



# MLA Format

The Modern Language Association (MLA) style is widely accepted in most disciplines in the Humanities. This handout provides a quick reference to the basics of using MLA style to format the body of an academic paper, the in-text or parenthetical citations, and the list of Works Cited. For complete and definitive guidelines, please consult Joseph Gibaldi's MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. , [REF LB2369.G53 2003](#). All page numbers provided below refer to the 6<sup>th</sup> and most recent edition of Gibaldi's MLA Handbook.

## Formatting Basics

(pp. 132-141 in MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, 6<sup>th</sup> ed.)

- Choose a standard font such as Times New Roman, in 12-point size.
- Double space throughout paper, including Works Cited page.
- Do not right justify.
- Set margins to 1-inch at top, bottom, and both sides.
- Indent the first word of a paragraph by 1/2 inch or 5 spaces.
- Do not use a title page for the research paper: instead simply type your name, instructor's name, course number, and date. This should be flush with the left margin.
- After that information, center the title of the research paper. The title should not be underlined, put in "quotation marks," or set in ALL CAPITALS. The body of the paper should begin below the title, on the same page.
- Number all pages consecutively. Put numbers in the upper right-hand corner, 1/2 inch from the top and flush with right margin. Type your last name before the page number, and do not use "p." before the number.

SAMPLE FIRST PAGE:

Josephson 1
Laura Josephson
Professor Barnett
Humanities 210
8 November 2008
<b>Ellington's Adventures in Music and Geography</b>
In studying the influence of Latin American, African, and Asian music on modern
American composers, music historians tend to discuss such figures as Aaron Copland,
George Gershwin, Henry Cowell, Alan Hovhaness, and John Cage. Edward Kennedy

## Works Cited

(pp. 142-237 in MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, 6<sup>th</sup> ed.)

The list of Works Cited will appear on a new page at the end of your paper, but it may be helpful to construct it before you begin working on the rest of your paper. Formatting rules for the Works Cited page include:

- Continue page numbering from the body of your paper.
- Center the title “Works Cited.”
- Alphabetize entries by the author’s last name.
- If no author, alphabetize by the title (ignore A, An, The).
- Use a hanging indent.

The following information is required to create complete citations in your list of Works Cited.

### **For books** (pp. 147-179):

- If only citing one chapter within a book, the author and title (in “quotation marks”) of the chapter, essay, or story.
- Name(s) of book’s authors or editors.
- Complete title of book (including subtitle) underlined.
- City of book’s publication.
- Publisher’s name.
- Year of book’s publication.
- Edition (only if 2nd ed. or later).
- Volume number (if there is one).
- If citing one chapter within a book, the page numbers of the chapter, essay, or story.

### **For print journal and magazine articles** (pp. 180-193):

- Names of article’s authors.
- Title of article in “quotation marks.”
- Title of journal underlined.
- Volume number and issue number.
- Date of article’s publication (for scholarly journal article, note year only).
- Page numbers of the article.

### **For journal and magazine articles acquired using an online database** (pp. 229-230):

- Names of article’s authors.
- Title of article in “quotation marks.”
- Journal title underlined.
- Volume number and issue number.
- Date of article’s publication (for scholarly journal article, note year only).
- Page numbers of the article as originally published in print journal.

- Database name underlined.
- Name of location through which database was accessed, e.g. California State University, Los Angeles, Kennedy Library.
- Date accessed, e.g. 1 Nov. 2008.
- Abbreviated URL (web address), e.g. <http://search.ebscohost.com>.

**For websites** (pp. 207-224):

- Name of author or editor (if given).
- Title of web article or web content in “quotation marks.”
- Title of host website underlined.
- Date of latest update to web content.
- Name of sponsoring institution.
- Date accessed, e.g. 21 Mar. 2009.
- Full URL (web address).

### **Examples of Citations**

(Note: All citations are double-spaced, as required in MLA format!)

**Book with one author:**

Conroy, Mike. 500 Comic Book Villains. Hauppauge: Barron’s, 2004.

**Book with two or three authors:**

Trice, Ashton D., and Samuel A. Holland. Heroes, Antiheroes, and Dolts: Portrayals of Masculinity in American Popular Films. Jefferson: McFarland, 2001.

**Book with four or more authors:**

Jimenez, Phil, et al. The DC Comics Encyclopedia : The Definitive Guide to the Characters of the DC Universe. New York : DK, 2004.

**Chapter in a book:**

O’Rourke, Dan, and Pravin A. Rodrigues. “The ‘Transcreation’ of a Mediated Myth: Spider-Man in India.” The Amazing Transforming Superhero: Essays on the Revision of Characters in Comic Books, Film and Television. Ed. Terrence R. Wandtke. Jefferson: McFarland, 2007. 112-128.

**Print journal article with separately paged volumes (include issue number):**

Whitlock, Gillian. “Autographics: The Seeing ‘I’ of the Comics.” Modern Fiction Studies 54.2 (2006): 965-979.

### **Journal article acquired using an online database:**

Thomas, Calvin. "Last Laughs: Batman, Masculinity, and the Technology of Abjection." Men and Masculinities 2.1 (1999): 26-46. Sociology: A SAGE Full-Text Collection. Calif. State Univ., Los Angeles, Kennedy Library. 5 Nov. 2008 <[www.sagefulltext.com/sociology/](http://www.sagefulltext.com/sociology/)>.

### **Website:**

Comic Book Database. Comic Book Database, Ltd. 2007. 15 Nov. 2007 <<http://www.cbdb.com/>>.

### **Newspaper article :**

Jeromack, Paul. "This Once, a David of the Art World Does Goliath a Favor." New York Times 13 July 2002, late ed.: B7+.

## **Parenthetical Citations**

(pp. 238-261 in MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, 6<sup>th</sup> ed.)

- References in your paper must clearly point to specific sources in your list of Works Cited.
- Within parentheses, list the author's name and the page number of specifically cited content (unless referring to entire book/article).
- If you have two authors with the same last name, also include the author's first initial.
- If you have several works by the same author, also include the title (abbreviated if long).
- If no author is listed, use the title (abbreviated if long).
- If using the title, remember to use correct punctuation: underline book titles, use quotation marks for journal articles, short stories, book chapters, etc.
- The author's name can be referred to within the sentence, as below...

**O'Rourke and Rodrigues have argued this point (24-25).**

...or the author's name can be referred to within the parenthetical reference, as below.

**Some scholars have argued this point (O'Rourke and Rodrigues 24-25).**

### **For additional help:**

- Consult Joseph Gibaldi's MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. (call number [LB2369 G53 2003](#)), available at the Reference Desk and on Reserve.
- Refer to the Online Writing Lab (OWL) at Purdue University, <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/557/01/>
- Utilize bibliographic management tools such as...
  - Zotero (Firefox only) - <http://www.zotero.org/>
  - Knight Cite - <http://www.calvin.edu/library/knightcite/>
- Ask a Librarian at any public or college library, or use the AskNow 24/7 internet chat service: <http://www.calstatela.edu/library/asknow.htm>