

**MLA- Research Documentation
Modern Language Association**

Belk 207
<https://walc.wcu.edu>
227-2274
Call, visit us, or go online
to make an appointment

This handout is designed to give you quick assistance with using MLA rules for undergraduate papers at WCU. The information presented here is based on the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* (7th ed.). We strongly encourage you to consult this handbook for detailed questions. You can find a copy in the Writing and Learning Commons (Belk 207),
There are also many examples and detailed explanations on the MLA website: <www.mla.org>.

What is MLA?

MLA (Modern Language Association) represents a consensus among teachers, scholars, and librarians in the fields of language and literature on the conventions for documenting research. MLA is used primarily in liberal arts and humanities, but it is common in many classes at WCU. MLA guidelines cover more than just citations; MLA provides rules on the structure, style, and look of a paper, including headings, tables, and research methods.

Formatting Your Paper (See *MLA Handbook* 115-122)

Type and print your paper on 8 ½-by-11-inch paper.

The Title Page

Rules for Works Cited List (See *MLA Handbook* 123-211)

NOTE: Good research requires you to select your sources carefully and read them closely. Start by finding reliable, relevant sources. Develop an understanding of your topic, build your source list, and then start writing. Remember, the research always comes first! All sources should be included in a list at the end of your paper.

Center the title Works Cited at the top of the list, and then **double-space** to start your first entry. Double-space each entry. (See *MLA Handbook* 130)

The first line of each entry is flush with the left margin. The second line and any subsequent lines are indented ½ inch. Use the MS Word Format Paragraph function to create hanging indentations.

New with the 7th edition, every entry includes the publication medium, for example; Print, DVD, and Web. Pay attention to its placement, especially in electronic entries. (See *MLA Handbook* 136, 148, 185, 194)

Only **one** letter space follows periods.

Every entry ends with a period, including electronic entries.

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. (See *MLA Handbook* 86)

Use italics (instead of underlining) for titles of larger works (books, plays, movies, magazines) and quotation marks for titles of shorter works (poems, articles) (See *MLA Handbook* 88)

Corporate authors are organizations. Omit any *A*, *An*, or *The* from the name and also multiple names, and inc. etc. (See *MLA Handbook*

156) See 248-49 for a representative list of publisher name abbreviations.

followed by a page reference. It is better however to include a long name in the text, so that the reading is not interrupted with an extended parenthetical reference. When giving the names of a corporate author in parentheses, shorten terms that are commonly abbreviated : (See *MLA Handbook* 224)

the periodical, the series number or name, volume number, issue number, date of publication, inclusive page numbers (if possible. Use n. pag. If pagination is not available), the title of the database (italicized), the medium of publication (Web) and the date of access (day, month, and year). (See *MLA Handbook* 192)

You should include a URL as supplementary information only when the reader probably cannot locate the source without it or when your instructor requires it. (See *MLA Handbook* 182)

If you present a URL, give it immediately following the date of access, a period, and a space. If a URL must be divided between two lines, break it only after the double slashes or a single processing program to do so. If possible, give the complete address, including *http*, for the specific work you are citing. (See *MLA Handbook* 182)

It is necessary to list your date of access for electronic sources because web postings are often updated, and information available on one date may no longer be available later. (See *MLA Handbook* 185)

the first letter of the first meaningful word in the title. (See *MLA Handbook* 131)

Sources: Scholarly sources are easier to cite than informal ones. If you are having trouble with a citation, look for a more reputable source. For any academic paper, use library resources. Don't just "Google" your topic.

Documentation within Your Paper (See *MLA Handbook* 214-225)

Documentation within your research paper gives parenthetical credit for ALL direct quotations, paraphrases, and summaries of facts, ideas or opinions. What appears inside the parentheses (called an in-text citation or a parenthetical citation) functions as a short, specific address that corresponds to the complete address on the Works Cited list. The position of the in-text citation, usually at the end of the pertinent sentence, shows your reader exactly what information has come from the source and from which page, or its alternative. See 214-19 in the *Handbook*.

An in-text citation includes the last name(s) of the author(s) and page number(s), or the alternative(s), from which a quotation, paraphrase, or summary is taken.

If there is no author, use a shortened version of the title. Article titles and titles of other short works should be in quotation marks. Book, journal, and Web site titles should be italicized.

If you are referring to an entire source, or if a source has only one page, page numbers are unnecessary. If you are using a selection within a larger Web site with no page numbers, choose an alternative such as section name/number or designated paragraph number (do not count unnumbered paragraphs). See **Electronic Sources with Authors** and **Electronic Sources without Authors**.

Once you have cited a source, if you refer to that source again without citing any other source, you may simply put page number(s) in parentheses. This guideline applies only to consecutive citations of one source.

If you are using more than one work by an author, include the title of the work, or a shortened version of a longer title in parentheses.

If you introduce an author/title within a sentence, you need to include only the page number(s) in parentheses. See **Author Mentioned in Text and Pages in Parentheses**.

Page numbers, or their alternative, are *always* provided parenthetically.

For a source with three or fewer authors, list the authors' last names in the text or in the parenthetical citation.

For a source with more than three authors, et al. is used to signify there are three or more authors or editors and it

Source List Examples

Below are the basic formats and examples of sources often used in research papers.

Books (print) (See *MLA Handbook* 148-180)

Books by a Single Author

Debo, Annette. *The American H.D.* Iowa City: U of Iowa P, 2012. Print.

Books by Two or Three Authors

Wright, Laura and Elizabeth Heffelfinger. *Visual difference: Postcolonial Studies and Intercultural Cinema.* New York: Peter Lang, 2010. Print.

Books by More Than Three Authors

Martinez, Diane, Tanya Peterson, Carrie Wells, Carrie Hannigan, and Carolyn Stevenson. *Technical Writing: Comprehensive Resource for Technical Writers at All Levels.* Rev. ed. New York: Kaplan, 2011. Print.

OR

Martinez, Diane, et al. *Technical Writing: A Comprehensive Resource for Technical Writers at All Levels.* Rev. ed. New York: Kaplan, 2011. Print.

Two or More Books by the Same Author

Frye, Northrop. *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays.* Princeton: Princeton UP, 1957. Print.

---, ed. *Design for Learning: Reports Submitted to the Joint Committee of the Toronto Board of Education and the University of Toronto.* Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1962. Print.

---. *The Double Vision: Language and Meaning in Religion.* Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1991. Print.

NOTE: Works by the same author are arranged alphabetically by title (exclude *A* or *The* when sorting).

Books by Corporate/Non-Profit Authors

National Research Council. *Beyond Six Billion* . Washington: Natl. Acad., 2000. Print.

NOTE: Corporate authors are organizations. Omit any *A*, *An*, or *The* from the name. If the corporate author is also

Anonymous Books, Including the Bible

Beowulf. Ed. and Trans. Chickering, Howell D. New York: Doubleday, 1977. Print.

The Holy Bible: New International Version. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984. Print.

Later Editions of Book

Martinez, Diane, Tanya Peterson, Carrie Wells, Carrie Hannigan, and Carolyn Stevenson. *Kaplan Technical Writing: A Comprehensive Resource for Technical Writers at All Levels*. Rev. ed. New York: Kaplan, 2011.

Edited Book with Selections by Different Authors (to cite editor or compiler)

Starnes, Richard D., ed. *Southern Journeys: Tourism, History, and Culture in the Modern South*. Tuscaloosa: U of Alabama P, 2003. Print.

NOTE: You will use this entry only if you are citing the editor or compiler (comp.). If you are citing an individual author within an edited anthology, use **work in collection of writings by different authors** below.

Work in Collection of Writings by Different Authors (to cite an author)

Kinsler, Brent. Mark Twain, Thomas Carlyle and shooting Niagara. *The Carlyles at Home and Abroad*. Ed. David R. Sorensen and Rodger L. Tarr. Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2003. 113-24. Print.

NOTE:

Periodical Articles (See *MLA Handbook* 136-47)

Article in Journal with Volume and Issue Number (applies to most scholarly journals)

Journal of
Communication 50.4 (2000): 70-110. Print.

NOTE: "50.4" indicates the volume and issue numbers of the journal in which the article is found.

Article in Journal with Issue Number Only

Brenton, Keith. *Journal of* op Native American Young Professional.
Western Carolina Magazine 17(2) (2013) 39. Print.

Signed Article in Monthly or Weekly Magazine

Weintraub, Arlene, and *Journal of* - *Business Week* 6 May 2002: 94-
96. Print.

Anonymous Article in Monthly or Weekly Magazine

Journal of *Smoky Mountain News* 10-16 July 2013:
20. Print.

Signed Article in Daily Newspaper

Government Publications (See *MLA Handbook* 174)

Western Carolina University. *20/20 Vision Focusing Our Future*. Cullowhee: Western Carolina. 2012. Print.

United Nations. *Consequences of Rapid Population Growth in Developing Countries*. New York: Taylor, 1991.
Print.

Great Britain. Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Food. Dept. of the Environment, Transport, and the Regions.

Performance

Hamlet. By William Shakespeare. Dir. John Gielgud. Perf. Richard Burton. Shubert Theater, Boston. 4 Mar.

*Performance*¹⁹⁶⁴. Performance.

South African Suite. Chor. Arthur Mitchell, Augustus Van Heerder, and Laveen Naidu. Dance Theatre of Harlem.

Cadillac Palace Theatre, Chicago. 1 June 2002. Performance.

Musical Score or Libretto

Beethoven, Ludwig van. *Symphony No. 7 in A, Op. 92*. 1812. New York: Dover, 1998. Print.

Oakes, Meredith. *The Tempest: An Opera in Three Acts*. Composed by Thomas Adès. London: Faber Music, 2004. Print.

Painting, Sculpture, or Photograph

Rembrandt Harmensz van Rijn. *Aristotle with a Bust of Homer*. 1653. Oil on canvas. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Heckman, Albert. *Windblown Trees*. N.d. Lithograph on paper. Private collection.

Bearden, Romare. *The Train*. 1974. Photogravure and aquatint. Museum of Mod. Art, New York.

Evans, Walker. *Penny Picture Display*. 1936. Photograph. Museum of Mod. Art, New York.

NOTE: N.d. indicates there is no date available.

Interview

Breslin, Jimmy. Interview with Neal Conan. *Talk of the Nation*. Natl. Public Radio. WBUR, Boston. 26 Mar. 2002. Radio.

Poussaint, Alvin F. Telephone interview. 10 Dec. 1998.

Hudson, Michael. Personal interview. 20 Apr. 2009.

Map or chart

Michigan

Advertisement

The Fitness Fragrance by Ralph Lauren. Advertisement. *GQ* Apr. 1997: 111-12. Print.

Cahill, Daniel J. Memo to English dept. fac., Brooklyn Technical High School, New York. 1 June 2000. TS.

Harner, James L. Message to the author. 20 Aug. 2002. E-mail.

NOTE: TS = typescript.

Legal source

Consult the most recent edition of *The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation* (Cambridge: Harvard Law Rev. Assn.; print), available at the Hunter Library Reference Desk. For help with navigating *The Bluebook*, consult Becky Kornegay, reference librarian who specializes in government documents and law, available at the Reference Desk, kornegay@email.wcu.edu, or 828-227-3417.

Pamphlet

Washington, DC. New York: Trip Builder, 2000. Print.

Lenoir Lithographs. New York: Dover, 1994. Print.

MLA: Electronic Information (See *MLA Handbook* 181-193)

When citing websites and other electronic sources, your goal is to provide enough information to help your reader find them. While MLA previously recommended including URLs at the end of all citations, the 2009 guidelines now recommend including a URL **only if finding the source requires it or if your instructor requires it**. Most web sources

Remember, higher quality websites provide more useful information. Further, because web sources can disappear, always download important web information to your files for easy retrieval during the research process.

Basic entry for documents from web sites

Name of author, compiler, director, editor, narrator, performer, or translator

Title of work (italicized if work is entire and independent; enclosed in quotation marks if work is part of a larger work)

If pertinent, title of official Web site (italicized), for example *CNN.com*, *New York Times*, and *Google Maps*

If pertinent, version or edition, for example Vers. 1.2 and 13th ed.

If available, publisher or sponsor, for example Cable News Network, New York Times, and Google; if not available, use N.p. (Note that a comma follows the publisher; otherwise, all entries end with a period.)

Date of publication (day, month, and year); if no date, use n.d.

Medium of publication (Web)

Date of access (day, month, and year)

If your instructor requires a URL address, place the complete <http://> address within brackets < > and end with a period.

See the following example, which includes the optional URL.

Eaves, Morris, Robert Essick, and Joseph Viscomi, eds. *The William Blake Archive*. Lib. of Cong., 28 Sept. 2007.

Web. 30 Nov. 2007. <<http://www.blakearchive.org/blake/>>.

Works without authors

Basketball Named to 2012-2013 WBCA Academic Top 25. *Western Carolina: The Official Site for Catamount Athletics*. Western Carolina University. 18 July 2013. Web. 13 Aug. 2013.

Entire websites

Eaves, Morris, Robert Essick, and Joseph Viscomi, eds. *The William Blake Archive*. Lib. of Cong., 8 May 2008. Web. 15 May 2008.

Salda, Michael N., ed. *The Cinderella Project*. Vers. 1.2. U of Southern Mississippi, Oct. 2005. Web. 15 May 2007.

García Landa, José Ángel, comp. *A Bibliography of Literary Theory, Criticism and Philology*. 13th ed. U de Zaragoza, 2008. Web. 15 May 2008.

Home pages

Belcher, D. O. Home Page. *Office of the Chancellor*. Western Carolina University. 2013. Web. 15 May 2008.

Articles in online scholarly journals, including editorials and reviews

Reconstruction 7.4 (2007): n. pag. Web. 5 June 2008.

NOTE: In the entry above, 7.4 stands for the volume number (7) and issue number (4).

Michigan Family Review 11 (2006). n. pag. Web. 8 Nov. 2007.

NOTE: In the entry above, the Michigan Family Review is published by volume (11) only.

Raja, Masood Ashraf. Rev. of *Voices of Resistance: Muslim Women on War, Faith, and Sexuality*, ed. Sarah Husain. *Postcolonial Text* 3.2 (2007): n. pag. Web 5 June 2008.

NOTE: If no page numbers are available, use n. pag.

Documents from an online database (includes all Hunter Library databases)

Postmodern Culture 10.3 (2000): n. pag. *Project Muse*. Web. 5 June 2008.

NOTE: In the entry above, 10.3 stands for the volume number (10) and issue number (3).

National Parks 72.5/6 (May-June 1998): 20-24. *Academic Search Premier*. Web. 18 Feb. 2004.

Digital file (exists on your computer independently of Web or CD-ROM/ DVD-ROM, for example, PDF file, Microsoft Word file, JPEG file, MP3 file, etc.) (See *MLA Handbook* 210)

American Council of Learned Societies. Commission on Cyberinfrastructure for the Humanities and Social Sciences. *Our Cultural Commonwealth*. New York: ACLS, 2006. PDF file.

Delano, Jack. *At the Vermont State Fair*. 1941. Lib. of Cong., Washington. JPEG file.

Dreamgirls: Music from the Motion Picture.

Sony BMG, 2006. MP3 file.

In-Text (Parenthetical) Citations (See *MLA Handbook* 213-231)

Author and pages in parentheses

This point has already been argued (Tannen 178-85).

NOTE: The period follows the in-text citation.

Author, shortened title, and pages in parentheses

One's death is not a unique experience, for every moment we have lived through we have also died out of into another order (Frye, *Double Vision* 85).

NOTE: MLA includes the title, or a shortened version of it, to identify the exact work by Frye when Frye has two or more works in the Works Cited.

Author mentioned in text and pages in parentheses

It may be

Margaret Wheatley describes how the new physics is changing our perceptions of the world:

Something strange is happening in the quantum world. No longer is there a lonely void. Space everywhere is now thought to be filled with fields, invisible, non-material structures that are the basic substance of the universe. We cannot see these fields, but we do observe their effects. They have become a useful construct for explaining action-at-a-distance, for helping us understand why change occurs without the direct exertion of material "shoving" across space. (48)

NOTE: In a long quotation, parentheses stand outside the final period.

