

MLA (Modern Language Association) Formatting and Style Guide (9th edition)

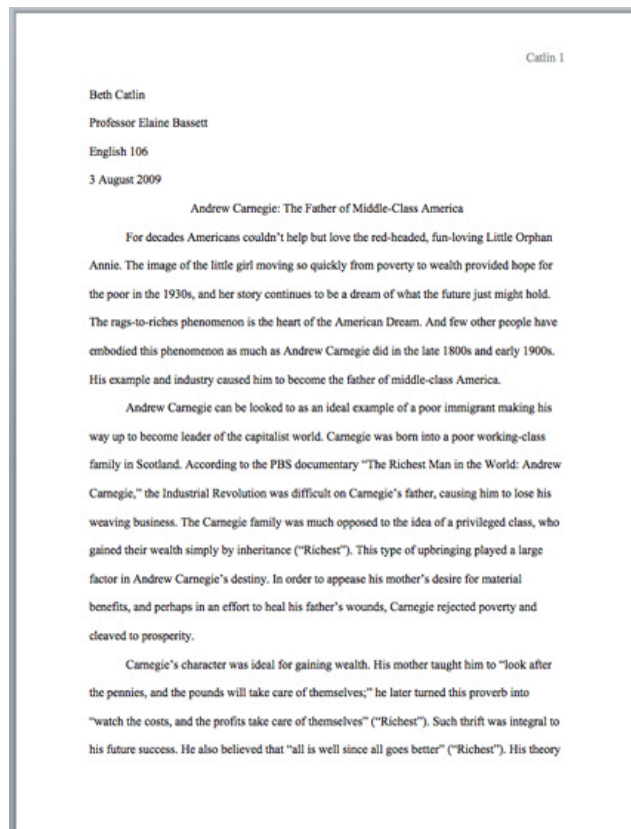
MLA Handbook. The Modern Language Association of America, 2021.

Format for Assignments

- ☐ Type on white 8.5" x 11" paper
- ☐ Double-space EVERYTHING but DO NOT quadruple space between paragraphs
- ☐ Use 12 pt. Times New Roman font
- ☐ Leave only one space after punctuation
- ☐ Set all margins to 1 inch on all sides (usually the default setting)
- ☐ Indent all paragraphs using the Tab key (½ inch)
- ☐ Include surname and page number in the upper right corner of every page (e.g. Killins 2)
- ☐ Staple your paper at a 45 degree angle ☺

Formatting the First Page

- ☐ **No title page!**
- ☐ **Double space everything!**
- ☐ In the upper left corner of the first page, list your name, your instructor's name, the course, and date
- ☐ Centre the paper title (use standard capitalization but no underlining, italics, quotation marks, or bold unless using the title of a work)
 - ☐ Use quotation marks or italics when referring to other works in the title of your essay (e.g. name of *book* or "poem")
 - ☐ E.g. Finding the Inner Voice: Regaining Self and Agency in Laurie Halse Anderson's *Speak*



In-Text Citations

- MLA uses **parenthetical citations** (this method involves providing relevant source information in parentheses whenever a sentence uses a quotation or paraphrase. Usually, the simplest way to do this is to put all of the source information in parentheses at the end of the sentence (i.e., just before the period).
- Source information provided in-text must correspond to the Works Cited page. Whatever signal word or phrase you provide to your readers in the text must be the first thing that appears on the left-hand margin of the corresponding entry on the Works Cited page.

Author-Page Style

- MLA format follows the author-page method. This means that the **author's last name** and the **page number(s)** from which the quotation or paraphrase is taken must appear in the text, and a complete reference should appear on your Works Cited page. The author's name may appear either in the sentence itself or in parentheses following the quotation or paraphrase, but the page number(s) should always appear in the parentheses, not in the text of your sentence. For example:
 - Romantic poetry is characterized by the "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" (Wordsworth 263). [direct quotation]
 - Wordsworth stated that Romantic poetry was marked by a "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" (263). [direct quotation]
 - Wordsworth extensively explored the role of emotion in the creative process (263). [paraphrase]
 - **Corresponding Works Cited entry:**
 - Wordsworth, William. *Lyrical Ballads*. Oxford UP, 1967.
- If only one source is used, do not write the author's last name in the parentheses; just put page number or line number.

Punctuation and Quotations

- Quoted material is usually preceded by a colon (:) IF **the quotation is formally introduced (i.e. a complete sentence is used before the quotation is given)**
- If the quotation is an integral part of the sentence structure, a comma or no punctuation is used
- A QUOTATION SHOULD NOT STAND ALONE; IT SHOULD BE INTEGRATED INTO A SENTENCE

Shakespeare

Viola is in love with Duke Orsino: “Quotation” (Act.Scene.Line). {Complete sentence precedes quotation}

Viola says to Duke Orsino, “Quotation” (Act. Scene.Line). {Sentence fragment precedes quotation}

If the quotation ends with a QUESTION MARK an EXCLAMATION POINT, the original punctuation is retained.

Novel: {**Question mark**}

On the first day of school, Melinda wonders, “Where to sit?” (Anderson 3).

Novel: {**Exclamation mark**}

Melinda finally finds her voice: “NNNOOO!!!” (Anderson 194).

Formatting SHORT Prose Quotations – shorter than FOUR lines inclusive: prose is normal language
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- If a prose quotation runs no more than four lines (when typed in your essay), put it in quotation marks and incorporate it into the text.
- **Place the sentence period (.) after the reference.**

Novel Example:

Melinda is able to overcome her ordeal: “I feel the frozen stillness melt down through the inside of me, dripping shards of ice that vanish in a puddle of sunlight on the stained floor. Words float up” (198). [Only one source in this essay, so author name not required]

Shakespeare Example:

Sebastian reveals his origins to Antonio early in the play: “You must know of me then, Antonio, my name is Sebastian, which I called Roderigo. My father was that Sebastian of Messaline, whom I know you have heard of” (2.1.13-16).

Formatting SHORT Prose Quotations <u>WITH</u> Dialogue (only for a SINGLE SPEAKER)

- Use double quotation marks around quotations incorporated into the text only for one person talking, and single quotation marks ('Dialogue') around dialogue within those quotations.

Novel Example:

Ivy gives her opinion of Andy: “‘What a jerk,’ she says. She pinches the clay. ‘I can’t believe she’s going out with him. Can you? It’s like I don’t know her anymore. And he’s trouble.’ She slaps a hunk of clay on the table. ‘Believe me, that creep is trouble with a capital T’” (Anderson 162).

Formatting Prose Quotations <u>WITH More Than One Speaker</u>
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Do not use embedded citation; USE BLOCK FORMAT. Copy the text as it is written in the book.

Ivy and Melinda discuss Andy Evans:

“Remember what you said about Andy Evans being big trouble?”

“Yeah.”

“Why did you say that?”

She rinses the soap from the shirt. “He has such a reputation.” (175)

Online Article:

The author highlights the connection between reader engagement and the vulnerable hero:

“Create the vulnerabilities in your character background, then use them at the appropriate plot points to keep your reader engaged” (Altair).

Corresponding Works Cited Entry for Online Article:

Altair, Zara. “Make Readers Fall in Love with Characters, Not Plots.” *ProWritingAid*, 22 Apr.

2019,

prowritingaid.com/art/893/make-readers-fall-in-love-with-characters%2C-not-plots.aspx#:~:text=Plot%20keeps%20the%20story%20moving,your%20character%20and%20your%20story.&text=Successful%20plot%2Ddriven%20action%20writers%20like%20Robert%20Ludlum%20know%20this. Accessed 16 Apr. 2024.

Formatting LONG Prose Quotations – Longer than FIVE lines when typed inclusive (BLOCK)

- Set the quotation off from your text by beginning a new line, indenting one inch from the left margin, and typing it **double-spaced**, without adding quotation marks, but reproduce any quotation marks that are in the passage quoted (e.g. dialogue)
- A colon generally introduces a quotation displayed this way, though sometimes the context may require a different mark of punctuation or none at all
- Also use block format when citing two or more paragraphs

Novel Example (no quotation marks, indent, period goes before parentheses):

Melinda finally “speaks” the truth to herself:

IT happened. There is no avoiding it, no forgetting. No running away, or flying, or burying, or hiding. Andy Evans raped me in August when I was drunk and too young to know what was happening. It wasn't my fault. He hurt me. It wasn't my fault. And I'm not going to let it kill me. I can grow. I look at my homely sketch. It doesn't need anything. Even through the river in my eyes I can see that. It isn't perfect and that makes it just right. (198)

Shakespeare Example (no quotation marks, indent, period goes before parentheses):

Sebastian reveals his origins to Antonio early in the play:

You must know of me then, Antonio, my name is Sebastian, which I called Roderigo. My father was that Sebastian of Messaline, whom I know you have heard of. He left behind him myself and a sister, both born in an hour. If the heavens had been pleased, would we had so ended! But you, sir, altered that; for some hour before you took me from the breach of the sea was my sister drowned. (2.1.13-20)

Quoting Dialogue from a Play

- If you quote dialogue **between two or more characters** in a play, set the quotation off from your text (BLOCK)
- Begin each part of the dialogue with the appropriate character's name indented half an inch from the left margin and written in all capital letters: HAMLET.
- Follow the name with a period, and start the quotation.
- (Act.Scene.Line number(s))

Shakespeare Example:

Viola does not know where she is after the shipwreck, which shows her physical and emotional vulnerability:

VIOLA. What country, friends, is this?

CAPTAIN. This is Illyria, lady. (1.2.1-2)

Poetry and BLANK VERSE

If you quote part or all of a single line of verse that does not require special emphasis, put it in quotation marks within your text (embedded). You may also incorporate two or three lines in this way, using a forward slash with a space on each side (/) to indicate to your reader where the line breaks fall. You must quote line numbers for poetry NOT page numbers.

Short Verse Examples (less than THREE lines inclusive):
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Poem Examples:

Bradstreet frames the poem with a sense of mortality: “All things within this fading world hath end” (1).

Reflecting on the “incident” in Baltimore, Cullen concludes, “Of all the things that happened there / That’s all that I remember” (11-12).

Stanza Break: If a stanza break occurs in the quotation, mark it with TWO forward slashes (//):

The *Tao Te Ching*, in David Hinton’s translation, says that the ancient masters were “so deep beyond knowing / we can only describe their appearance: // perfectly cautious, as if crossing winter streams” (329).

Shakespeare Example (Verse):

Orsino expresses his appreciation of the arts at the beginning of *Twelfth Night*: “If music be the food of love, play on; / Give me excess of it, that surfeiting, / The appetite may sicken, and so die” (1.1.1-3).

Long Verse Examples (FOUR or more lines):
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USE BLOCK FORMAT. Indent each line half an inch from the left margin and double space between lines, adding no quotation marks that do not appear in the original (no slashes here).

Poem Example:

Elizabeth Bishop’s “In the Waiting Room” is rich in evocative detail:

It was winter. It got dark
 early. The waiting room
 was full of grown-up people,
 arctics and overcoats,
 lamps and magazine. (6-10)

Shakespeare Example:

Orsino expresses his appreciation of the arts at the beginning of *Twelfth Night*:

If music be the food of love, play on;

Give me excess of it, that surfeiting,

The appetite may sicken, and so die.

That strain again! it had a dying fall. (1.1.1-4)

Adding/Omitting Words

In-text Example for Adding Words [use brackets]:

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).

In-text example for Omitting Words (use an ellipsis . . .):

In an essay on urban legends, Jan 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).

Works Cited

- You must have a Works Cited page at the end of your paper. All entries in the Works Cited page must correspond to the works cited in your main text.
- Begin your Works Cited page on a separate page at the end of your paper. It should have the same one-inch margins **and last name, page number header as the rest of your paper.**
- Label the page Works Cited (do not italicize the words Works Cited nor put them in quotation marks nor bold them); centre the words Works Cited at the top of the page. Use “Work Cited” if only using one source.
- Entries are listed alphabetically by the author's last name (or, for entire edited collections, editor names). Author names are written with the last name first, then the first name, and then the middle name or middle initial when needed (e.g. Levy, David M.).
- If you have cited more than one work by a particular author, order the entries alphabetically by title, and use three hyphens in place of the author's name for every entry after the first.
 - Burke, Kenneth. *A Grammar of Motives*.
 - ---. *A Rhetoric of Motives*.
- Alphabetize works with no known author by their title; use a shortened version of the title in the parenthetical citations in your paper.
- Double space all citations, but do not skip spaces between entries.
- Indent the second and subsequent lines of citations five spaces so that you create a hanging indent.
- List page numbers of sources 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 pp. 225-50. You do not need to list page numbers if citing a whole book.
- If only one page of a print source is used, mark it with the abbreviation “p.” before the page number (e.g., p. 157). If a span of pages is used, mark it with the abbreviation “pp.” before the page number (e.g., pp. 157-68).
- If you are citing an article or a publication that was originally issued in print form but that you retrieved from an online database, you should type the online database name in *italics*.
- All works cited entries end with a period.

- Capitalize each word in the titles of articles, books, etc., but do not capitalize word articles (e.g. the, an), prepositions, or conjunctions unless one is the first word of the title or subtitle: *Gone with the Wind*, *The Art of War*, *There is Nothing Left to Lose*.
- Use *italics* for titles of long works (plays, novels, epic poems, films)
 - e.g. *Romeo and Juliet*, *Z for Zachariah*, *The Canterbury Tales*, *Star Wars*
- Use quotation marks for titles of short works (short stories, poems, song titles, essays)
 - e.g. “Lamb to the Slaughter,” “The Execution,” “Redemption Song,” “Portrait of the Essay as a Warm Body”

Works Cited

- Dean, Cornelia. "Executive on a Mission: Saving the Planet." *The New York Times*, 22 May 2007, www.nytimes.com/2007/05/22/science/earth/22ander.html?_r=0. Accessed 29 May 2019.
- Ebert, Roger. Review of *An Inconvenient Truth*, directed by Davis Guggenheim. *rogerebert.com*, 1 June 2006, <http://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/an-inconvenient-truth-2006>. Accessed 15 June 2019.
- Gowdy, John. "Avoiding Self-organized Extinction: Toward a Co-evolutionary Economics of Sustainability." *International Journal of Sustainable Development and World Ecology*, vol. 14, no. 1, 2007, pp. 27-36.
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- Leroux, Marcel. *Global Warming: Myth Or Reality?: The Erring Ways of Climatology*. Springer, 2005.
- Milken, Michael, et al. "On Global Warming and Financial Imbalances." *New Perspectives Quarterly*, vol. 23, no. 4, 2006, p. 63.
- Nordhaus, William D. "After Kyoto: Alternative Mechanisms to Control Global Warming." *American Economic Review*, vol. 96, no. 2, 2006, pp. 31-34.
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- Regas, Diane. "Three Key Energy Policies That Can Help Us Turn the Corner on Climate." *Environmental Defense Fund*, 1 June 2016, www.edf.org/blog/2016/06/01/3-key-energy-policies-can-help-us-turn-corner-climate. Accessed 19 July 2016.

Works Cited: Books

Basic Format:

Last name, First name. *Title of Book*. Publisher, Year of Publication.

Examples:

Orwell, George. *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Penguin, 1987.

Palmer, William J. *Dickens and New Historicism*. St. Martin's, 1997.

---. *The Films of the Eighties: A Social History*. Southern Illinois UP, 1993.

Works Cited: Web

Web Source Format:

Editor, author, director, narrator, performer, translator, or compiler name (if available).

“Article Name” (title of the work). *Name of Web Site*, Date of last update or publication (day month year), URL (omit http). Accessed day month year.

Examples:

Bernstein, Mark. "10 Tips on Writing the Living Web." *A List Apart: For People Who Make Websites*, 16 Aug. 2002, alistapart.com/article/writeliving. Accessed 3 Nov. 2016.

Felluga, Dino. *Introductory Guide to Critical Theory*, 31 Jan. 2011, www.cla.purdue.edu/english/theory/. Accessed 3 Nov. 2016.

Citing a TED Talk from YouTube:

List the speaker in the author position, but also list the uploader (usually “TED” or “TEDx Talks”) and give the full upload date, since it’s available on YouTube.

TED Talk Basic Format

Speaker last name, First name. “Video Title.” YouTube, uploaded by TED or TEDx Talks, Day Month Year, URL.

TED Talk Example

Bailey, Chris. "How to Get Your Brain to Focus | Chris Bailey | TEDxManchester." YouTube,

uploaded by TEDx Talks, 5 Apr. 2019, www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hu4Yvq-g7_Y.

Corresponding In-text Citation for TED Talk - You can use a timestamp to highlight a specific quotation where necessary.

"Quotation" (Bailey 12:15).

Purdue University Online Writing Lab (OWL)