Format Papers Correctly

First impressions mean a lot, and it is important to make certain that research papers follow the formatting guidelines established in Chapter 4 of the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*.

- Use white 8½ by 11 inch paper and print in black.
- Use a standard typeface such as Times New Roman. Avoid unusual typefaces.
- Use a 12-point font.
- Double-space between all lines of the manuscript.
- Don’t justify the right margin
- Except for page numbers, leave margins of one inch at the top and bottom and on both sides of the text. Number pages consecutively throughout the paper in the upper right-hand corner, one-half inch from the top and flush with the right margin. Type your last name and leave a space before the page number.
- A research paper does not need a title page. Instead, beginning one inch from the top of the first page and flush with the left margin, type your name, your instructor’s name, the course number, and the date on separate lines, double-spacing between the lines. Double space again and center the title. Do not underline your title or put it in quotation marks.
- Indent the first line of each paragraph five spaces.

Use the Correct Form for In-text Citations and for the Works Cited Page

You must cite material that you paraphrase, summarize, or directly quote in your paper. Document your paper throughout by citing the author (or keyword of title if there is no author) and page number for the works you have used in your research in parentheses at the end of the sentence containing the information you are citing. This style of citation briefly identifies the source for the readers and enables them to locate the source of information in the alphabetical works cited list at the end of your paper. References cited in text must appear in the works cited list; conversely, each entry in the works cited list must be cited in text. Because the purpose of listing references is to enable readers to retrieve and use the sources, reference data must be correct and complete. The parenthetical citation that concludes the following sentence is typical of MLA style.

**Example:** Ancient writers attributed the invention of the monochord to Pythagoras, who lived in the sixth century BC (Marcuse 197).

(Note that the information in this example is paraphrased, not directly quoted, yet the information still requires a citation.)

The citation (Marcuse 197) tells readers that the information in the sentence is derived from page 197 of a work by an author named Marcuse. If readers want more information about this source,
they can turn to the works cited list, where, under the name Marcuse, they would find the following information.


**Examples of Common In-text Citations**

- **Author not named in text:** One researcher concludes that “women impose a distinctive construction on moral problems” (Gilligan 105).

- **Author named in text:** According to Gilligan, “women impose a distinctive construction on moral problems” (105).

- **If you wish to cite an entire work**—whether a print source or a non-print source, it is usually preferable to include in the text, rather than in parenthetical reference, the name of the author and the title of the work.
  
  **Example:** Fukuyama’s *Our Post human Future* includes many examples of this trend.

- **A work with no author listed:** In a parenthetical reference to a work alphabetized by title in the works cited list, the full title (if brief) or a shortened version using the first important keyword of the title precedes the page or section number. When abbreviating the title, begin with the word by which the title is alphabetized.
  
  **Example:** “The barber shop was a relic of the 1880s” (“Cruelest Cut” 31). This will be cited on the works cited page by the title “Cruelest Cut.”

- **A work with two or three authors:** If the source has two or three authors, give all their last names in the text or in the citation. Separate last two authors’ names with “and.”
  
  **Example:** (Smith, Jones, and Bailey 112).

- **A work with more than three authors:** If the source has more than three authors, list the first author’s name followed by “et al.” (Latin abbreviation for “and others.”)
  
  **Example:** (Smith et al. 112).

- **Citing two or more works by the same author:** In a parenthetical reference to one of two or more works by the same author, put a comma after the author’s last name and add a keyword of the title of the work followed by the relevant page reference.
  
  **Example:** (Durant, *Age* 214).

- **A personal interview:** Indicate with a phrase that the material comes from an interview.
  
  **Example:** In a recent interview, Professor Smith indicated that . . . .

  On the works cited page, list the interview in the following fashion:
  
  **Example:** Smith, Lynn. Personal interview. 19 Dec. 1993.

- **Electronic sources:** Cite an electronic source as you would any other source, usually by author’s name or, if there is no author, by title. Do not use page numbers with electronic sources; you may use paragraph (par. or pars.) numbers if they are provided.
Examples: Twins reared apart report similar feelings (Palfrey, pars. 6-7).

- **Government publications or works with corporate authors:** If the author of the work is listed as a government body or a corporation, cite the work by that organization’s name. If the name is long, work it into the text to avoid an intrusive citation.
  
  **Examples:** A 1996 report by the Hawaii Department of Education predicts an increase of enrollments (6). Or “Unemployment fell during the first half of 1999” (US Dept. of Labor 47).

- **A literary work:** Novels, plays, and poems are often available in many editions, so provide information that will help readers find the passage you cite no matter what edition they consult. For novels, cite page number first, add a semicolon, and then give other identifying information, using appropriate abbreviations.

  **Example:** Raskolnikov first appears in *Crime and Punishment* as a man contemplating a terrible act but frightened of meeting his talkative landlady on the stairs (Dostoevsky 1; pt 1; ch.1).

  For poems that are not divided into parts, you can omit the page numbers and supply the line number(s) for the quotation. To prevent confusion with page numbers, precede the line number(s) with “line” or “lines” in the first citation; then just use the number(s). For verse plays and poems that are divided into parts, omit a page number and cite the appropriate part or act (and scene, if any), plus the line number(s). Use Arabic numerals for parts, including acts and scenes.

  **Example:** Later in *King Lear* Shakespeare has the disguised Edgar say, “The prince of darkness is a gentleman” (3.4.147). The citation indicates that the quote is from Act 3, Scene 4, line 147.

- **The Bible:** When you cite passages of the Bible in parentheses, abbreviate the title of any book longer than four letters—for instance, “Gen.” for Genesis. Then give the chapter and verse(s) in Arabic numerals. The first time you cite from scripture, state in the text or in the parenthetical citation the element that begins the entry on the Works Cited page (usually the name of the edition)

  **Example first citation:** According to the Bible, at Babel God “did ... confound the language of all the earth” (*New Jerusalem Bible*, Gen.11.9).

  **Example for following citations:** According to the Bible, at Babel God “did ... confound the language of all the earth (Gen. 11.9).

  **Example of Works Cited Entry:**


**Long quotes:** If a quotation runs to more than four lines in your paper, set it off from your text by beginning a new line, indenting one inch (ten spaces) from the left margin, and typing it double-spaced, without adding quotation marks. A colon generally introduces a quotation displayed in this “block quote” fashion, though sometimes the context may require a different punctuation mark or none at all. If you quote only a single paragraph or part of one, do not indent the first line more than the rest. A parenthetical reference to a prose quotation set off from the text follows the last line of the quotations. (The citation comes after the period with block quotes.)

**Works Cited**

As the heading indicates, the works cited page contains all the works that you cite in your text. The works cited page is double spaced and the second and subsequent lines of each source are indented five spaces (hanging indentation). The basic format for entries on the works cited page...
includes the following elements: 1) **Author.** Use the author’s full name: last name first, followed by a comma, and then the first name and middle name or initial. End the name with a period and one space. 2) **Title.** Give the full title, including any subtitle. Italicize titles of books and long works, but put titles of shot works inside quotation marks. Capitalize all important words, separate the main title and the subtitle with a colon followed by one space, and end the title with a period and one space. 3) **Publication information.** The city of publication, followed by a colon and one space, the name of the publisher, followed by a comma, and provide date of publication, ending with a period. **Close the citation with the medium of publication, for example, Print, CD, DVD, or other publication format.**

- **A book by one author**
  
  **Example:** Tatar, Maria. *Off with Their Heads.* Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1982. Print. *(note that the citation ends with the medium of publication)*

- **A book by two or more authors:**
  
  To cite a book by two or three authors, give their names in the same order as they appear on the title page. Reverse only the name of the first author, add a comma, and give the other name or names in normal form. If the persons listed on the title page are editors, translators, or compilers, pace a comma (not a period) after the final name and add the appropriate abbreviations (eds., trans, or comps. for “editors,” “translators,” or “compliers.”
  
  

- **Two or more books by the same author:** To cite two or more books by the same author, give the author’s name in the first entry only. Thereafter, in place of the name, type three hyphens, followed by a period and the title. The three hyphens stand for exactly the same name as in the preceding entry.
  
  

- **A work in an anthology** (stories and essays collected in larger, bound collections): Follow the same procedure for books but include editor and page numbers for selection.
  

- **An article in a reference book:** Treat an encyclopedia article or a dictionary entry as you would a piece in a collection, but do not cite the editor of the reference work. If the article is signed, give the author first; if it is unsigned, give the title first. If the encyclopedia or dictionary arranges articles alphabetically, you may omit volume and page numbers.
  

- **A pamphlet:** Treat a pamphlet as you would a book. If there is no author, cite by title and give as much information as possible about the publisher and date of publication.
• **A government publication:** If you do not know the author of the document, cite as author the government agency that issued it—that is, state the name of the government first, followed by the name of the government agency, using an abbreviation if the context makes it clear. In citing the Congressional Record (abbreviated *Cong. Rec.*), give only the date and page numbers (*Cong. Rec.* 7 Feb. 1973: 3831-51). In citing other congressional documents, include such information as the number and session of Congress, the house (S stands for Senate, HR for House of Representatives), and the type and number of the publication. The usual publication information comes next (place, publisher, and date). Most federal publications, regardless of the branch of government issuing them, are published by the Government Printing Office (GPO), in Washington, D.C.


• **A signed article in a journal with continuous pagination:** Some journals number the pages of issues consecutively throughout a year, so that issue number 3 might begin on page 261. For this kind of journal, give the volume number after the title and place the year of publication in parentheses.


• **A signed article in a journal that pages issues separately or that numbers only issues, not volumes:** Provide volume and number separated by a period.


• **A signed article in a monthly or bimonthly magazine:** Abbreviate all months except May, June, and July. Don’t place the date in parentheses, and don’t provide a volume or issue number.


• **A signed article in a weekly or biweekly magazine** (date includes a day).


• **A signed article in a daily newspaper:** The name of the paper appears without *A, An* or *The*. If the newspaper lists an edition at the top of the first page, include that information. If the paper is divided into lettered or numbers sections, provide the section designation. Use a + sign to indicate that the story begins on one page and is continued on a later page.


• **An unsigned article:** The article is cited by keyword or the title if there is no author.


• **Electronic sources:**

  Internet sites, such as information databases, scholarly projects, professional Web sites, and online periodicals, vary significantly in the publication information they provide. Most works on the Web are nonperiodical—not released on a regular schedule, but sometimes it is important to indicate that a work consulted on the Web also appeared in another medium. In the past, a ULR
was required for these sources. While no longer required, some instructors may ask for the ULR of the site. If you include the URL, place it in reverse angle brackets:

<www.descant.tcu.edu>

**A Work cited only on the Web**

An entry for a nonperiodical publication on the Web usually contains most of the following components, in sequence:

1. Name of the author, compiler, director, editor, narrator, performer, or translator of the work.

2. Title of the work (italicized if the work is independent; in roman type and quotation marks if the work is part of a larger work.

3. Title of the overall Web site (italicized), if distinct from item 2.

4. Version or edition used.

5. Publisher or sponsor of the site; if not available, use *N.p.*

6. Date of publication (day, month, and year, as available); if nothing is available, use *n.d.*

7. Medium of publication (*Web*)

8. Date of access (day, month, and year)

Each item is followed by a period except the publisher or sponsor, which is followed by a comma. Untitled works may be identified by a genre label (e.g., *Home page, Introduction, Online posting*), neither italicized nor enclosed in quotation marks, in the place where the title goes. If not otherwise recorded in the entry, the name of a creator of the overall Web site, such as its editor, may be listed following the title of the site. If you cannot find some of this information, cite what is available. Here are some common examples of Web citations as they appear on the Works Cited page:


**Work Obtained from a Database**

To cite a work from a periodical in an online database, such as an article, a review, an editorial, or a letter to the editor, begin the entry by following the recommendations citing works in print periodicals, but drop the medium of original publication (*Print*). A periodical article on the Web may not include page numbers. If possible, give the inclusive page numbers or, when pagination is not continuous, the first page number and a plus sign; if pagination is not available, use *n. pag.* Conclude the entry with the following items:

1. Title of the database (italicized)
2. Medium of publication consulted (*Web*)
3. Date of access (day, month, and year)

If the guidelines you are following call for supplementary bibliographic information after the medium of publication, this information should be included immediately before item 1 above (see the Richardson entry). Here are examples of entries for periodical publications collected in online databases:


Scholarly journals

Some scholarly journals exist only in electronic form on the Web, while others appear both in print and on the Web. Following the legacy of print periodicals, most scholarly journals on the Web are organized by volume number (usually on an annual basis) and include issue numbers and the dates of publication. To cite a work in a scholarly journal on the Web, including an article, a review, an editorial, and a letter to the editor, begin the entry by following the recommendations for citing works in print periodicals, but do not give Print as the medium of publication. A periodical publication on the Web may not include page numbers, or it may include page numbers in a new sequence for each item rather than continuously across the entire issue. In such cases, use n. pag. in place of inclusive page numbers (see fig. 32). Conclude the entry with the following items:

1. Medium of publication consulted (Web)
2. Date of access (day, month, and year)

If the guidelines you are following call for supplementary bibliographic information after the medium of publication, this information should be included immediately before item 1 above. Here are examples of entries for scholarly journals on the Web:


For additional details on citations of electronic sources refer to chapter five of the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*.

**A Sample Works Cited Page**

Works Cited


**Revised July 2009** (Much of this document was taken word for word from the *MLA Handbook of Research Papers, seventh edition*, and this document is meant only to be used for supplemental, instructional purposes.)