

# MLA Style of Documentation

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## Format of a Research Paper: The Text

- double-space
- 1-inch margins
- header: last name and page number (upper right corner, 1/2 inch from top)
- first page: name, instructor, course, date (flush left)
- title (centered)
- indent paragraphs 1/2 inch
- long quotations (4+ lines): indent whole quotation 1 inch; do not enclose in quotation marks.

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Michael Martin  
Prof. James Sodon  
English Composition I  
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MLA Style of Documentation

The style of documentation developed by the Modern Language Association (MLA) is widely used in scholarly publications of English literature, modern languages, and other humanities. The MLA style uses parenthetical

## Format of a Research Paper: The Works Cited

- start a new page (same margins, spacing, and header)
- Works Cited (centered at top)
- list sources alphabetically
- use hanging paragraphs (1st line flush left; indent subsequent lines 1/2 inch)

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Works Cited

Bryson, Bill. The Mother Tongue: English and How It Got That Way. New York: Morrow, 1990.

Gibaldi, Joseph. MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers. 6th ed. New York: MLA, 2003.

Strunk, William, Jr., and E. B. White. The Elements of Style. 3rd ed. New York: Macmillan, 1979.

## Relationship of In-Text Citations and the List of Works Cited

MLA style uses a parenthetical author-page system to cite sources in text.

Of the 615,000 words in the Oxford English Dictionary, "about 200,000 English words are in common use . . ." (Bryson 13).

□ The in-text citation, in turn, refers to a list of works cited with the source's complete publication information.

Works Cited  
Bryson, Bill. The Mother Tongue: English and How It Got That Way. New York: Morrow, 1990.

## Use parenthetical citations in your text to refer to your list of works cited.

□ Author in signal phrase with page number in parentheses.

Bill Bryson states that of the 615,000 words in the Oxford English Dictionary, "about 200,000 English words are in common use . . ." (13).

□ Author and page number in parentheses.

Of the 615,000 words in the Oxford English Dictionary, "about 200,000 English words are in common use . . ." (Bryson 13).

## Provide complete publication information in your list of works cited.

Common Sources:

### □ Print Sources

- Book
- Short Work in an Anthology
- Article in a Magazine
- Article in a Journal

### □ Electronics Sources

- Article in a Database
- Web Page

## Works Cited: Books

1. Author(s) (first name reversed for alphabetizing)
2. Title of part of a book (in quotations)
3. Title of book (underlined)
4. Editor, translator, or compiler
5. Edition (if other than first)
6. Volume number
7. Name of the series
8. Place of publication: publisher, and date
9. Page number (if part of a book)

## Examples of Books

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### Book

Strunk, William, Jr., and E. B. White. The Elements of Style.  
3rd ed. New York: Macmillan, 1979.

### Short Work in an Anthology

Baldwin, James. "Stranger in the Village." The Norton Reader.  
Ed. Linda H. Peterson and John C. Brereton. 11th ed. New  
York: Norton, 2004. 360-68.

## Works Cited: Articles

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1. Author(s) (first name reversed for alphabetizing)
2. Title of article (in quotations)
3. Title of periodical (underlined)
4. Series number or name (if relevant)
5. Volume number (if a journal)
6. Issue number (if needed)
7. Date of publication
8. Page numbers

## Examples of Articles

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### Article in a Magazine

Fineman, Howard. "Money, Money, Everywhere."  
Newsweek 26 Sept. 2006: 24-31.

### Article in a Scholarly Journal

Haney, Brenda, and Ed Hara. "'Finding' Teaching: A  
Lesson in Collaboration." Thought and Action  
20.1 (2004): 63-72.

## Works Cited: Electronic Publications

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1. Author(s) (first name reversed for alphabetizing)
2. Title of Article (in quotations)
3. Title of book (underlined)
4. Editor, compiler, or translator
5. Print publication information
6. Title of Internet site or database (underlined)
7. Editor of site
8. Version number
9. Date of electronic publication
10. Subscription service
11. Name of posting list or forum
12. Pages numbers
13. Sponsor
14. Date of access
15. URL <in angle brackets>

## Examples of Electronic Publications

### Article in a Scholarly Journal Retrieved from a Database

Coris, Eric E., and William H. Higgins II. "First Rib Stress Fractures in Throwing Athletes." American Journal of Sports Medicine 33 (2005): 1400-04. Academic Search Elite. EBSCOhost. St. Louis Community College Libraries, MO. 26 Sept. 2005 <<http://search.epnet.com>>.

### Web Page

"How Do I Document Sources from the Web in My Works-Cited List?" MLA: Modern Language Association. 4 Dec. 2003. Modern Language Association. 20 Aug. 2005 <[http://www.mla.org/publications/style/style\\_faq/style\\_faq4](http://www.mla.org/publications/style/style_faq/style_faq4)>.

## Capitalization of Titles

- Capitalize the first and last word of a title and subtitle.
- Capitalize all words in between (regardless of length) except the following:
  - articles (*a, an, the*)
  - coordinating conjunctions (*and, but, for, nor, or, so, yet*)
  - prepositions (*for, in, of, from . . .*)
  - infinitive verb particle *to*
- Use a colon and space before a subtitle.

## Dates

The preferred format for dates is day-month-year, with most months abbreviated.

- Use one- or two-digit numerals for day.  
9 Sept. 2005 (**BUT NOT:** 09 Sept. 2005)
- Spell months: Do not abbreviate *May, June, July*. Abbreviate other months with first three letters (*Jan., Feb., Mar., Apr., Aug., Oct., Nov., Dec.*) except *Sept.*
- Write full year in numerals  
20 Aug. 2005 (**BUT NOT:** 20 Aug. 05)
- Do not use a comma in the day-month-year, month-year, or season-year format.

**Note:** Month-day-year format is acceptable, with or without month abbreviated and a comma after day, but be consistent.

## Questions?

### Work Cited

Gibaldi, Joseph. MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers. 6th ed. New York: MLA, 2003.