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Modern Language Association [MLA] General Guidelines

When documenting a source using MLA, you have the choice of citing an author using an in-text signal phrase or with a parenthetical citation at the end of the sentence. In the following handout, both ways of documenting are presented.

All information garnered from a source not your own **must** be cited. When using directly quoted material, you must give the page numbers or location reference where the information can be found. You must also cite the page numbers for any ideas or information borrowed from another source including summaries, paraphrases, statistics, specific facts, or visuals.

The following handout is divided into three sections. The first section details general MLA formatting guidelines. The second section details the most common types of in-text citation styles used in MLA. The third section details how to create Works Cited entries for the most common types of sources.

MLA Formatting Guidelines

- Typically, MLA papers will not have a title page. On the first page of the document, left justify and double-space the following information: Name, professor's name, class information, due date. For example:

Benjamin Syn

Professor McCandless

English 1020

31 Oct 2009

- The full title of the paper is centered just below the aforementioned paper information.
- In the top right hand corner of every page, list your last name and the page number. You will have a page number on every page, including the first and your works cited.
- When mentioning the title of an article (or poem, song, etc.) in text, place it in quotation marks. Example: John Varkman's article "The Moon is the Future" notes that the American government should begin planning more moon missions (8).
- When mentioning the title of a book (or film, sculpture, etc.) in text, italicize the title. Example: George Yardley's book *The Future Mars Missions* notes that astronauts will have to recycle many materials on the spacecraft to make those missions a success (99).

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In-text citation styles	
In signal phrase, one author:	George Yuks states that “most modern television programs lack emotional depth” (8).
In signal phrase, two-three authors	According to Ronald Gorky and Omar Jacobs, “The Soviet Moon program had many successes (99).
Parenthetical citation, single author	Moreover, “Most modern television programs lack emotional depth” (Yuks 8).
Parenthetical citation, two-three authors	In fact, “The Soviet Moon program had many successes” (Gorky and Jacobs 99).
Four or more authors	<p>When citing sources with four or more authors, listed only the first author’s name followed by “et al.”</p> <p>The study found that most Americans believe that the moon landings occurred” (Varkland et al. 88).</p>
Unknown page number	<p>According to Fuller, “Conspiracy theories that question America’s landing on the moon have no merit.”</p> <p>OR:</p> <p>In fact, “Conspiracy theories that question America’s landing on the moon have no merit” (Fuller).</p>
Corporate Authors	<p>Corporate authors are cited in the same fashion as individual authors:</p> <p>The Corporation for Freedom of Military Information notes that the United States Department of Defense coordinates the military activities of the United States and has a budget of \$400 billion (3-4).</p> <p>OR:</p> <p>The United States Department of Defense coordinates the military activities of the United States and has a budget of \$400 billion (Corporation for Freedom of Military Information 3-4).</p>
Indirect Source	<p>At times, quoted words or important information can be found in a source written by someone else:</p> <p>According to Karl Taylor, “General Patton had a unique style of command” (qtd. in Franklin 24).</p>
Sources with no authors listed	<p>At times, no authors can be identified to cite as an author (e.g., some encyclopedias, dictionaries, or websites). In this instance, cite the title of the article or entry without the page number:</p> <p>Coronal mass ejections can disrupt communications on earth (“Coronal mass ejections”).</p>
Two or more authors/works	<p>At times it is necessary to draw attention to the fact that numerous studies, works, or authors have come to similar conclusions or have had similar research. In this instance, alphabetically cite the authors in the parenthetical citation:</p>

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	The effect of weightlessness on tiny screws has been studied extensively (Farkley 50; Potsticker 699; Zooley 2).
Title mentioned in text	In other cases (e.g., short stories, novels, and plays without parts or line numbers), it is necessary to mention both the author and the title of the work: George Qarnioti’s “The Luna Program” notes that the Soviets were able to land unmanned probes on the moon (67).
Verses in a play	When citing specific lines from a play, give the act, scene, and line numbers: Shakespeare’s <i>Richard III</i> opens with Gloucester stating, “Now is the winter of our discontent” (1.1.1).

- When creating a Works Cited page, the words **Works Cited** should be typed and centered at the top of the page. Sources should be alphabetized based upon the author(s)’ last name. For each reference, the first line of the citation will be left justified in the document with each subsequent line indented ½ inch.
- When works have two or three authors, list the authors how they are listed in the source and reverse only the first author. Example: Brunsfeld, George, Tallis Denmark, and Dennis Pomar.
- When works have four authors or more, you have the choice of listing all of the authors or naming the first author followed by “et al.” Example: Franks, John, Jane Goldstein, Georgia Lupin, and Charles Vardman. **OR:** Franks, John, et al.
- When citing journals, cite the volume and issue numbers. Occasionally, some journals have only volume numbers and no issue numbers; the following handout details both.
- In the Works Cited page, the names of books, journals, newspapers, and website titles are italicized; however, articles and webpages are placed in quotes.
- At the very end of a works cited entry, place the medium that you found the information: Print, Web, CD, PDF File, Film, etc. (For Web entries, place the date of access after the word “Web.”)

Document Types	MLA	Works Cited entries
An Article in Scholarly Journal	5.4.2.	Connelly, Deborah S. “To Read or Not To Read: Understanding Book Censorship.” <i>Community & Junior College Libraries</i> . 15.2 (2009): 83-90. PDF.
An Article in a Newspaper	5.4.5.	Wines, Michael. “China: Censors Bar Mythical Creature.” <i>New York Times</i> , 30 Mar 2009: 8. Print.

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An Article in a Magazine	5.4.6.	Liu, Melinda. "Blog the Record Straight." <i>Newsweek</i> 9 Oct 2009: 9. Print.
A Review	5.4.7.	Freeman, Lisa A. "Exit Lord Chamberlain, Stage Left." Rev. of <i>Theatre Censorship: From Walpole to Wilson</i> , by David Thomas, David Carlton and Anne Etienne. <i>TLS</i> , 7 Nov 2008: 23. Print.
A Book by a Single Author	5.5.2.	Heins, Marjorie. <i>Not in Front of the Children: Indecency, Censorship, and the Innocence of Youth</i> . Piscataway, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2007. Print.
An Anthology or Collection	5.5.3.	Byrd, Cathy and Susan Richmond, eds. <i>Potentially Harmful: The Art of American Censorship</i> . Atlanta: Georgia State University, 2006. Print.
A Book by Two or More Authors	5.5.4.	Karolides, Nicholas J., Margaret Bald, and Dawn B. Sova. <i>100 Banned Books: Censorship Histories of World Literature</i> . New York: Checkmark Books, 1999. Print.
A Book by a Corporate Author	5.5.5.	Feminists Against Censorship. <i>Pornography and Feminism: The Case Against Censorship</i> . Eds. Gillian Rodgerson and Elizabeth Wilson, eds. London: Lawrence & Wishart Ltd., 1991. Print.
A Work in an Anthology	5.5.6.	Rosenblatt, Roger. "We Are Free to Be You, Me, Stupid, and Dead." Eds. Paul Eschholz, Alfred Rosa, and Virginia Clark. <i>Language Awareness</i> . 10th ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2009. 453-58. Print.
An Article in a Reference Book	5.5.7.	"Censorship." <i>Oxford English Dictionary</i> . 2 nd ed. 1989. Print.
A Work Cited Only on the Web (including optional URL)	5.6.2.b.	"The Right to Sext: Sending Nude Photos of Oneself is a Right." <i>ncac.org</i> . Natl. Coalition Against Censorship, 26 Mar. 2009. Web. 15 Apr. 2009. < http://www.ncac.org/The-Right-to-Sext-Sending-Nude-Photos-of-Oneself-is-a-Right >.
A Periodical Publication in an Online Database	5.6.4.	Rich, Motoko. "Amazon Ranking Errors Ignite a Twitter-Fed Outrage." <i>New York Times</i> , 14 Apr. 2009: 1. <i>EBSCO</i> . Web. 15 Apr. 2009.
A Film or a Video Recording	5.7.3.	<i>This Film Is Not Yet Rated</i> . Dir. Kirby Dick. Independent Film Channel, 2006. Film.
A Work of Visual Art	5.7.6.	Fergus, Daniel C. <i>Censorship</i> . Watercolor, ink, and color pencil. Private collection.
An Interview	5.7.7.	Hansen, James and Mark Bowen. Interview by Terry Gross. <i>Fresh Air</i> . Natl. Public Radio, WHYY, Philadelphia. 8 Jan. 2008. Radio.