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# Modern Language Association (MLA) Citation Style

# Workshop Agenda

1. Quoting in MLA
2. Paraphrasing information
3. Works Cited format and entries

# Why might researchers use citation/formatting styles in their field?

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- To avoid plagiarism
- To connect information in the text to the reference list
- To contextualize information via the author names, publication years, or source type (journal, magazine, newspaper, social media feed, etc.)
- To standardize how information is communicated between researchers and audiences (i.e. section organization of an article, presentation of outside sources, etc.)

# Notes on Plagiarism

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- What is it?
- Copying verbatim, or too closely, the words and/or paragraph structure of another person
- Can be both intentional and unintentional
- Why and how does it happen?
  - Difficult to add original material to the existing expert conversation
  - Misunderstanding proper citation techniques
  - Disorganized notes

# Characteristics of MLA Style

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- Avoid informal language (e.g. slang, colloquialisms, contractions, etc.)
- Avoid implicit bias
- Use concise language
- Use present tense with research
- Avoid second person pronouns and the editorial “we”
- Use active voice whenever possible

# What Should I Cite?

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- Generally, all information from a source must be cited:
  - Direct quotations (always w/page number)
  - When summarizing or paraphrasing another's ideas or opinions
  - When presenting specific facts, figures, or ideas
- When in doubt, cite!

# Direct Quotations

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# What Does a Direct Quotation Include?

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- Exact words from a source
- Always includes quotation marks (“this is the quote”)
- Always includes a citation
- Includes a signal phrase
  - Signal phrase: short phrases that introduce a quote, paraphrase, or summary (EX: **Smith clarifies**, “quote.”)
- In general, include explanation or analysis afterward
- In general, avoid starting a paragraph with a quote

# Signal Phrases

## Explanation

- comments
- clarifies
- declares
- demonstrates
- describes
- discusses
- emphasizes
- establishes
- explains
- highlights
- illustrates
- models
- observes
- outlines
- posits
- reports
- shows
- suggests

## Concession

- accepts
- acknowledges
- admits
- concedes
- grants

## Agreement

- adds
- advocates
- affirms
- agrees
- endorses
- supports
- verifies

## Argumentative

- argues
- asserts
- cautions
- challenges
- claims
- contends
- contradicts
- criticizes
- denies
- disagrees
- disputes
- implies
- insists
- maintains
- negates
- proposes
- refutes
- rejects
- urges

# Citing Direct Quotes in MLA

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- MLA follows a pattern of author and page number when using in-text citations
  - “...end of quote” (**Smith 56**).
  - According to **Smith**, “working in the neuroscience field is as rewarding as it is difficult” (**56**).
- MLA uses present tense for signal verbs
  - Smith **states** that “working in the neuroscience field is as rewarding as it is difficult” (56).
- If there is missing information (dates or authors), MLA has guidelines for it.

# Direct Quotation with No Page Number

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- According to Weir, "At an individual level, creativity can lead to personal fulfillment and positive academic and professional outcomes."
- Results of a recent study indicate "At an individual level, creativity can lead to personal fulfillment and positive academic and professional outcomes" (Weir).

# Direct Quotation with No Author or Page Number

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- According to the American Psychological Association code of conduct, “ethical standards for psychologists' work-related conduct requires a personal commitment and lifelong effort to act ethically” (“Ethical Principles”).
- Research indicates "a majority of all U.S. children have televisions in their bedrooms" (American Psychological Association).
- ❖ If the author is unknown, use the first piece of information in the source's entry on the Works Cited page. That may be the organization or a shortened version of the title of the article.

# Block Quotes in MLA

If a quotation is 4 full lines or longer, no quotation marks are used. Instead, the text is indented one tab (0.5") from the left margin, a signal phrase introduces the quotation, and the citation at the end is outside the final punctuation.

## **Example:**

Chamovitz explains how plants feel:

It's probably a bit surprising, and maybe even a bit disconcerting, to discover that plants know when they're being touched. Not only do they know when they're being touched, but plants can differentiate between hot and cold, and know when their branches are swaying in the wind. Plants feel direct contact: some plants, like vines, immediately start rapid growth upon contact with an object like a fence. (70)

# Examples of In-Text Citations

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- Single author: (Peters 266)
- Multiple authors: (Smith and Black 104)
- No page: (James)
- Organization as author: (Modern Language Association)
- No author, using title: (“Using MLA”)
- Multiple sources: (Green 128; Peters 21; Williams 431)

# Paraphrasing

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# What does Paraphrasing Include?

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- Rephrases source material without source language or structure
- **Still uses parenthetical citation** and includes the page number
- Used in place of long quotes or if source uses complex explanations
- Can use quotation marks for phrasing that isn't easily reworded or that was coined by an author

# Examples of Paraphrasing in MLA

- Direct quote:

“Differentiation as an instructional approach promotes a balance between a student's style and a student's ability. Differentiated instruction provides the student with options for processing and internalizing the content, and for constructing new learning in order to progress academically” (Thompson 46).

- Incorrect paraphrase:

Differentiation is a **way to encourage equality** between the **approach and talent of the student** (Thompson 46). **This type of instruction gives** students different ways to deal with and **grasp information**, and for **establishing** new learning **to move on in education** (Thompson 46).

- Correct Paraphrase:

Teachers use differentiated instruction to help students learn, allowing the teacher to cater lessons to the way each student learns and each student's skill (Thompson 46).

# Works Cited Page

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# Works Cited Page Format

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- Begin on a new page at end of paper
- Center the title: Works Cited
- List *all* the sources cited in paper
- List *only* the sources cited in paper
- Alphabetize by authors' last names (if no author, alphabetize by title)
- Double-space throughout
- Use hanging indent (indents all info after first line of each entry)

# Basic Works Cited Formats

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## Journal Articles

Last Name, First Name, and Second Author. "Title of Article." *Title of Journal*, vol. #, no. #, year, pp. range-range. doi.

## Website (Electronic source)

Last Name, First Name. "Title of Article." *Title of Website*, date of copyright or date last updated, URL: [www.linktowebsite.com/full\\_link.html](http://www.linktowebsite.com/full_link.html). Accessed day abbreviated Month year.

## Books

Last Name, First Name. *Title of Book*. Publisher, Publication Date.

# Basic Works Cited Format For Articles

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Author Last, First Name. "Title of Article." *Title of Journal*, vol. #, no. #, Month  
or Season Year, page range. doi:number/inserted/here. Or URL if DOI is  
not given.

Smith, Rosemary A. "Effective Preparation for College English." *The School Review*, vol.  
60, no. 2, Feb. 1952, pp. 90-3. doi:10.1002/tox.20155.

# Basic Works Cited Format For Electronic Source

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Dobrin, Andrew. “Ethics Training Isn't Useful When Taught by Lawyers.”

*Psychology Today*, 2018, <http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/>

[am-i-right/201212/ethics training-isnt-useful-when-taught-](http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/am-i-right/201212/ethics-training-isnt-useful-when-taught-lawyers)

[lawyers](http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/am-i-right/201212/ethics-training-isnt-useful-when-taught-lawyers). Accessed 23 Oct. 2018.

# Basic Works Cited Format For Books

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Bloom, Judy. *Forever*. Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2003.

Emezi, Akwaeke. *Pet*. Knopf, 2019.

Gaiman, Neil. *Neverwhere*, Avon, 1996.

Nelson, Jandy. *I'll Give You the Sun*, Dial Books, 2014.

❖ Note: the City of Publication should only be used if the book was published before 1900, if the publisher has offices in more than one country, or if the publisher is unknown in North America.

## Basic Works Cited Format For a Selection in Book with Editors

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Ungar, Sanford J. “The New Liberal Arts.” *They Say, I Say*,  
edited by Gerald Graff, Cathy Birkenstein, and  
Russel Durst, Norton, 2018, pp. 336-43.

# Miscellaneous

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# MLA vs. APA *What Differences Do You See?*

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## Example 1

- MLA: Paula Treichler argues, "Gender difference continues to affect the classroom experiences of many students" (75).
- APA: Treichler (1990) argued, "Gender difference continues to affect the classroom experiences of many students" (p. 75).

## Example 2

- MLA: Researchers argue, "Gender difference continues to affect the classroom experiences of many students" (Treichler 75).
- APA: Researchers argued, "Gender difference continues to affect the classroom experiences of many students" (Treichler, 1990, p. 75).

# Make an Appointment at the Writing Center

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**Park Library 360**

(989) 774-2986

## **Hours**

Monday-Thursday: 9:00am-5:00pm

Friday: 9:00am-1:00pm

Sunday: 5:00pm-8:00pm



# Resources

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Modern Language Association.

<https://style.mla.org/works-cited/citations-by-Format/>

The OWL at Purdue University.

[https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research\\_and\\_citation/mla\\_style/mla\\_style\\_introduction.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_style_introduction.html)

The Writing Center @ The University of Wisconsin.

<https://writing.wisc.edu/handbook/documentation/>

CMU Writing Center.

<https://www.cmich.edu/academics/colleges/liberal-arts-social-sciences/centers-institutes/writing-center/writing-resources-for-faculty-students>