

Student Name

Teacher

Course Code

xx Month xxxx

Insightful, Text Specific Paper Topic (Centred Text--with No Unnecessary  
Punctuation or Formatting)

The Modern Language Association (MLA) demands very specific formatting. Use this guide as a framework for your essays. Read the information contained on this sheet very carefully. Pay attention to the page layout, size of font, and spacing, among other points. MLA does not use a title page. Only include a title page if specifically instructed to by your teacher.

*Every* line in MLA is *double spaced*, including Work(s) Cited entries, student identifying information, the paper's title, and long quotations that are set off from the rest of the text. Every paragraph begins by indenting five spaces. Do not create extra spaces between paragraphs or anywhere else in the text. Writers should also leave only one space after periods or other punctuation marks. Do not justify the text. Keep the right side of the paper "ragged" as on this handout.

Use a 12-point font, such as Times New Roman, and format your paper on standard 8.5 x 11-inch white paper in portrait orientation. Do not highlight your text by using bold font, underlining, or italicizing parts of your paper, including the paper's title and "Works Cited" heading. You should, however, italicize (not underline) the titles of books and films.

Aim to integrate quotations into the text of your essay--to work quotations into one's own sentences. Here is an example: David describes the "arrival of . . . [his] sister . . . as a genuine surprise" (66). Notice the use of square brackets and ellipses. When a writer is omitting text from a quoted passage, use the ". . ." notation. When inserting comments into a quotation for grammatical purposes or to clarify a remark, insert one's own words in square brackets (as above). A writer should use ellipses at the end of an in-set quotation *only* when the original quoted passage does not end with a period and the modified version does; if you need to omit an entire sentence, use a period before the three ellipsis dots; and ellipses are not required at the beginning of an in-set quotation.

While short, "punchy" quotations are extremely effective in essays, a writer occasionally needs to use longer quotations. The rules for set-off quotations are as follows:

When quoting *prose that is longer than four full lines*, set the lines off from the text by indenting one inch, or two Tabs. Similarly, set off the text in this way when quoting *poetry that is longer than three full lines*. For poetry, remember to reproduce the lines exactly as in the text. Do not use quotation marks for set-off quotations. Include the citation *outside* the sentence ending punctuation for both prose and poetry set-off quotations. (xx)

When using in-set quotations for poetry, on the other hand, remember to separate lines with the "/" (or forward slash) notation, leaving a space on each side of the mark. At the end of a quoted line, only include those punctuation marks which imply tone of voice, such as exclamation marks and question marks. In other words, do not include

commas, semicolons and periods. After your bracketed in-text citation, you must then insert a period to close your sentence. In your essay, refer to quotations as passages or excerpts.

Notice that MLA uses citations that are located inside brackets (23)—also referred to as parenthetical citations. When the context of the quotation is made clear, a simple page number is all that is necessary. When more information is required, insert the writer's last name before the page number, being sure *not* to include any punctuation in the citation.<sup>1</sup> When multiple sources need to be cited in the same reference, use a semicolon to separate the texts in this way: (Ibsen 4; Davies 14). When quoting from a Shakespearean text, cite the act, scene, and line numbers in the reference as follows: (1.2.122-25) or (*Macbeth* 1.2.122-25), if multiple Shakespearean plays are being cited in your paper. Similarly, if quoting multiple works by the same author, include an abbreviation of the work in your citation if the context of your quotation does not already make this information clear. For example, the citation (*Portrait* 23) could be used as a citation for a quotation taken from page twenty-three of James Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*.

Finally, the 8<sup>th</sup> edition (2016) of MLA has changed what is required in a reference. Here are some of the most important updates:

- (a) The city of publication and medium of publication are no longer noted;
- (b) The URL or digital object identifier (DOI) is now provided for websites;

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<sup>1</sup> Footnotes or Endnotes—such as this one—may be used for additional remarks that are best separated from the main text of your paper. Most essays will not require this device.

- (c) “N.d.” and “n.p.” are no longer used when information is not available for date or publisher;
- (d) Date accessed is recommended for online sources; and
- (e) The original date of publication is not required for sources that have multiple publication dates, but this information is often helpful for the reader.

The attached Works Cited sample entries reflect these updates. Several Works Cited examples are listed below, including single authored books, films and journal articles, but the list is not exhaustive. The 8<sup>th</sup> Edition of the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* (2016) provides additional information.

Works Cited

Conniff, Richard. "How Much Greenhouse Gas Does Your Family Produce?" *Discover Magazine*, 6 Aug. 2005, [discovermagazine.com/2005/aug/25-counting-carbons](http://discovermagazine.com/2005/aug/25-counting-carbons).

Hosseini, Khaled. *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. Riverhead Books, 2007.

Keats, John. "Ode on a Grecian Urn." *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*.

Ed. M.H. Abrams and Stephen Greenblatt. 7th ed. Vol. 2. Norton, 2000. 851-53.

Rwanda, Burundi. *A Story about Nutrition*. *YouTube*. 12 May 2015

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=5IXrLxvkEwo](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5IXrLxvkEwo).

The Weather Channel. "National and Local Weather Radar, Daily Forecast, Hurricane and Information from The Weather Channel and Weather.com." *The Weather Channel*, The Weather Channel, 4 Aug. 2019, [weather.com/](http://weather.com/).

### Works Cited Formatting for Common Sources

#### **E-mail**

Hart, Tom. "Request for Essay Extension." Email to Compassionate Teacher. 15  
Nov. 2018.

#### **Periodical (Print Edition)**

Conniff, Richard. "How Much Greenhouse Gas Does Your Family Produce?" *Discover*.  
Aug. 2005: 54-61.

#### **Website<sup>2</sup> (Entire Website)**

The Weather Channel. "National and Local Weather Radar, Daily Forecast, Hurricane  
and Information from The Weather Channel and Weather.com." *The Weather  
Channel*, The Weather Channel, 4 Aug. 2019, weather.com/.

#### **Work in an Anthology**

Keats, John. "Ode on a Grecian Urn." *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*.  
Ed. M.H. Abrams and Stephen Greenblatt. 7th ed. Vol. 2. Norton, 2000. 851-53.

#### **An Image, Chart or Photograph**

Joseph, Lori, and Bob Laird. "Driving While Phoning Is Dangerous." Chart. *USA Today*  
16 Feb. 2001: 1A. Print.

#### **Multiple Authors (Novel example)**

Kinney, James, and Michael Harrison. *The Broken Mirror*. Harvard, 1972.

#### **Novel (One Author, Print-Based)**

Morrison, Toni. *Beloved*. 1987. Penguin, 2000.

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<sup>2</sup> Begin with the name of the author or editor (surname first) if one (or more) is provided.

**Song**

Nirvana. "Smells Like Teen Spirit." *Nevermind*. Geffen, 1991

**Encyclopaedia Entry**

Posner, Rebecca. "Romance Languages." *The Encyclopaedia Britannica: Macropaedia*.  
15th ed. 1987.

**Film:**

*Titanic*. Dir. James Cameron. Twentieth Century Fox and Paramount, 1997.

**Work from a Website**

Tonnesson, Oyvind. "Mahatma Gandhi, the Missing Laureate." *Nobelprize.org*. Nobel  
Foundation, 1 Dec. 1999.

[www.nobelprize.org/prizes/themes/mahatma-gandhi-the-missing-laureate](http://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/themes/mahatma-gandhi-the-missing-laureate).

**Online Database:**

Stevenson, Kathryn. "Family characteristics of problem kids." *Canadian Social Trends*  
55.4 (1999): 2-6.