.).

How do I write my paper in MLA style?
If you have never used MLA before, we recommend that you speak with your professor or visit the Writing Center or Library for one-on-one assistance. You can visit the library online at www.csn.edu/library and the writing center at www.csn.edu/writingcenter. You can also follow this quick guide’s instructions to help you make your paper follow the rules of an MLA paper. More detailed instructions are available at http://libguides.csn.edu/MLA.

How should I start?
Step 1 – Set up the paper’s format for an MLA paper before you start to write. See page 6 for information.

In Microsoft Word 2013

Step 2 - Before you begin to write the essay, make a list of all the resources you have found through research that you will use (cite) in the essay. This page is called the Works Cited page and it will be on a separate page and the last page of the paper. See section II below.

Step 3 – Write a rough draft of the essay and mark where you use information (ideas, quotations, or paraphrasing) from a resource. This is called in-text citation. See examples in section III below.

I. Works Cited Page Citations
The Works Cited page lists the long citations for all the sources you cited in your paper and is included at the end of your paper. The purpose of a Works Cited page is to give the reader all the information needed to find the sources that you used. All citations are listed alphabetically, by the first piece of information (usually the author). See the back of this handout for an example Works Cited page.

ELECTRONIC SOURCES

Items found using an online database (such as those provided by the CSN Library) and items found on the free web (such as those you found using a search engine like Google) are cited differently. Be sure to choose the correct format.

ONLINE DATABASES

Online databases accessed through the CSN Library, such as Academic Search Complete or ProQuest, provide access to information from journals, magazines, newspapers and other sources. Many of the online databases have citation tools, which will help create a citation for you. If you use the citation tool, be sure to always check the resulting citation to make sure it’s correct.

View the complete guide at: http://libguides.csn.edu/MLA

CSN Library Services -- Get the Facts!
### Journal, Scholarly or Peer-Reviewed Article from an Online Database


### Magazine Article from an Online Database

Author Last Name, First Name. "Title of Article." *Name of Magazine* Date of Publication: Inclusive Pages. *Title of Database*. Web. Date of Access.


### Newspaper Article from an Online Database

Author Last Name, First Name. "Title of Article." *Name of Newspaper* Date of Publication: Inclusive Pages. *Title of Database*. Web. Date of Access.


- For local newspapers, include the city in brackets after the name of the newspaper. Example:


### Specific Online Pro/Con Article Database Examples

**CQ Researcher**


**Issues and Controversies**


**Opposing Viewpoints In Context**


### eBook from an Online Database

Author Last Name, First Name. *Title of Book*. Place of Publication: Publisher, Year of publication. *Title of Database*. Web. Date of Access.

View the complete guide at: http://libguides.csn.edu/MLA

*CSN Library Services -- Get the Facts!*

- Citations for ebooks and print books are very similar. See common exceptions under Print Books.

**Video from an Online Database**

*Title of Film.* Film Distributor, Year of Release. *Title of Database.* Web. Date of Access.


**Common Exceptions for Online Database Resources**

- If there are 2 or 3 authors, include all names. Example:


- If there are more than 3 authors, use the first author’s name followed by et al. Example:


- If there is no author, omit. Example:


**WEBSITES**

This section contains citation information for things you find freely available on the web (meaning, not things you find by searching on the CSN Library website). You often find them by using a search engine, such as Google. To locate the publisher or sponsor of a website for your citation, look for the copyright symbol © at the bottom of the website, or locate the “About” page.

**Website**

Author Last Name, First Name. “Title of Work.” *Title of Website.* Publisher or Sponsor of Site, Date of publication. Web. Date of Access.


**Video on the Web**

Author’s Name or Poster’s Username. “Title of Video.” *Title of Website.* Publisher or Sponsor of Site, Date of posting. Web. Date of Access.

Common Author Exceptions for Websites

• If there is no author, omit it. Example:


• If there is no date of publication, write n.d. Example:


• If you cannot find the publisher or sponsor of the website, write n.p. Example:


PRINT SOURCES

**Book**

Author Last Name, First Name. *Title of Book*. Place of Publication: Publisher, Year of publication. Print.


• If you have two or three authors, include all names.


• If there are more than three authors, you may write all the names, or the first author’s name followed by et al.


**A Work in Edited Book or Anthology in Print** (Essay, Short Story, Poem, etc.)

This rule is most commonly used for books that have an editor and contain sections, such as essays, short stories or poems, by different authors.

Last Name, First Name of Author of Section. “Title of Section.” *Title of Overall Book*. Ed. Name of Editor or Compiler. Place of Publication: Name of Publisher, Year of publication. Pages included in section. Print.


**Specific Edited Book Examples**

Essay from Opposing Viewpoints Series

Journal/Magazine/Newspaper Article in Print
Most journal, magazine and newspaper articles are currently accessed electronically, usually through an online database. If you are using an article you found in print, see the complete online MLA Style Guide for citation information at http://bit.ly/csn-mla.

MISCELLANEOUS
See information for citing other miscellaneous sources in the complete online MLA Style Guide.

DVD
Title of Film. Name of Director. Film Distributor, Year of Release. DVD.

*Dimming the Sun.* Dir. Duncan Copp. Nova/WGBH and BBC, 2006. DVD.

• You may also include the names of performers, if relevant to your essay.


II. In-Text Citations
When you quote, summarize or paraphrase information you found in a source (book, article, etc.), you use in-text citations to give credit to the creator of the information. The purpose of the in-text citation is to give the reader the information needed to find the source in your Works Cited list. The in-text citation goes directly after the piece of information you included.

Basic Format
(Author’s Last Name page number)
Example: In 1861, a large number of settlers made the trek West (Highman 112).

OR
If you write the author’s name in the sentence, you do not need to repeat it in the parentheses at the end.

Example: Highman notes that in 1861, a large number of settlers made the trek to California (112).

OR
If there is no page number listed, omit it.

Example: One out of three textbooks are purchased as brand new (Johnson).
Example: Johnson found that one out of three textbooks are purchased as brand new.

Common Exceptions for In-Text Citation
• If there are 2 or 3 authors, include all names.

Example: (Highman and Smith 41) or (Highman, Smith and Heart 41)

• If there are more than 3 authors, you may use all the names, or just the first author’s name followed by et al.

Example: (Highman et al. 41)

• If there is no author, use the first piece of information you have from the long citation (on the Works Cited page), which is often the title of the item (title of the article, video, etc.).

Example: (“Diabetes Superfood” 12)

• If an online source does not have page numbers, omit it.

Example: (“Diabetes Superfoods”)
III. Formatting

Sample MLA Paper

Body of Paper

Mary Mack  
Professor Hendricks  
Sociology 113  
24 May 2014

Combatting Childhood Obesity

The rising prevalence of childhood obesity in most developed countries is well recognized, as are the many long-term complications that can occur as a result. The past decade has seen a rapid growth in research into various aspects of this epidemic. However, in most countries, there has been a far slower response in terms of the number of funded policies and services aimed at preventing and treating childhood obesity (“One Out of Three”). To solve this serious health crisis, schools must implement new policies regarding exercise and food service.

According to Maria Golan and Scott Crow, there has been little impact from current school-based physical activity interventions on body mass index among children (357). One explanation for this problem is that “the activity is often not sustained long enough to make a difference” (Harris). Per the American Diabetes Association website, “short duration of exercise can still be useful if one’s diet is healthy” (“Diabetes Superfoods”). Thus, Stephen Sutton argues that school recess and physical education programs are only partially to blame for obesity in children. In fact, the majority of educators feel that solutions can only

Works Cited Page

Works Cited


 ✓ Use Times New Roman, 12pt font
 ✓ All text should be double spaced, with 1 inch margins on all sides
 ✓ Type your last name and page number at ½ inch from top of page
 ✓ Write your name, professor’s name, class and date (note: date is day month year)
 ✓ Center the title of your paper

 ✓ Continue last name and page numbering
 ✓ Type “Works Cited” in center at top of page
 ✓ List all entries alphabetically. If the citation has more than one line, indent the rest of the lines. This special indenting is called a “hanging indent.”
 ✓ Note that the short months are spelled out (May, June, and July) and the long months are abbreviated.