

USING THE MLA STYLE HANDBOOK (7TH Edition)



Workshop sponsored by:

**The Dr. Mack Gipson, Jr.,
Tutorial and Enrichment Center**

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WHAT DO WE MEAN BY “MLA STYLE?”

Many journals accept articles for publication. Since these articles come from so many different researchers and authors, it is important to have some rules and procedures so that the articles will be similar in format and easy for the readers to follow.

These standard procedures (or rules for format) are different for different disciplines. For example, while English instructors follow the procedures set forth by the Modern Language Association (the “MLA” style), authors in other fields use other styles or standards.

Although you will probably not be submitting your paper to a journal, it is still important for you to follow the standard rules so that your paper will be easy for others to read. These rules cover such topics as format, grammar, typing rules, and page layout. It will be especially important for you to follow the rules for proper documentation (giving credit to those authors whose work you have referred to in your paper).

Your instructor has assigned you a research paper and has specified that you follow the MLA style handbook. This packet will discuss some of the more important features of that manual and will provide samples of many of the rules.

This packet is intended to be used as a brief guide to introduce you to the use of the MLA style handbook as you write your research paper. You will probably need more information as you go through the process. **For more information, you should look at the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers (Seventh Edition).***

Many other books may help explain how to write a research paper. These books are available in the Tutorial and Enrichment Center and in most libraries and bookstores. In addition, many grammar books have sections on writing research papers.

HOWEVER, keep in mind that the MLA Handbook will always be the best place to look for answers to your questions about format, rules, and procedures. Remember, also, that you will be using the rules for the 7th edition.

To help you find your way through the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers (Seventh Edition), the next page of this packet gives you a list of the chapters and includes notes about *some* of the sections which you might need to use.

* This manual will be called the “MLA Handbook” for the remainder of this packet.

USING THE MLA HANDBOOK

Although you might occasionally have to look at other sections of the handbook, the following pages will probably answer most of your questions:

<u>CHAPTER</u>	<u>PAGES</u>
1. Research and Writing	1-50
• includes information about the steps of writing a research paper	
2. Plagiarism and Academic Integrity	51-61
• includes information about the definition and consequences of plagiarism and methods for avoiding plagiarism	
3. The Mechanics of Writing	63-113
• includes information includes information on the following topics:	
Spelling	65-66
Punctuation	66-78
Italics (Underlining)	78-79
Names of Persons	79-81
Numbers	81-85
Titles	86-92
Quotations	92-105
Capitalization and Personal Names in Languages Other than English	105-113
4. The Format of the Research Paper	115-122
• includes information on rules for typing a research paper, such as margins, line spacing, headings, page numbers, etc.	
5. Documentation: Preparing the List of Works Cited	123-212
• includes general information and examples of 68 different types of sources for which you might have to write reference entries in the “Works Cited” section at the end of your paper	
➤ “Table of Contents” for these examples	123-125
6. Documentation: Citing Sources in the Text	213-232
• includes general information and specific examples of how to give credit for ideas and quotations in the body of your paper	
7. Abbreviations	233-256
Appendix A: Guides to Writing	257-263
Index	265-292

TYPING RULES

GENERAL RULES:

1. Use standard paper (8½ X 11). Do not use erasable or onionskin paper. Do not tape, glue, or staple anything to any of the pages.
2. All pages should be **double-spaced**. Double-space between all lines of your paper, including long quotations and the references on your Works Cited pages at the end of the paper..
3. **All margins** (top, bottom, right, and left) should be **1"** (top, bottom, left, and right). Remember that your page numbering will be only ½" from the top margin.
4. Use **left justification** to leave the right margin uneven. That means you should not use full justification (do not try to make every line the same length). Do not hyphenate at the end of a line. Instead, let the computer use "word wrap" to move a word to the next line rather than trying to split it between two lines.

FONTS:

1. Use a font that will give your paper a professional look. (**Times Roman** is a good choice.)
2. Use font size **12** only.

PAGE NUMBERING:

1. You will number your pages by creating a **header** that will appear on every page. The header will contain **your last name** and the **page number**. Your header should appear in the top right corner of every page, ½" from the top of the page, with the page number to the right of your last name. Use only the number itself; do not use *page* or *p*. (Create a "header" to automatically number each page and place the header in the appropriate spot on each page.)
2. Number **every** page, starting with the first page of the body of your paper.

INDENTING:

1. Indent the first line of every paragraph ½".
2. There are a few exceptions, which will be covered in other sections of this packet.

CREATING A WORKING BIBLIOGRAPHY

As you start to do your research, it is a very good idea to keep track of the sources that you are using. If you write down all of the information you might need as soon as you see that you will be using the book or article, you will save yourself a lot of difficulty later on. The MLA Handbook (pp. 123-212) will tell you the specific format to use for each of your resources, but you can use the following lists to get an idea of the information you should write down for each source:

BOOK:

Author's full name: last name first (write down all names if there are more than one author)
Full title (including any subtitle)
Editor or translator (if there is one) – record the name and whether he/she is an editor or translator
Edition (if the book is a second or later edition)
Number of the volume and the total number of volumes (if the book is part of a multivolume set)
Series name (if the book is part of a series)
City of publication (write down only the first city if several are listed)
Publisher
Year of publication

ARTICLE IN A SCHOLARLY JOURNAL:

Author's name
Title of the article
Title of the journal
Volume number (and issue number, if needed)
Year of publication
Inclusive page numbers of the article (for example: 162 - 71)

NEWSPAPER OR MAGAZINE ARTICLE:

Author's name
Title of the article
Title of the periodical
Volume number (and issue number, if needed)
Date of publication
Inclusive page numbers of the article (for example: 162 - 71) or the actual page numbers the article covers (for example: 13-15, 16, 22, 29). (Record all page numbers at this stage, although in your Works Cited section you may be able to use a shortcut.)

NOTE: For an Internet source, also write down the entire pathname and the date of access.

REFERENCES/CITATIONS IN TEXT

It is **extremely** important that you give credit to authors when you use their ideas and/or their words. There are 3 basic situations:

1. GIVING CREDIT FOR IDEAS

If you are giving credit to authors for an idea but have not used their actual words, you must give the **author's last names (and page number if necessary)**.

Suicide is a major cause of death among teenagers today (Husain and Vandiver 97).

Husain and Vandiver note that teens are also aware of the general alienation common today and fear an insecure and changing world (116).

2. SHORT QUOTATIONS

If you are using a short quote (***up to 4 typed lines***), you should incorporate it into your text and use double quotation marks before and after it. You must give the **author(s) and page number**. *Put the period after this reference information*, not after the words of the quotation.

Another frequent factor in suicide is depression which, Glasser notes, “frequently occurs when we are rejected” (48).

“The first thing a teacher can do is to listen carefully to what the adolescent wishes to tell him/her” (Powers 562).

REFERENCES/CITATIONS IN TEXT (cont'd.)

3. LONG QUOTATIONS

If the quote has *more than 4 lines of type*, you must double-space it in block form with each line indented 1" (10 spaces on a typewriter) from the left margin. Do not use quotation marks before and after it. You must give the **author(s) and page number**. *Put the period after the last word of the quote*, not after the citation.

Another important step for an adolescent to take is to develop a plan of action. This plan would benefit a teenager in many ways:

In many instances, the adolescent may, with the support of the teacher, be willing to seek further help. This, in effect, gives the student a degree of responsibility and control over a course of action. For a despairing student, this active move indicates a degree of control over the self and opens up avenues of thought and action other than an inevitable, self-determined demise.

(Powers 562)

Becoming involved with others and developing a sense of internal control seem to be important goals for adolescents with suicidal

See Chapter 6 of the MLA Handbook for more information about citing your sources in your paper.

FORMAT

Your paper will have three main parts: TITLE PAGE, BODY, and WORKS CITED. Some explanations appear on this page; samples of each will be found on the following pages.

The ***title page*** presents the full title of your paper, along with your name, course number, instructor's name, and date the paper will be submitted.

The ***body*** of the paper should start with an introduction. You will present your thesis and describe your method of research. Discuss the literature but do not give an extremely detailed review at this point. (You will be doing that later on.) End the introduction with a statement telling what you have done or use another method to make the transition to the main body of the paper. In the body, you will discuss each of your major points and give supporting evidence from the literature you have read. Be sure to use correct citation procedures so that you give credit whenever needed.

The body of your paper will end with your conclusions. In addition to summarizing your findings, you will be able to suggest avenues for future research, applications of your work, implications for future study, etc. In other words, try to evaluate and interpret your findings and help the reader see beyond your work. Remember: In a research paper you are doing more than just reporting on what other people have said.

The ***works cited*** section of your paper will be one of the most important parts. This section is where you will list your bibliography of the articles and books which you have used while writing your paper. Your information must be **accurate**. **Type your entries in the proper format**. See **pp. 123-212 in the MLA Handbook** for specific instructions and examples that you can follow to type your references.

Read **pp. 123-125** in the MLA Handbook for a list of examples and patterns to follow. Read **pp. 123-212** for more detailed information.



For sample paper showing formatting, layout, citations, and references, access the Purdue University Online Writing Lab:

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/16/>

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REMEMBER:

- Do not number the entries
 - Alphabetize the entire list
 - Use hanging indents
 - Follow the guidelines in chapter 5
 - Pay attention to details in formats
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*Compiled from sample entries on the MLA Handbook website (www.mlahandbook.org).

MISCELLANEOUS SUGGESTIONS

1. Avoid gender-specific terms (like "he" and "she").
2. Make sure you have subject-verb agreement.
3. Be consistent in your use of verb tenses.
4. Use proper punctuation.
5. Be sure to back up your paper onto an extra flash drive in case your main drive develops a problem. Make a hard copy after you finish each draft.
6. Make sure your final copy is legible.
7. Make sure your final copy is neat. Avoid smudges, erasures, crossed-out words, and insertions.
8. Make sure each page is numbered and in order before you assemble and hand in your paper. (Ask your instructor if you should just staple your paper together or if you must use a report cover.)
9. Keep a copy of your final paper for your own protection and for your records.
10. Give proper credit to ideas as well as direct quotations. Your instructor will be able to tell when you are not using your own ideas (or your own words) and will look for your in-text citations to see where you found the information.
11. Be sure to integrate your sources into your paper and synthesize what they have said. Do not merely report what each person wrote. Do not turn your paper into a book report on each article. Remember: You must put your own thoughts into this paper and you must find a way to incorporate what other people have written.