

The Basics of MLA Format

MLA is an acronym for *Modern Language Association*, a group that sets formatting guidelines for academic writing in the humanities.

MLA format is used to:

1. Support your claims in a standard and uniform way.
2. Strengthen your argument with facts, statistics, and other ideas.
3. Add credibility to your work by attributing ownership to any source material used.

MLA requires your essay to follow these guidelines:

- 12-point font, usually Times New Roman
- One-inch margins all around
- Double spaced text throughout the entire essay
- Centered essay title immediately after the heading
- Heading with your name, instructor's name, class abbreviation and number, and date
- Your last name and page number in the header at the top right side of each page

MLA style citation or documentation is done in two ways:

1. In-text (or parenthetical) citation: giving credit to sources within your paper.
2. Work(s) Cited page: a separate page at the end of your essay that provides full publishing information of each source used.

The three basic parts of the in-text citation:

1. Signal phrase or preface (introducing the author and title of work)
2. Direct quote, paraphrase, or block quote
3. Parenthetical citation

THE THREE (3) TYPES OF QUOTES:

1. **Direct quote:** A **direct quote** is one in which you copy an author's words verbatim from the text and use that exact wording in your essay. You must use quotation marks to indicate that these are someone else's words and indicate where you found the source.
2. **Paraphrases:** A **paraphrase** is when you take someone else's idea(s) and put those ideas into your own words. It is still essential for you to indicate that the idea is someone else's by showing where the information came from after the paraphrase.
3. **Block (long) quote:** **Block** form is used for long quotations (four or more lines), in which the quotation marks are omitted because the block form substitutes for quotation marks. Indent the blocked quote half an inch from the left margin. In block quotations, the period at the end of the quotation marks comes before the parenthetical citation.



Example:	Type of quote:
<p>According to Joel Christenson’s work, <i>Homer: A Beginner’s Guide</i>, “Contrary to modern assumptions, Homer is not the beginning of the classical world” (4).</p>	<p>This is an example of a direct quote. First introduced is the signal phrase (or preface) that contains the author’s name and the title of the work. The quote is then followed by the parenthetical citation.</p>
<p>Tolstoy’s novella, <i>The Death of Ivan Ilyich</i>, teaches us that the dread of isolation is not merely caused by someone being alone. Rather, isolation’s dread exists due to the condition of one’s choice to be alone within a highly populated city full of close friends, family and loved ones (122).</p>	<p>This is an example of a paraphrase. Here, no quotation marks are used. First introduced, again, is the author’s name and the title of the work that is examined. This information is then followed by the writer’s own interpretation of an idea in Tolstoy’s novella. Since this is concept is not the author’s original idea, this paraphrase is followed by a parenthetical citation.</p>
<p>Martha Nussbaum’s article “Objectification” points to an interesting misconception in parent-child relationships:</p> <p>The treatment of young children by their parents almost always involves a denial of autonomy; it involves some aspects of ownership, though not all. On the other hand, in almost all times and places it has been thought bad for parents to treat their children as lacking in bodily integrity – battery and abuse, though common, are more or less universally deplored. (262)</p>	<p>This is an example of a block quote. Block quotes are only used when material exceeds four (4) lines of prose and three (3) lines of verse. Again, first introduced is the author’s name and the title of the work. All of the quoted material is indented half an inch from the left margin, and no quotation marks are used. The punctuation is placed after the quoted text, not the parenthetical.</p>

The Work(s) Cited Page:



MLA requires you to give publication information at the end of your essay on its own separate page. Center the title. Your Work(s) cited page requires a hanging indent for all listed sources. Also, all sources are listed in alphabetical order. Below is an example of how each would look:

Last name, First name. *Title of book*. City of Publication: Year of Publication.

Last name, First name. "Title of Essay." *Title of Collection*. Ed. Editor's Name(s). City of Publication: Publisher, Year. Page range of entry.

Author(s). "Title of Article." *Title of Journal*, volume, issue, year, page range of entry.

Author, editor, or compiler name (if available). "Name of Webpage." *Name of Website*. Name of institution/organization affiliated with the site (sponsor or publisher), date of resource creation (if available), URL, DOI or permalink. Date of access (day month year format).