MLA Style for Research Papers

This guide is provided by the Iowa City Library staff. All information is taken from the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, 6th ed. Check with your instructor for final approval or clarification if you have any questions. 9/2003

PRINT RESOURCES

A Book by One Author (author may be an individual or a commission, association or committee)


Two or More Books by the Same Author (alphabetize by author, then title)


A Book by Two or More Authors (For four or more authors you list only the first name plus “et al.”)


A Book by an Anonymous Author (alphabetize the entry by title, ignoring A, An, or The)


An Anthology or Compilation


A Work in an Anthology


Article in Reference Source: When citing a familiar reference book, do not give full publication information. List only the edition (if stated) and the year of publication.


When citing a less familiar reference book, give full publication information.


**Magazine Published Every Week or Two Weeks** (do not give volume or issue numbers)


**Magazine Published Every Month or Two Months** (use the + sign for non consecutive pages in an article more than one page long)


**Magazine Article by an Anonymous Author** (alphabetize by title, ignoring A, An, or The)


**Article in a Scholarly Journal with Continuous Pagination**


**Scholarly Journal that Pages Each Issue Separately** (the issue number is important)


**A Review** (alphabetize under the title of the work being reviewed)


**Article in a Newspaper** (state specific edition [natl. ed., late ed., etc..])


ELECTRONIC RESOURCES

Basic information for any electronic resource (where applicable):
- Author’s name
- Title of the Document
- Information about Print Publication
- Information about Electronic Publication (title of site, date of publication or latest update, name of sponsoring organization)
- Access Information (date of access, URL)

Entire Internet Site: Scholarly Project or Information Database


Document within a Scholarly Project or Information Database


Magazine article from an online subscription service such as Ebscohost’s MasterFILE Premier

Thompson, Dick, and Dan Cray. “Smog Alert: The EPA Proposes Tough New Clean Air Standards.”


Journal article from an online subscription service such as Ebschohost’s Academic Search Elite

Simon, Robert W., “Revisiting the Relationships Among Gender, Marital Status and Mental Health.”


An Article from a Newspaper or Newswire
   <http://128.255.60.56/index.html>.

A Part of an Online Book

An Online Government Publication
   <http://www.ncjrs.org/txtfiles/pgang.txt>.

Online Periodical article with no print equivalent

Personal or Professional Site

Posting to a Discussion List
Treelo, M. “Cloth or Disposable?” Online posting. 2 Mar. 1999. 23 Mar. 1999

A Letter to the Editor
   <http://128.255.60.56/index.html>.

E-mail Communication
MISC. NON-PRINT RESOURCES

Film or videorecording: Include title, director, distributor and year of release. You may include additional data (performers, etc.) between the title and distributor. If citing a videocassette, DVD, or other medium, include the original release date and the medium before the distributor name.

**Medicine at the Crossroads.** Prod 13/WNET and BBC TV. Videocassette. PBS Video, 1993.

**Matrix.** Dir. Wachowski Brothers. Perf. Keanu Reeves and Laurence Fishburne. 1999. DVD.


Sound Recording
“The person cited first (e.g. the composer, conductor, or performer) depends on the desired emphasis.” List title, artist(s), manufacturer, and year of issue.


Painting, Sculpture, or Photograph: artist’s name, title, institution that houses work.

**Lasansky, Mauricio.** *Young Nahua Dancer.* Cedar Rapids Museum of Art, Cedar Rapids.

Painting, Sculpture, etc., from a Photograph in a publication:


Pamphlet - Treat a pamphlet as you would a book

Interview that you conducted

**Poussaint, Alvin F.** Telephone Interview. 10 Dec. 1990.

**Madonna.** Personal Interview. 22 July 1993.

Interview that has been broadcast on TV or radio

Formatting, footnoting, and parenthetical references

Citing resources used in writing your paper is accomplished by including a complete list of works cited at the end of your paper, and by referring to that list with parenthetical references within your paper.

Format of “bibliography” or “works cited” list (MLA chapter 5):

The works cited list should be included at the end of a paper, and should start on a fresh page, continuing pagination from your paper. Entries should be arranged alphabetically by the author’s last name, or the title, whichever comes first in your citation. Multiple entries by the same author should be alphabetized by author, then title. The first line of each citation should be flush with the left margin, and subsequent lines should be indented 5 spaces, or one-half inch. (If using Microsoft Word, this can be accomplished by clicking on Format, then Paragraph, and choosing Indentation, Hanging.) Entries should be double-spaced, within and between entries.

Example:


Parenthetical citations (MLA chapter 6):

The preferred MLA documentation style is parenthetical citations which refer to your works cited list. These are written directly after the quote or reference to the work in your paper, and include the author’s last name and the page number you’re referring to. If you refer to the author in the preceding sentence, you include just the page number.

Examples:

“He lived by the rising and setting of the sun, in a pocket outside time” (Coetzee 82).

Davenport-Hines tracks the use of opium and morphine for “chronically ill patients” with a variety of illnesses back to the late 1800’s (105).

Other rules:

- If there are two different authors with the same last name in your bibliography, include the author’s first initial in your parenthetical citation. If the first initial is also shared, include the first and last name:  (A. Miller 98) or (Arthur Miller 98)
- If there is more than one author, give the first author, then “et al.”:  (Johnson et al. 301-303)
- If the work is listed by title, use the title, shortened or in full:  (Pursuit 89)