MLA Style Format & Citations

What is MLA Style and Why Do We Use It in Citing/Paraphrasing Sources?

According to https://www.mla.org/MLA-Style.

MLA Style is a system for documenting sources in scholarly writing in the fields of humanities, arts, and literature. We use it in citing/paraphrasing sources in order to:

- Strengthen the credibility of our writing by presenting evidence from reliable sources.
- Give credit/acknowledge the ideas/work of other scholars before us have come up with.
- Avoid the serious academic offense of plagiarism or using someone else's ideas without openly acknowledging it.
- Refer the readers to other sources on the topic that can be of interest to them for further inquiries.

How Do We Format in an MLA Style?

Font: Times New Roman, 12 pt. font
Line Spacing: Double spaced; no extra lines between the heading, title, or body
Margins: 1-inch margins always
Header: Student's last name and page number in the top left corner of the document

How Do We Do In-Text Citation in MLA Style?

We use in-text citations when we quote or paraphrase evidence from a source within the course of our writing. Below are 3 examples of in-text citations using MLA format. The first example is a **direct quote**, and the second two are **paraphrases**.

Direct Quote (quoting evidence word-for-word, as it appears in the original text):

1. As a result, Gregor-as-roach begins chasing the deputy director, not realizing that his roach-voice cannot convey the thoughts inside his head, which are concerned primarily with proving his worthiness to his boss. Reacting to this, Mr. Samsa brandishes a cane at his son which "threatened to come down on his back or his head with a deadly blow," and he eventually shoves Gregor through the doorway into his room, injuring his body and a few of his legs (Kafka 20).

Paraphrases (presenting author's ideas/statements in our own words):

1. Today neoliberal economists use the term "free" to describe the "choices" that workers—described instead as human capital—make in an economy increasingly defined by precariousness and structural inequality, both of which leave people with little choice but to settle for subpar employment (Spence 10-11).

2. It is, in any case, never Gregor's comfort that results from any of this work, but that of his parents and sister. Kafka writes, "What a quiet life the family has been leading,' Gregor said to himself, and while he stared rigidly in front of him into the darkness, he felt very proud that he had been able to provide such a life in so nice an apartment for his parents and his sister" (22).

   Note: See how in the first two examples the author's name is not mentioned in the sentence introducing the quote (e.g. "Kafka describes…" "Spence states…"), so we mention his/her name in the parentheses after the quote/paraphrase, along with the page number.

If, on the other hand, the author's name is mentioned in the signal phrase (see "Kafka writes..." in the third example), we just need to put the page number in the parentheses after.

In all of the above examples, please note that the writer has placed the period after the close of the parentheses. This is the general pattern for in-text citations, even when the author and passage you are quoting includes a period at the end of the sentence

---

How is the MLA "Works Cited" Page Formatted?

The "Works Cited" page, or the last separate page of the paper, contains the following:
- 1-inch margins and double-spaced entries.
- Page number in the upper right corner.
- All the sources used in an alphabetical order by the author's last name, if applicable.
- "Hanging tabs," or indenting all the lines of a source entry except for the first one.

Using the in-text citation example from above, this is what the source would look like on your Works Cited Page:

Kafka, Franz. *The Metamorphosis*, Bantam Books, 1972, pp. 20-22.

This reflects the proper format for citing <mark>books</mark>:

Last name, first name, *Book title,* Publisher/press name, date of publication, page range.

If you were citing a <mark>newspaper/magazine article</mark>, this format would look different:

Last name, first name. "Title of article." *Title of newspaper/magazine,* day month year, pages.

Caron, Christina. "How to Spot 'Medical Gaslighting' and What to Do About it." *The New York Times,* 29 July 2022, pp. 25-28.

If you were citing a source from an <mark>article found in an academic database</mark>, this format would look even more different.

Last name, first name. "Title of article." *Title of journal, magazine, etc.* Volume, number and/or edition of publication. Date of publication. Page range.

Bagchi, Alaknanda. "Conflicting Nationalisms: The Voice of the Subaltern in Mahasweta Devi's Bashai Tudu." *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, vol. 15, no. 1, 1996, pp. 41-50.

In other cases, you may be citing directly from a <mark>website</mark> of an organization/company/government agency with <u>no</u> author. In such cases, please use the following format.

Name of Website. Name of institution/organization sponsoring the site, date of website creation if known, URL link. Accessed day month year.

Summer Rising – Growing up NYC. NYC Department of Education, 2021, https://growingupnyc.cityofnewyork.us/summer-programs/summer-rising/ Accessed July 30 2022.

If you decide to use an <mark>online video</mark>, the format looks like this:

Last name, first name of author/artist. "Title of video." *Title of platform/channel,*
    uploaded by if different from author/artist, day month year, URL link.

Adichie, Chimamanda. "The Danger of a Single Story." *YouTube*. 7 October
    2009, https://www.youtube.com/watch?reload=9&v=D9lhs241zeg.

These are just a few examples of the most common types of citations in MLA format. For further information and a wider range of publication types, please visit the following:

- The Modern Language Association's Online Style Guide
  https://style.mla.org/formatting-papers/

- Research and Citation Resources from the Online Writing Lab at Purdue
  University https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/

- Excelsior College's Online Writing Lab https://owl.excelsior.edu/citation-and-documentation/mla-style