

MLA DOCUMENTATION

If within an essay you borrow ideas, statistics, opinions, facts, or quotations from any source, you are required in the MLA style of documentation to tell the reader what you borrowed and what source you used. MLA accomplishes this through *parenthetical citations* found within the text (also called *in-text citations*) and a list of Works Cited found at the end of the essay.

IN-TEXT (PARENTHETICAL) DOCUMENTATION--OVERVIEW

In-text documentation is found within the text of the essay as near as possible to the material borrowed and is set off with parenthesis.

- Place the citation at a normal break in the work (at the end of a sentence or phrase) as close as possible to the borrowed material.
- Citations come before most forms of punctuation. If citing quoted material, the citation follows the quotation marks, but comes before the end punctuation: for example: “My dog ran out the door” (citation).
- In an off-set (or block) quotation, the punctuation comes before the citation.
- MLA style does not use the abbreviations *p.* or *pp.* for *page* or *pages*.
- In general, use the first piece of information in a Works Cited entry as the first item in the in-text citation. Include enough information that a reader can find the entry on the list of works cited. Usually, this is the author's last name. If more than one author has the same last name, include the first initial. If this is also the same, use the author's full first name. If there are two works by the same author, include the title of the work, or a shortened version of it, separated from the author's name by a comma: (Smith, *Home* 7). If there is no author given for the work, use the first important word of the title of the work in the citations.
- When shortening titles, begin with first important word of the title (this is also the word you will use when you are alphabetizing on the Work-Cited page). For example, *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* would be shortened to (*Tree*) for the parenthetical citation but NOT to (*Brooklyn*).
- When citing articles in text that have no author, you also begin with the first important word of the title (again this is also the word you will use when you are alphabetizing on the Work-Cited page. For example, “The Runt of the Litter” would be shortened to (“Runt”) for the citation but NOT to (“Litter”). The quotation marks in the citation tell the reader to look for “Runt” in the name of the article.
- If using more than one work in one citation, format each entry in the normal way and separate entries with a semi-colon.

EXAMPLES OF PARENTHETICAL CITATIONS

General Entry:

Delano is described as “a man of such native simplicity as to be incapable of satire or irony” (Melville 287).

Block Quote, Author Cited in Text:

In Melville's text, Delano continuously misreads the activities on the Spanish ship:

Though the remark of Captain Delano, a man of such native simplicity as to be incapable of satire or irony, had been dropped in playful allusion to the Spaniard's singularly evidenced lordship over the black; yet the hypochondriac seemed in some way to have taken it as a malicious reflection upon his confessed inability thus far to break down, at last, on a verbal summons, the entrenched will of the slave. (287)

Paraphrase:

Original Text:

“The singular alternations of courtesy and ill-breeding in the Spanish captain were unaccountable, except on one of two suppositions—innocent lunacy, or wicked imposture” (Melville 288).

Paraphrase:

Delano blames the strange behavior of Don Benito on either some sort of elaborate performance or insanity (Melville 288).

Using One of Two Sources by the Same Author.

The railways forced “cities across England to standardize how they kept time so that the train schedules could be constructed” (Ramsey, “Railways”).

THE WORKS CITED

- On the Works Cited page you list only the sources you use in the essay, but you must list *every* source you use in the essay. This list is found at the end of your essay on its own page (if your text has only two lines on page ten, the Works Cited would still begin on page eleven).
- The words “Works Cited” are centered at the top of the page, and the entire page is double spaced. Each entry uses a hanging indent. This means that the first line of each entry begins even with the left margin and any other lines for that entry are indented half an inch.
- The page is alphabetized by the authors’ last names. If two authors have the same last name, then alphabetize by their first names. If the works are by the same author, or if there is no author, alphabetize by the title of the work (Do not count A, An, or The as the first word of the title –“The College Man in South Africa” would be alphabetized under “C”).

There are some general formats you can follow for the most common types of Works Cited entries. Here is a list of most of the information you might have for your sources. Not *all* of this information is relevant with each entry. In fact, **most entries do not include all of the following information**, but this list gives an overview of the order of any information you *might* need.

General Format for a Book:

Author’s last name, First name. “Title of the Part of the Book.” *Title of the Book*. Ed. Comp. or Trans. Name of Editor, Compiler, or Translator. Edition used. Number(s) of the volume(s) of *Name of the series*. City of Publication: Name of Publisher, Date of Publication. Inclusive Page Numbers. Publication medium.

General Format for an Article:

Author’s last name, First name. “Title of the Article.” *Name of the Periodical* Volume Number.Issue Number (Date of Publication): Inclusive Page Numbers. Publication medium.

General Format for a Web Site:

Author/Editor’s last name, First name. “Title of the Work (*article, poem story, etc.*)” Publication Information for any Print Source of the Material (*In the same format as for that type of print source*). *Title of the Online Site*. Ed. And Name of any Editor of Site. Name of any Sponsoring Organization or Group. Version or Volume number for the Source. Date of Electronic Publication or Last Update. Range or Total Number of Paragraphs, Pages or Sections (*if numbered—if not numbered, omit*). Print medium: Web. Date You Accessed Material.

Works Cited

- Breslin, Jimmy. Interview with Neal Conan. *Talk of the Nation*. Natl. Public Radio. WBUR, Boston. 26 Mar. 2002. Radio.
- Condon, Richard. *An Infinity of Mirrors*. New York: Random, 1964. Print.
- Cooley, Ron. "Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle: Biographical Introduction." *As One Phoenix: Four Seventeenth-Century Women Poets*. U of Saskatchewan Dept of English, 8 June 1998. Web. 27 February 2004.
- "Fighting Resumes at Camp in Lebanon." *New York Times*. New York Times, 1 June 2007. Web. 22 June 2007.
- Flynn, Kevin. "Destination Nation: Nineteenth-Century Travels aboard the Canadian Pacific Railway." *Essays on Canadian Writing* 67.2 (1999): 190-222. *MLA Bibliography*. Web. 1 June 2007.
- Kellet, John R. *The Impact of Railways on Victorian Cities*. Toronto: U of Toronto P; London: Routledge, 1969. Print.
- Melville, Herman. "Benito Cereno." *Nation of Letters: A Concise Anthology of American Literature*. Ed. Stephen Cushman and Paul Newlin. Vol. 1. St. James: Brandywine P, 1998. 278-315. Print.
- Ramsey, Keith. "The Exchange, Bristol." *flickr.com*. 9 May 2007. Web. 10 June 2008.
- . "Railways in the Victorian Period." E-mail to Beth Sutton-Ramspeck. 8 May 2007. Email.
- Spiller, Elizabeth A. "Reading through Galileo's Telescope: Margaret Cavendish and the Experience of Reading." *Renaissance Quarterly* 53.1 (2000): 192-221. Print.
- Sutton-Ramspeck, Doug. 27 May 2005. Personal Interview.

Here Is a Guide to Understanding the Works Cited Page Examples

Book

Condon, Richard. *An Infinity of Mirrors*. New York: Random, 1964. Print.

Book with Two Publishers

Kellet, John R. *The Impact of Railways on Victorian Cities*. Toronto: U of Toronto P; London: Routledge, 1969. Print.

Anthology

Melville, Herman. "Benito Cereno." *Nation of Letters: A Concise Anthology of American Literature*. Ed. Stephen Cushman and Paul Newlin. Vol. 1. St. James: Brandywine P, 1998. 278-315. Print.

Sources by the Same Author

Ramsey, Keith. "The Exchange, Bristol." *flickr.com*. 9 May 2007. Web. 10 June 2008.

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Journal Article

Spiller, Elizabeth A. "Reading through Galileo's Telescope: Margaret Cavendish and the Experience of Reading." *Renaissance Quarterly* 53.1 (2000): 192-221. Print.

Journal Article Found Online in an Html Format

Cooley, Ron. "Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle: Biographical Introduction." *As One Phoenix: Four Seventeenth-Century Women Poets*. U of Saskatchewan Dept of English, 8 June 1998. Web. 27 February 2004.

Online Article with Unknown Author

"Fighting Resumes at Camp in Lebanon." *New York Times*. New York Times, 1 June 2007. Web. 22 June 2007.

Academic Online Article

Flynn, Kevin. "Destination Nation: Nineteenth-Century Travels aboard the Canadian Pacific Railway." *Essays on Canadian Writing* 67.2 (1999): 190-222. *MLA Bibliography*. Web. 1 June 2007.

Interviews

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

Sutton-Ramspeck, Doug. 27 May 2005. Personal Interview.

COMMON ABBREVIATIONS

Adapt.	Adapted by
Anon.	Anonymous
c.	Circa / around this is used with approximate dates
Comp.	Compiled by
Cong.	Congress
Const.	Constitution
Dept.	Department
ed.	Editor, edition, edited by
Et al.	And others
Inst.	Institute / institution
Ltd.	Limited
n.d.	No date of publication
n.p.	No place of publication / no publisher
n. pag.	No pagination
P	Press
Qtd.	Quoted
Jr. / Sr.	Junior / Senior
U	University used in documentation
UP	University press
Vol.	volume

ABBREVIATIONS FOR COMMON PUBLISHERS

Cambridge UP	Cambridge University Press
Harper	Harper and Row, Publishers, Inc.; HarperCollins Publishers, Inc.
Houghton	Houghton Mifflin Co.
Knopf	Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.
Macmillan	Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc.
Norton	W. W. Norton and Co., Inc.
Random	Random House, Inc.
Scribner's	Charles Scribner's sons
Simon	Simon and Schuster, Inc.
State U of New York P	State University of New York Press
St. Martin's	St. Martin's Press, Inc.
U of Chicago P	University of Chicago Press
UP of Mississippi	University Press of Mississippi

These are just some of the abbreviations used in MLA. Refer to the *MLA Handbook* for a more complete list.

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