Using Modern Language Association (MLA) Format

Brought to you by the Purdue University Online Writing Lab.

Purdue's OWL also offers information about other citation methods and electronic sources. We have the following handouts:

- Using APA Format (http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_apa.html)
- Formatting in Sociology(http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/rsearch/r_docsocio.html)

Modern Language Association (MLA) format provides writers with a system for cross-referencing their sources--from their parenthetical references to their works cited page. This cross-referencing system allows readers to locate the publication information of source material. This is of great value for researchers who may want to locate your sources for their own research projects. The proper use of MLA style also shows the credibility of writers; such writers show accountability to their source material. Most importantly, the use of MLA style can protect writers from accusations of plagiarism--the purposeful or accidental use of source material by other writers without giving appropriate credit.

If you are asked to use MLA format, the book to consult is The MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers (5th edition). Copies of this book are on the reference shelves in the Writing Lab (226 Heavilon Hall) and in the HSSE Library; it is also widely available in bookstores, libraries, and at the MLA web site at http://www.mla.org. Included here is a brief summary of MLA style for the research paper.

Paper Format

Your essay should be typed, double-spaced on standard-sized paper (8.5 X 11 inches) with margins of 1 inch on all sides. Unless requested, a title page is unnecessary. Instead, you should provide a double-spaced entry in the top left corner of the first page that lists your name, your instructor's name, the course, and the date. Create a header that numbers all pages consecutively in the upper right-hand corner, one-half inch from the top and flush with the right margin. (Note: Your instructor may ask that you omit the number on your first page. Always follow your instructor's guidelines.) Then center your title on the line below the header with your name, and begin your essay immediately below the title. For example:

```
                                                              Purdue 1

Pete Purdue

Dr.  B. Boilermaker

English 101

12 November 2000

                  Building a Dream: Reasons to Expand Ross-Aide Stadium


        During the 2000 football season, the Purdue Boilermakers won the Big Ten

Conference  Title, earned their first trip to the Rose Bowl in thirty-four years,

and played consistently to sold-out crowds. Looking ahead...
```

Your works cited list should begin on a separate page from the text of the essay under the label Works Cited (with no quotation marks, underlining, etc.), centered at the top of the page. Double space all entries, with no skipped spaces between entries. Notes, if any, should be formatted similarly and should appear on a page before the works cited page. Keep in mind that underlining and *italics* are equivalent; you should select one or the other to use throughout your essay.

Your Works Cited List

This list, alphabetized by the first word in each entry (usually the author's last name), should appear at the end of your essay. It provides the information necessary for a reader to locate and be able to read any sources you cite in the essay. Each source you cite in the essay must appear in your works-cited list; likewise, each entry in the works-cited list must be cited in your text.

Basic Rules

- Authors' names are inverted (last name first); if a work has more than one author, invert only the first author's name, follow it with a comma, then continue listing the rest of the authors. If you have cited more than one work by a particular author, order them alphabetically by title, and use three hyphens in place of the author's name for every entry after the first. When an author appears both as the sole author of a text and as the first author of a group, list solo-author entries first.
- If no author is given for a particular work, alphabetize by the title of the piece and use a shortened version of the title for parenthetical citations.
- The first line of each entry in your list should be flush left. Subsequent lines should be indented one-half inch. This is known as a hanging indent.
- All references should be double-spaced.
- Capitalize each word in the titles of articles, books, etc. This rule does not apply to articles, short prepositions, or conjunctions unless one is the first word of the title or subtitle.
- Underline or italicize titles of books, journals, magazines, newspapers, and films.
- Use quotation marks around the titles of articles in journals, magazines, and newspapers. Also use quotation marks for the titles of short stories, book chapters, poems, and songs.
- List page numbers efficiently, when needed. If you refer to a journal article that appeared on pages 225 through 250, list the page numbers on your Works Cited page as 225-50.

Basic Forms for Sources in Print

The MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers provides extensive examples covering a wide variety of potential sources. If your particular case is not covered here, use the basic forms to determine the correct format, consult the MLA Handbook, or call or email the Writing Lab (765-494-3723) for help.

A book

```
Author(s). Title of Book. Place of Publication: Publisher, Year of

        Publication.
```

Book with one author

Henley, Patricia. The Hummingbird House. Denver: MacMurray, 1999.

Two books by the same author

(After the first listing of the author's name, use three hyphens and a period for the author's name. List books alphabetically.)

Palmer, William J. Dickens and New Historicism. New York:

    St. Martin's, 1997.

---. The Films of the Eighties: A Social History. Carbondale:

    Southern Illinois UP, 1993.

Book with more than one author

Gillespie, Paula, and Neal Lerner. The Allyn and Bacon Guide

    to Peer Tutoring. Boston: Allyn, 2000.

N.B. If there are more than three authors, you may list only the first author followed by the phrase et al. (the abbreviation for the Latin phrase "and others") in place of the other authors' names, or you may list all the authors in the order in which their names appear on the title page.

Book with a corporate author

American Allergy Association. Allergies in Children. New York: Random, 1998.

Book or article with no author named

Encyclopedia of Indiana. New York: Somerset, 1993.

"Cigarette Sales Fall 30% as California Tax Rises." New York Times

      14 Sept. 1999: A17.

N.B. For parenthetical citations of sources with no author named, use a shortened version of the title instead of an author's name. Use quotation marks and underlining as appropriate. For example, parenthetical citations of the two sources above would appear as follows: (Encyclopedia 235) and ("Cigarette" A17).

Anthology or collection

Peterson, Nancy J., ed. Toni Morrison: Critical and Theoretical Approaches.

      Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1997.

A part of a book (such as an essay in a collection)

Author(s). "Title of Article." Title of Collection. Ed. Editor's

      Name(s). Place of Publication: Publisher, Year. Pages.

Essay in a collection

Harris, Muriel. "Talk to Me: Engaging Reluctant Writers."

      A Tutor's Guide: Helping Writers One to One. Ed. Ben Rafoth.

    Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2000. 24-34.

Cross-referencing: If you cite more than one essay from the same edited collection, you should cross-reference within your works cited list in order to avoid writing out the publishing information for each separate essay. To do so, include a separate entry for the entire collection listed by the editor's name. For individual essays from that collection, simply list the author's name, the title of the essay, the editor's last name, and the page numbers. For example:

L'Eplattenier, Barbara. "Finding Ourselves in the Past: An Argument

      for Historical Work on WPAs." Rose and Weiser 131-40.

Peeples, Tim. "'Seeing' the WPA With/Through Postmodern Mapping."

      Rose and Weiser 153-167.

Rose, Shirley K., and Irwin Weiser, eds. The Writing Program

      Administrator as Researcher. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann,

      1999.

Article from a reference book

"Jamaica." Encyclopedia Britannica. 1999 ed.

An article in a periodical (such as a newspaper or magazine)

Author(s). "Title of Article." Title of Source Day Month Year: pages.

N.B. When citing the date, list day before month; use a three-letter abbreviation of the month (e.g. Jan., Mar., Aug.). If there is more than one edition available for that date (as in an early and late edition of a newspaper), identify the edition following the date (e.g. 17 May 1987, late ed.).

Magazine or newspaper article

Poniewozik, James. "TV Makes a Too-Close Call." Time 20 Nov. 2000: 70-71.

Trembacki, Paul. "Brees Hopes to Win Heisman for Team." Purdue Exponent

      5 Dec. 2000: 20.

An article in a scholarly journal

```
Author(s). "Title of Article." Title of Journal Vol (Year): pages.
```

N.B. "Vol" indicates the volume number of the journal. If the journal uses continuous pagination throughout a particular volume, only volume and year are needed, e.g. <u>Modern Fiction Studies</u> 40 (1998): 251-81. If each issue of the journal begins on page 1, however, you must also provide the issue number following the volume, e.g. <u>Mosaic</u> 19.3 (1986): 33-49.

Essay in a journal with continuous pagination

```
Allen, Emily. "Staging Identity: Frances Burney's Allegory of Genre."

        Eighteenth-Century Studies 31 (1998): 433-51.
```

Essay in a journal that pages each issue separately

```
Duvall, John N. "The (Super)Marketplace of Images: Television as

        Unmediated Mediation in DeLillo's White Noise." Arizona Quarterly

    50.3 (1994): 127-53.
```

Basic Forms for Electronic Sources

<u>The MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers</u> provides extensive examples covering a wide variety of potential sources. If your particular case is not covered here, use the basic forms to determine the correct format, consult the <u>MLA Handbook</u>, or call the Writing Lab (765-494-3723) for help.

If no author is given for a web page or electronic source, start with and alphabetize by the title of the piece and use a shortened version of the title for parenthetical citations.

A web site

N.B. It is necessary to list your date of access because web postings are often updated, and information available at one date may no longer be available later. Be sure to include the <u>complete</u> address for the site. Also, note the use of angled brackets around the electronic address; MLA requires them for clarity.

```
Author(s). Name of Page. Date of Posting/Revision. Name of institution/organization

        affiliated with the site.  Date of Access <electronic address>.
```

Web site example

```
Felluga, Dino. Undergraduate Guide to Literary Theory. 17 Dec. 1999. Purdue University.

        15 Nov. 2000 <http://omni.cc.purdue.edu%7Efelluga/theory2.html>.
```

An article on a web site

N.B. It is necessary to list your date of access because web postings are often updated, and information available at one date may no longer be available later. Be sure to include the <u>complete</u> address for the site. Also, note the use of angled brackets around the electronic address; MLA requires them for clarity.

```
Author(s)."Article Title." Name of web site. Date of posting/revision. Name of

        institution/organization affiliated with site. Date of access <electronic address>.
```

Article on a web site

```
Poland, Dave. "The Hot Button." Roughcut. 26 Oct. 1998.  Turner Network Television.

        28 Oct. 1998 <http://www.roughcut.com>.
```

An article in an online journal or magazine

```
Author(s). "Title of Article." Title of Journal Volume. Issue

        (Year): Pages/Paragraphs. Date of Access <electronic

        address>.
```

N.B. Some electronic journals and magazines provide paragraph or page numbers; include them if available. This format is also appropriate to online magazines; as with a print version, you should provide a complete publication date rather than volume and issue number.

Online journal article

```
Wheelis, Mark. "Investigating Disease Outbreaks Under a Protocol to the

        Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention." Emerging Infectious Diseases

        6.6 (2000): 33 pars. 5 Dec. 2000

        <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/eid/vol6no6/wheelis.htm>.
```

E-mail

```
Author. "Title of the message (if any)" E-mail to the author. Date of the message.
```

N.B. This same format may be used for personal interviews or personal letters. These do not have titles, and the description should be appropriate. Instead of "Email to John Smith," you would have "Personal interview."

E-mail to you

```
Kunka, Andrew. "Re: Modernist Literature." E-mail to the author. 15 Nov. 2000.
```

Email communication between two parties, not including the author

```
Neyhart, David. "Re: Online Tutoring." E-mail to Joe Barbato. 1 Dec. 2000.
```

A listserv posting

```
Author. "Title of Posting." Online posting. Date when material was posted

        (for example: 14 Mar. 1998). Name of listserv.
```

```
        Date of access <electronic address for retrieval>.
```

Online Posting

```
Karper, Erin. "Welcome!" Online posting. 23 Oct. 2000. Professional Writing

        Bulletin Board. 12 Nov. 2000

        <http://linnell.english.purdue.edu/ubb/Forum2/HTML/000001.html>.
```

An electronic database

```
Author. "Title of Article." Relevant information for the database. Date of access

<electronic address for retrieval>.
```

Provide the bibliographic data for the original source as for any other of its genre, then add the name of the database along with relevant retrieval data (such as version number and/or transcript or abstract number).

Article in a reference database on CD-ROM

```
    "World War II." Encarta. CD-ROM. Seattle: Microsoft, 1999.
```

Article from a periodically published database on CD-ROM

```
Reed, William. "Whites and the Entertainment Industry."

        Tennessee Tribune 25 Dec. 1996: 28. Ethnic

        NewsWatch.  CD-ROM.  Data Technologies.  Feb. 1997.
```

Other Types of Sources

Government publication

```
United States Dept. of Health and Human Services. Healthy People

        2010:Understanding and Improving Health. Washington: GPO, 2000.
```

Pamphlet

```
Office of the Dean of Students. Resources for Success: Learning

        Disabilities and Attention Deficit Disorders. West Lafayette,

        IN: Purdue University, 2000.
```

Interview that you conducted

```
Purdue, Pete. Personal Interview. 1 Dec. 2000.
```

Advertisement

```
Lufthansa. Advertisement. Time 20 Nov. 2000: 151.
```

Television or radio program

```
"The Blessing Way." The X-Files. Fox. WXIA, Atlanta. 19 Jul. 1998.
```

Sound recording

```
U2. All That You Can't Leave Behind. Interscope, 2000.
```

Film

```
The Usual Suspects. Dir. Bryan Singer. Perf. Kevin Spacey,

        Gabriel Byrne, Chazz Palminteri, Stephen Baldwin, and

    Benecio del Toro.  Polygram, 1995.
```

Advertisement

```
Staples. Advertisement. CBS. 3 Dec. 2000.
```

Handling Quotations In Your Text

Author's Name

MLA format follows the author-page method of citation. This means that the author's last name and the page number(s) from which the quotation is taken must appear in the text, and a complete reference should appear in your works-cited list (see Your Works Cited Page, below). The author's name may appear either in the sentence itself or in parentheses following the quotation, but the page number(s) should always appear in the parentheses, not in the text of your sentence.

Examples:

```
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).
```

```
Wordsworth extensively explored the role of emotion in
```

```
the creative process (263).
```

For nonprint (films, TV series, etc.) or electronic sources, try to include the name that begins the entry in the Works Cited page.

Sometimes you may have to use an indirect quotation, that is, a quotation that you found in another source that was quoting from the original. For such indirect quotations, use "qtd. in" to indicate the source:

```
Ravitch argues that high schools are pressured to act as "social service centers, and

they don't do that well" (qtd.in Weisman 259).
```

Sometimes more information is necessary to identify the source from which a quotation is taken. For instance, if two or more authors have the same last name, provide both authors' first initials (or even her or his full name if different authors share initials) in your citation. If you cite more than one work by a particular author, include a shortened title for the particular work from which you are quoting to distinguish it from the other works by that same person.

Examples:

Two authors with the same last name:

```
Although some medical ethicists claim that cloning will lead to designer children

(R. Miller 12), others note that the advantages for medical research outweigh this

consideration (A. Miller 46).
```

Two works by the same author:

```
Lightenor has argued that computers are not useful tools for small children ("Too Soon" 38),

though he has acknowledged that early exposure to computer games does lead to better

small motor skill development in a child's second and third year ("Hand-Eye Development" 17).
```

Short Quotations

To indicate short quotations (fewer than four typed lines of prose or three lines of verse) in your text, enclose the quotation within double quotation marks and incorporate it into your text. Provide the author and specific page citation (in the case of verse, provide line numbers) in the text, and include a complete reference in the works-cited list. Punctuation marks such as periods, commas, and semicolons should appear <u>after</u> the parenthetical citation. Question marks and exclamation points should appear within the quotation marks if they are a part of the quoted passage but after the parenthetical citation if they are a part of your text.

Examples:

```
According to some, dreams express "profound aspects of personality" (Foulkes 184), though

others disagree.

According to Foulkes's study, dreams may express "profound aspects of personality" (184).

Is it possible that dreams may express "profound aspects of personality" (Foulkes 184)?

Cullen concludes, "Of all the things that happened there/ That's all I remember" (11-12).
```

Long Quotations

Place quotations longer than four typed lines in a free-standing block of typewritten lines, and omit quotation marks. Start the quotation on a new line, indented one inch from the left margin, and maintain double-spacing. Your parenthetical citation should come <u>after</u> the closing punctuation mark. When quoting verse, maintain original line breaks. (<u>You should maintain double-spacing throughout your essay</u>.)

Examples:

```
Nelly Dean treats Heathcliff poorly and dehumanizes him throughout her narration:


          They entirely refused to have it in bed with them,

          or even in their room, and I had no more sense, so,

          I put it on the landing of the stairs, hoping

          it would be gone on the morrow. By chance,

          or else attracted by hearing his voice, it crept to

          Mr. Earnshaw's door, and there he found it on quitting

          his chamber. Inquiries were made as to how it got

          there; I was obliged to confess, and in recompense

          for my cowardice and inhumanity was sent out of the house.

          (Bronte 78)
```

In "Sources," Adrienne Rich explores the roles of women in shaping their world:

```
        The faithful drudging child

        the child at the oak desk whose penmanship,

        hard work, style will win her prizes

        becomes the woman with a mission, not to win prizes

        but to change the laws of history. (23)
```

Adding or Omitting Words In Quotations

If you add a word or words in a quotation, you should put brackets around the words to indicate that they are not part of the original text. For example:

```
Jan Harold Brunvand, in an essay on urban legends, states: "some individuals

[who retell urban legends] make a  point of learning every rumor or tale" (78).
```

If you omit a word or words from a quotation, you should indicate the deleted word or word by using ellipsis marks surrounded by brackets. For example:

```
In an essay on urban legends, Jan Harold Brunvand notes that "some individuals make a

point of learning every recent rumor or tale [...] and in a short time a lively exchange

of details occurs" (78).
```

Note: If there are ellipsis marks in the quoted author's work, do not put brackets around them; only use brackets around ellipsis marks to distinguish them from ellipsis marks in the quoted author's work.

A Note on Footnotes and Endnotes

Because long explanatory notes can be distracting to readers, most academic style guidelines (including MLA and APA) recommend limited use of footnotes/endnotes. An exception is Chicago-style documentation, which relies on notes for all citations as well as explanatory notes. But even in that case, extensive discursive notes are discouraged. Proper use of notes would include:

1. evaluative bibliographic comments, for example:

```
[1] See Blackmur, especially chapters three and four, for an insightful analysis of this trend.

[2] On the problems related to repressed memory recovery, see Wollens pp. 120-

35; for a contrasting view, see Pyle.
```

2. occasional explanatory notes or other brief additional information that would seem digressive if included in the main text but might be interesting to readers, for example:

```
[3] In a 1998 interview, she reiterated this point even more strongly: "I am an

artist, not a politician!" (Weller 124).
```

Footnotes in MLA format are indicated by consecutive superscript arabic numbers in the text. The notes themselves are listed by consecutive superscript arabic numbers and appear double-spaced in regular paragraph format (a new paragraph for each note) on a separate page under the word *Notes* (centered, in plain text without quotation marks).

Revised by Jennifer Liethen Kunka and Joe Barbato, Purdue University, December 2000.