MLA Documentation Rules, Including Internal Citations and Works Cited (2009)

General rules for formatting a Works Cited page:

- A running header continues onto a Works Cited page. If the last page of a paper is 6, the Works Cited is page 7.

- Place the words Works Cited 1” from the top margin in the middle of a separate page.

- List sources in alphabetical order according to the author’s last name.

- If no author is listed, begin with the main word of the article or book title (ignoring articles A, An, or The).

- Italicize the title of books, magazines, newspapers, journals, DVDs, CDs, epic poetry, works of art, and other sound recordings.

- Quote the title of articles, or any other piece that appears within a larger publication. An exception is a book-length work such as an epic poem, play, or novel that appears in its entirety within a larger work such as an anthology. In this case, you must italicize both the work and the name of the anthology, separated by a period.

Example:


Format every entry with a hanging indent. A hanging indent means that the first line of the entry remains flush with the left margin, and the subsequent lines are indented ½” to the right. This allows your reader easy access to the author of the quotation you have used.

The order of each entry is as follows for a written work:

Author. “Article.” *Title of Book*. City Published (first city if there is more than one):

Publisher, Year of Publication. (Page number(s)—if work is one located within a larger work). The word Print.

Note: Double-space between and within all entries.
Basic citing format for electronic publications:


Format for specific electronic publications:

Online book:


Online newspaper article:


Online article with no author:


Citing EBSCOhost or another scholarly database:

Note: College and URL information is no longer necessary, nor is information on continuous pagination, but volume and issue numbers are required, regardless of publication.

Citing Government Publications:

Treat the government agency as the author, giving the name of the government followed by the name of the agency.


For government documents published online, give as much publication information as is available and end your citation with the date of access and the URL.


*EBSCOhost and Government citation information from www.dianahacker.com*

Citing More Than One Entry by the Same Author:

If more than one work by the same author is quoted in the text of your paper, cite those works alphabetically as follows by using three hyphens and a period for the second and subsequent entries (---.) This construction takes the place of the author’s full name.

**Example:**


In-Text Citations

Citations for Most Written Sources:

- MLA guidelines require that credit must be given for all information whether it is a direct quote or a paraphrase.

- Generally, you are required to give the following information: author's last name and page number in parenthesis directly after the quote or paraphrase: (Smith 345).

- If you state the author's name in the paragraph, cite only the page number in parenthesis.

Example:

Poole states, "When students fail to learn basic MLA formatting, grammar, and punctuation in high school, they tend to fall behind in their first year of college" (251).
Quotes of More Than Four Lines of Poetry or Prose:

Block quotations:

If you use a quotation of more than four lines, introduce it with a colon and set it apart from your sentence in a block.

- Indent the entire extended quotation one inch from the margin (2" in all) and double-space it.
- Do not place quotation marks around the block quotation.
- Place the parenthetical citation (author and/or page number) after the period (or other mark of punctuation) that closes the block quotation.

Example:

Alice Walker’s short story “Everyday Use” begins with a mother’s recounting of an impending visit from her eldest daughter by explaining the setting. Her explanation sets the tone for the story and places the characters firmly in a rural underclass:

I will wait for her in the yard that Maggie and I made so clean and wavy yesterday afternoon. A yard like this is more comfortable than most people know. It is not just a yard. It is like an extended living room. When the hard clay is swept clean as a floor and the fine sand around the edges lined with tiny, irregular grooves, anyone can come and sit and look up into the elm tree and wait for the breezes that never come inside the house. (2469)

Parenthetical Citations for Poetry:

If you quote more than one line of poetry, separate the lines with a slash to indicate line breaks. For the initial citation, use both the author’s name (if it is not in the paragraph) and the word line or lines, establishing that the numbers designate lines; after that, use only the line number(s).

Example:

"Something there is that does not love a wall/That sends the frozen groundswell under it’’ (Frost, lines 1-2), "And makes gaps even two can pass abreast” (4).
Switching between Authors:

When you switch between authors or works, you must cite the author's name again, either in the sentence or in the parenthetical citation.

Example:

Frost uses the imagery of stones in "Mending Wall" to evoke the idea that a kind of savagery lurks deep within the human spirit: "Bringing a stone grasped firmly by the top...like an old stone savage armed" (lines 38-39); whereas in "The Lottery," stones are the embodiment of savagery: "Although the villagers had forgotten the ritual and lost the original black box, they still remembered to use stones" (Jackson 223) to murder Tessie Hutchinson. All the characters in both works "[move] in darkness..." (Frost line 40), and this is one of the main points each author intends readers to understand.

Parenthetical Citations for Plays and Epic Poetry:

When quoting lines from a play, you must cite Act. Scene. Line(s) in that order and when quoting more than four lines, use a block quotation as well, beginning each part of the dialogue with the appropriate character's name indented one inch from the left margin and written in all capital letters: HAMLET. Follow the name with a period, and start the quotation exactly as it is formatted in the text.

Example:

HAMLET. ...How came he mad?

CLOWN. Very strangely they say.

HAMLET. How 'strangely'?

CLOWN. Faith, e’en with losing his wits.

HAMLET. Upon what ground?

CLOWN. Why, here in Denmark... (Hamlet. V.i.135-140)

- Italicize play titles, as in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream, As You Like It, or Richard II.*

- When you quote from a play, divide lines of verse with slashes the way you would if quoting poetry. You can tell a passage is in verse by examining it to see if every line starts with a capital letter, regardless of whether the line starts a sentence.
Example:

At the end of the play, Richard tries to regain his kingdom by imagining his thoughts as his subjects: "And these same thoughts people this little world,/ In humours like the people of this world" (V.i.9-10).

When you quote prose from a play, no slashes are necessary. You can recognize prose by the fact that, in prose, every sentence begins with a capital letter, but not every line on the page.

Example:

In A Midsummer Night’s Dream, Bottom wishes to transform his experience into art: "I will Peter Quince to write a ballet of this dream. It shall be called 'Bottom's Dream,' because it hath no bottom" (IV. i. 214-216).

Note: IV. =Act 4, i. = Scene 1, 214-216= line numbers cited

In citations from plays or epic poems, you may use Roman numerals or Arabic, as you prefer, but DO NOT MIX STYLES in your paper.

Example:

(1.1.12-23) or (I.i.12-23)

In this reference, the quotation comes from Act I, scene i, lines 12-23.

- The period should always appear at the end of your sentence, that is, outside the parenthetical reference. If the punctuation is an exclamation point or a question mark, however, it must fall within the quotation followed by a period, comma, colon, or semi-colon after the right-hand parenthesis.

- If you quote more than three lines of verse, begin a new line and indent your quotation with a block quote (see above) one inch from the left margin. The lines should be arranged as they appear in the text if you are quoting verse and arranged as a paragraph if you are quoting prose.
Verse Example:

Richard ultimately recognizes--and in eloquent terms--how he has destroyed his own position:

\.\.\. How sour sweet music is

When time is broke, and no proportion kept.

So is it in the music of men's lives:

Here have I the daintiness of ear

To check time broke in a disordered string,

But for the concord of my state and time,

Had not the ear to hear my true name broke.

I wasted time, and now doth time waste me. (V.v.41-49)

Whenever possible, include quotations from the plays within your own sentences, and end your paragraphs with your own thoughts rather than a quotation.

Example Citation from an Epic:

*The Odyssey* begins, "Sing in me, Muse, and through me tell the story / of the man skilled in all ways of contending" (1.1-2), referring directly to the epic theme of Odysseus' wanderings in search for home.

Here, you must cite the book and line, or lines, separated by periods. Unless you use the title in the paragraph, for both *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*, cite the poems' titles in the parenthetical rather than the author's name (Homer), i.e., (Iliad 2.50-55).