

MLA

MLA (Modern Language Association) is the method for referencing your sources of information through parenthetical citation in an essay or Works Cited page. The use of MLA citation is necessary both to provide credibility to your work (strengthen your points) and to avoid plagiarism.

PARENTHETICAL CITATION

Author-Page Style for Books

Whenever you paraphrase or take a direct quotation from a literary source you must cite who and where it came from in your essay (and put a complete reference to the material in your Works Cited Page). You can do this two different ways:

- Wordsworth stated that Romantic poetry was marked by a "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" (263).
- Romantic poetry is characterized by the "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" (Wordsworth 263).

The first example puts the author's name in the sentence and the page number in parentheses. The second puts both the author's name and page number in parentheses. Both tell the reader that the information can be located on page 263 of a work by an author named Wordsworth. However, in all cases the page number should come after the quote/paraphrase in parentheses.

Sources From the Internet

With an increase in scholarly work being published on the Internet it is likely you will often have to cite work from an online source. Be cautious when doing this; however, as many websites are not trustworthy sources of information.

When citing online sources one needs simply to include the name of the online article from where their information was gathered in their sentence:

- The Purdue OWL is accessed by millions of users every year. Specifically, the OWL's [MLA Formatting and Style Guide](#) is one of the most popular resources.

URLs for websites (such as www.gdn.edu) that the info came from should appear only on the Works Cited page.

WORKS CITED PAGE

So you've finished writing your paper? What now? Following MLA style you must have a Works Cited page at the end of your essay or research paper. All entries on the Works Cited page must also correspond to the works cited in your main text.

When beginning your Works Cited page make sure to start on a separate page at the end of the paper. Put the words **Works Cited** at the top of the page, do not underline or put them in quotation marks, then center them. Following this, when listing your works cited, make sure to double space between entries.

Here are two basic forms of listing references in a Works Cited page which will correspond to our examples listed earlier:

Citing Books:

Lastname, Firstname. Title of Book. Place of Publication: Publisher, Year of Publication.

Which when corresponding to our earlier example will look like this:

Wordsworth, William. Lyrical Ballads. London: Oxford U.P., 1967.

Electronic or Online Sources:

Name of Site. Date of Posting/Revision. Name of institution/organization affiliated with the site (sometimes found in copyright statements). Date you accessed the site [electronic address].

Now we match this up with our earlier example of in-text citations for electronic sources:

"MLA Formatting and Style Guide." The OWL at Purdue. 10 May 2006. Purdue University Writing Lab. 12 May 2006 <<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/557/01/>>.

Now we have only covered a tiny fraction of all the different ways to use MLA citation or the different scenarios that may arise (more than one author for a book, citing newspapers, or a work with an unknown author), but don't fret! There are several places online (or in books) that can aid you whatever your MLA needs:

The OWL at Purdue –
<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/557/01/>

Cornell University Online -
http://www.library.cornell.edu/newhelp/res_strategy/citing/mla.html

Dartmouth University Online Writing Center –
<http://www.dartmouth.edu/~writing/sources/>

MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers (Gibaldi, Joseph)
(available at most libraries and your Gordon College Writing Center)

As we draw to a close I hope what you have read will give a strong foundation on your road to conquering the ills of MLA citation and start you on your way to becoming a strong and credible writer.