

# A FREE STUDENT'S GUIDE TO

# MLA

## A STUDENT'S GUIDE TO

# MLA FORMATTING



### Your How-To Guide To Proper MLA Formatting

#### What is MLA & Why is it Important?

MLA (Modern Language Association) is a formatting style used to cite essay sources within the humanities discipline. Using MLA style provides consistency of style in a given field, establishes credibility, and makes it easier for readers to understand a text's sources.

**General Information:** Your essay should be typed, double spaced, 12 Times New Roman font. Margins should be set at 1 inch on all sides, and the first line of each new paragraph should be indented another half inch (you can do this by pressing tab). Your document should have a header that includes your last name and the page numbers in the upper right-hand corner. Use italics when using the title of a longer work (novels, plays etc.).

**Your First Page:** In the upper left-hand corner of the first page, list your name, the instructor's name, the course, and the date (double spaced). Double space again and center the title of your essay. Your title should not be bolded, underlined, italicized, or in quotation marks.

**In-Text Citations:** When you use information from an outside source (quote or paraphrase), you must use a parenthetical citation to show relevant source information. MLA style uses the author-page method which means that the author's last name and page number(s) must appear after the source, and a full reference must be provided on the Works Cited page. If you use the name of the author within the text, you do not need to include it in the in-text citation, but the page numbers must always be placed in parenthesis.

Robert Frost stated that "poetry is what gets lost in translation" (242). This relates to the idea that "poetry is what gets lost in translation" (242).

When you use an online source, you should include in the text the first name that appears in the Works Cited entry that corresponds with that citation (author name, article title, website etc.). You do not need to give any page or paragraph number in the text. You also should not include any full URLs within the essay. You may use partial URLs like NYTimes.com as opposed to <http://www.nytimes.com> if necessary.

An online film critic stated that the 2013 version of *Brave* and *Julie & Julia* were "total disappointments" (10). This relates to the idea that the 2013 version of *Brave* and *Julie & Julia* were "total disappointments" (10).

Some believe that "they are devoid of the... struggle that makes for great tragedy" (Smith 205).

**Quotations:** When you directly quote from others in your essay, you will format them differently based on their length. Below are some of the basic guidelines for formatting quotes:

**Short Quotations:** If your quotation is fewer than four typed lines you should enclose the quotation in quotation marks. With regards to punctuation periods, commas, and semi-colons should go after the parenthetical citation. Question marks and exclamation points should appear within the quotation marks if they are part of the quoted passage, but after the citation if they are part of your text.

**Example:** Some believe that "they are devoid of the inner struggle that makes for great tragedy" (Smith 205).

**Adding Words:** If you add words to a quotation, you must use square brackets to indicate which words are yours.

Some believe that "[Romeo and Juliet] are devoid of the inner struggle that makes for great tragedy" (Smith 205).

**Omitting Words:** If you omit words to a quotation, you must use an ellipsis (...) to indicate where words were taken out.

Some believe that "they are devoid of the... struggle that makes for great tragedy" (Smith 205).

**The Dangers Of Not Citing Information**  
Plagiarism occurs when you use information, quotes, or facts without properly acknowledging where it came from. PLAGIARISM IS CHEATING. Any evidence of plagiarism leads to a mark of zero and may involve further disciplinary action.



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MLA FORMATTING

NON-FICTION

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POETRY

DRAMA

FICTION



## Works Cited Page Information

Your works cited should appear on a separate page at the end of your essay. Center the words Works Cited at the top of the page. Entries are alphabetized by the author's last name. Sources are cited using these core elements and should be in this order followed by the punctuation marks shown here:

- |                        |                      |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Author.             | 6. Number,           |
| 2. Title of source.    | 7. Publisher,        |
| 3. Title of container, | 8. Publication date, |
| 4. Other contributors, | 9. Location.         |
| 5. Version,            |                      |

Read below to learn more information about each of the core elements:

1. **Author:** Begin with the author's last name, followed by a comma and the rest of the name.
2. **Title of source:** Books/ websites should be in italics. Articles/short poems are in quotation marks.
3. **Title of container:** The container is the larger whole in which the source is located. For example, if you are citing a poem in a collection of poems, the individual poem is the source, while the collection is the container (TV series, website title, collection title etc).
4. **Other contributors:** Consider other contributors to the source who should be credited (edited by, illustrated by, translated by, etc.). If their contributions are relevant, include them in the citation.
5. **Version:** If a source is listed as an edition of a work, include it in your citation (ex: 3rd ed.).
6. **Number:** If a source is part of a sequence, include volume (vol.) and issue numbers (no.).
7. **Publisher:** If there is more than one publisher, and they are all are relevant to your research, list them in your citation, separated by a forward slash (/).
8. **Date:** When the source has more than one date, use the date that is most relevant to your use of it. If you're unsure about which date to use, go with the date of the source's original publication.
9. **Location:** City location not required in print citations. Where appropriate, page numbers are included by using the following format: pp. #-#. If you are citing a website, use the URL omitting the "http://". You may add the date you accessed the information at the end of the citation, but it is not required.

### CITATION EXAMPLES (Double-Space Entries)

#### Book with one author

Gleick, James. *Chaos: Making a New Science*. Penguin, 1987.

#### Book with two authors

Gillespie, Paula, and Neal Lerner. *The Allyn and Bacon Guide to Peer Tutoring*. Allyn and Bacon, 2000.

#### Article in a magazine/newspaper

Poniewozik, James. "TV Makes a Too-Close Call." *Time*, 20 Nov. 2000, pp. 70-71.

#### Article in a scholarly journal

Duvall, John N. "The (Super)Marketplace of Images: Television as Unmediated Mediation in DeLillo's *White Noise*." *Arizona Quarterly*, vol. 50, no. 3, 1994, pp. 127-53.

#### An entire website

Upworthy. Cloud Tiger Media, Mar. 2012, www.upworthy.com. Accessed 10 May 2016.

#### An article/page on a website

Lundman, Susan. "How to Make Vegetarian Chili." *eHow*, www.ehow.com/how\_10727\_make-vegetarian-chili.html. Accessed 6 July 2015.

#### Online article in a scholarly journal

Dolby, Nadine. "Research in Youth Culture and Policy: Current Conditions and Future Directions." *Social Work and Society: The International Online-Only Journal*, vol. 6, no. 2, 2008, www.socwork.net/sws/article/view/60/362. Accessed 20 May 2009.

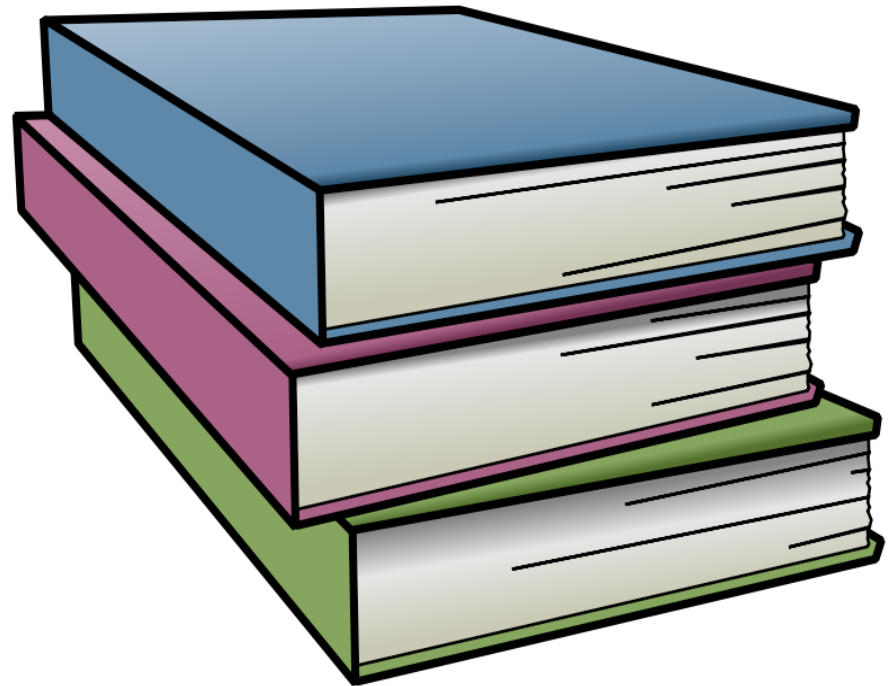
#### A YouTube video

McGonigal, Jane. "Gaming and Productivity." *YouTube*, uploaded by Big Think, 3 July 2012, www.youtube.com/watch?v=mkdzy9bWW3E.

#### Social media post

@tombrokaw. "SC demonstrated why all the debates are the engines of this campaign." *Twitter*, 22 Jan. 2012, 3:06 a.m., [twitter.com/tombrokaw/status/160996868971704320](https://twitter.com/tombrokaw/status/160996868971704320).

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Jane Smith Mr. Jones English 10 1 January 2000	Smith 1
Hamlet's Procrastination	
William Shakespeare's masterpiece, <i>Hamlet</i> , <i>Prince of Denmark</i> is a tragic drama which revolves around the themes of betrayal, vengeance and procrastination. Through characterization development, the reader is able to see that Hamlet's inability to act plays a significant role in his	

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Robert Frost stated that "poetry is what gets lost in translation" (242). This relates to the idea that "poetry is what gets lost in translation" (Frost 242).



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An online film critic stated that the 2013 version of Romeo and Juliet turns "what should be a hanky-required tragedy into a headache-inducing travesty" (Ebert).

**Quotations:** When you directly quote from others in your essay, you will format them differently based on their length. Below are some of the basic guidelines for formatting quotes:

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**Example:**

Some believe that "they are devoid of the inner struggle that makes for great tragedy" (Smith 320).

**Long Quotations:** If your quotation is more than four lines the quote is 'blocked'. This means you start the quotation on a new line with the entire quote indented half an inch from the left margin. Double spacing is still used, quotation marks are omitted, and punctuation appears within the quotation.

**Example:**

He describes the brain function as follows:

A brain-dead person is alleged to be dead because his neocortex, the seat of consciousness, has been destroyed. He has thus lost the ability to think and feel. (Greenberg 335)

**Adding Words:** If you add words to a quotation, you must use square brackets to indicate which words are yours.

Some believe that "[Romeo and Juliet] are devoid of the inner struggle that makes for great tragedy" (Smith 320).

**Omitting Words:** If you omit words to a quotation, you must use an ellipsis (...) to indicate where words were taken out.

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