

Barnegat High School

Reference Guide to

THE RESEARCH PAPER



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Introduction

“What exactly is MLA style and why do I need to know it?” is a question commonly asked of high school students. The abbreviation MLA stands for the Modern Language Association and it is a professional association for teachers, scholars, and librarians in the fields of language and literature. The association publishes a handbook that lays out the conventions, or basic rules, of how to write and format research papers.

During your years in school, you have most likely written papers that did not refer to any other source of information or ideas. Some assignments, however, require us to go beyond our personal knowledge. Students undertake research to explore an idea, probe an issue, solve a problem, or make an argument in relation to what others have written. The term *research paper* describes a presentation of student research that may be in a printed, an electronic, or a multimedia format.

Every time you write a research paper, you are entering a conversation with other writers. MLA style is a credible organizational format that is widely accepted, and by using it you will quickly and easily direct your readers to the sources you have used to build your argument. When writers use a uniform style, it ensures understanding and ease of reading, whether for your teacher at BHS or a professor across the country in California.

Ultimately, your goal in writing a research paper is to discover, assess, and assimilate others’ research and then articulate your own ideas clearly and persuasively. These are all necessary skills that will prove useful, both in college and the professional world beyond.

Please note that portions of this guide have been reproduced from the list of resources at the end of this packet.

Common Core State Standards for Research

To demonstrate college and career readiness, students must be able to conduct research to build and present knowledge. The standards are as follows:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.7

Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.8

Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.9

Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Procedure

The following is a simple, easy-to-follow plan for writing a research paper. Check off each task as you accomplish it. Your teacher may require completion of every step, or only a select few. Always follow their specific directions.

- STEP 1: BEGIN WITH A PLAN
- STEP 2: CHOOSE A TOPIC
- STEP 3: DO THE PRELIMINARY WORK
- STEP 4: LOCATE RESOURCES
- STEP 5: PREPARE WORKING BIBLIOGRAPHY OR CARDS
- STEP 6: TAKE NOTES
- STEP 7: WRITE THE OUTLINE
- STEP 8: WRITE THE DRAFT
- STEP 9: REVISE THE DRAFT
- STEP 10: PREPARE THE FINAL MANUSCRIPT
- STEP 11: PROOFREAD THE PAPER
- STEP 12: PRINT OUT A HARD COPY / SUBMIT TO TURNITIN.COM

Part I: Conducting Research

Time Management

Be clear that you understand the assignment. However, before you lift your pen or head to the library, plan your work. Look over the chart below and use it to plot your time on a calendar. Then stick to your plan to make sure you finish on schedule.

Task:	Goal Completion Date:
Choosing a topic.	
Preliminary work.	
Locating resources.	
Working bibliography or cards.	
Note taking.	
Outline.	
Drafting.	
Final draft.	
Proofreading.	
Print and submit to turnitin.com (if necessary)	

Topic Selection

Your teacher may assign a broad research subject to you. Even so, chances are you will need to narrow it down to a manageable topic for the space and time you have to work. On the other hand, you may have to choose your own topic. For topic ideas, consult the daily media: Internet, newspapers, magazines, and television. Consider your school, work, and personal interests. Choose a topic that is right for you and for your assignment.

Choose a good topic with these characteristics:

- ☺ **Interesting** A good topic holds your interest and that of your audience; it is something you want to learn more about.
- ☺ **Manageable** You have only a limited amount of time and resources available, so choose a topic you can handle.
- ☺ **Worthwhile** Choose something of substance, something that matters.
- ☺ **Original** A good topic is not just a rehashing, for instance, of Abraham Lincoln's childhood; instead, a more original topic might be how the books he read as a boy seem to have influenced his later political decisions.

Avoid a poor topic with these characteristics:

- ☹ **Too broad** Avoid a topic that is too broad. The Ice Age is far too broad a topic, but the role of the Ice Age in the formation of the Great Lakes would work. Hieroglyphics is too broad a topic, but how original Egyptian hieroglyphics are protected will work.
- ☹ **Too narrow** By contrast, also avoid a topic which is too narrow, one for which little information is available. For example, metric cooking conversions is too narrow; it can be explained in a few sentences or even a chart. The complexity of national metric conversion, however, has sufficient breadth for a suitable topic.
- ☹ **Too trivial** Every driver's manual, for example, will name the same laws of the road, so the topic is too trivial.
- ☹ **Too subjective** You must set personal preferences aside to respond objectively to a research topic.
- ☹ **Too familiar** You face boredom and will likely forget your audience's unfamiliarity with your topic.
- ☹ **Too technical** Doing the research will keep you busy enough without having to simultaneously learn a technical language.
- ☹ **Too factual** A research paper is not merely a recitation, for instance, of the facts of Thomas Jefferson's life.
- ☹ **Too regional** Localized topics generally lack sufficient resources to produce a well-developed paper.

Take your topic and re-word it from a statement into a question, like these:

- ✓ How did Thomas Jefferson affect American politics prior to his Presidency?
- ✓ How do the Amish differ from the Mennonites?
- ✓ What elements are necessary in a landfill design to protect future generations?

Re-framing your topic in the form of a question will help guide you and make sure you stay on track!

At this point, it is essential to do some preliminary reading in order to evaluate and refine your potential topic. Consulting general reference works is a good way to get started; these works are especially helpful for identifying subtopics, finding more specialized sources, and identifying useful keywords for electronic sources. It can also help you decide if enough has been written about your topic to allow adequate research and whether source materials are readily accessible.

Check the following:

- General Encyclopedias
- Dictionaries
- Biographical Resources
- Almanacs, Yearbooks, and Atlases
- General Indexes and Bibliographies
- Collections of Abstracts
- Specialized Research Guides

Remember to give yourself plenty of time to think through and revise your topic.

Types of Sources

Whether you are researching pizza or Picasso, you need to be familiar with the kinds of sources you are likely to use, the searches you can perform, and the types of research you will do most often: library, Internet, and for some, field research (interviews, surveys, experiments, letters).

Primary vs. Secondary

The research paper is generally based on a combination of research of both primary and secondary sources. *Primary research* is the study of a subject through firsthand investigation, such as analyzing a literary or historical text, a film, or a performance; conducting a survey or an interview; or carrying out a laboratory experiment. Primary sources include statistical data, historical documents, and works of literature or art. *Secondary research* is the examination of studies that other researchers have made of a subject. Examples of secondary sources are articles and books about political issues, historical events, scientific debates, or literary works.

Scholarly vs. Popular

While nonacademic sources like magazines can help you get started on a research project, you will want to depend on authorities in the field, whose work generally appears in scholarly journals in print or online. Scholarly sources often contain the word *Journal* in the title and are available mainly through library databases. Also, they have few commercial advertisements, authors are identified with academic credentials, and a summary or abstract may appear on the first page of the article. Most importantly, scholarly sources are *peer-reviewed*, which means that other experts in the field read the article and check it for errors before it is published.

Popular sources are available from newsstands and home Internet connections, have many advertisements. Additionally, the authors are usually journalists hired by the publication, not academics or experts.

Older vs. Current

Most projects can benefit from both older historical sources and more current ones. Some older sources are classics, essential for understanding later works. However, others are simply dated. Whether a source appeared hundreds of years ago or this morning, evaluate it carefully to determine how useful it will be for you.

Library Research

Many beginning researchers assume that all the information they could possibly need is available from a home Internet connection. However, it is a good idea to begin any research project with the sources available at both your school and community library.

The modern library offers resources in print and electronic forms and in other nonprint media—for instance, films or sound recordings—photocopy machines, and computer services, such as word processing, high-quality printers, and access to the Internet. This is extremely important if you do not have access to a home computer or Internet connection. Another valuable resource at the library is the staff, especially reference librarians. You can talk one-on-one with a librarian about your specific project and get recommendations for helpful places to begin your research. Furthermore, at websites like qandanj.org it is possible to consult reference librarians 24/7 via the computer.

Most libraries, such as the Ocean County Library, provide an online information system, which allows users to search the library's holdings from any location with an Internet connection. Navigating to theoceancountylibrary.org will bring up the library's home page and from here it is possible to access the catalog of books and other holdings, but also a large number of free databases—electronic collections of information, such as indexes to journal and magazine articles, texts of news stories and legal case, lists of sources on particular topics, and compilations of statistics. Searching these tools is always easier and more efficient if you use carefully chosen words to limit the scope of your research.

Subject, Keyword, and Advanced Searching

Catalogs and databases usually index their contents not only by author and title, but also by subject headings—standardized words and phrases used to classify the subject matter of books and articles. When you search the catalog by subject, you need to use the exact subject words.

Searches using keywords, on the other hand, make use of the computer's ability to look for any term in any field of the electronic record. In article databases, a keyword search will look in abstracts and summaries of articles as well. Keyword searching is less restrictive, but you will need to put some thought into choosing your search terms to get the best results.

Many library catalogs and database search engines offer advanced search options—sometimes on a separate page—to help you combine keywords, search for an exact phrase, or exclude items containing particular keywords. Most offer a search option using the Boolean operators AND, OR, and NOT, and some allow you to use parentheses to refine your search or wildcards to expand it.

Books

By using a combination of subject headings and keywords to search the library catalog, it is possible to discover several useful titles on your topic in book form. Catalog entries for books list a call number that indicates how the book is classified, where it is shelved, and whether it is available to check out. If a book you are interested in is located at a different branch, the library allows you to request the book and it will deliver it to your local branch—all you need is a library card. Many libraries also have interlibrary loan, which means you can request materials from other library systems. Remember, if you are requesting books, to do so as soon as possible in case someone else decides to check them out; also be sure to allow enough time for transit and delivery.

Periodical Databases

Titles of periodicals held by a library appear in its catalog, but the titles of individual articles do not—you need to use an index source. Indexes are databases or print volumes that hold information about articles published in newspapers, magazines, and scholarly journals. Some electronic indexes offer the full text of articles and some offer abstracts (short summaries) of the articles. Be sure not to confuse an abstract with a complete article. Using the library computer network or logging in with your library card bar code will allow you to view texts for free. A good place to start is theoceancountylibrary.org/researchinfo/. Some periodicals are not available electronically, but the catalog will tell you whether a print version is available. General indexes, such as InfoTrac and LexisNexis, can be useful but you may need to look at specialized indexes for in-depth articles.

Many disciplines have their own specific indexes:

Humanities

ABC-CLIO
EBSCOhost
Humanities Index
JSTOR
MLA Bibliography
Project Muse
ProQuest

Social Sciences

ERIC
EBSCOhost
GDCS
GPO Access
JSTOR
PAIS International
ProQuest
PsychInfo

Natural and Applied Sciences

EBSCOhost
General Science Index
JSTOR

Business

EBSCOhost
Periodical Abstracts
ProQuest

Internet Research

The Internet is many students' favorite way to research, and to be sure, there is an abundance of information available. However, while information in library databases comes from identifiable and professionally edited sources, no one is responsible for regulating information on the Web. It is therefore important to be extra careful in evaluating your sources.

You can find many sources online that are authoritative and reliable. For example, you can enter virtual libraries that may have larger collections than your own. Government sites such as the Library of Congress, the National Institutes of Health, and the U.S. Census Bureau also provide useful sources. For current national news, newspapers such as the *New York Times* or the *Washington Post* and news services like C-SPAN offer online content. Likewise, many scholarly journals, general-interest magazines (like *Slate* and *Salon*), and other publications (like *Newsweek* and the *New Republic*) have free online access. To limit your searches to scholarly works, try Google Scholar.

Two ideas to aid in Internet research are:

1. Take care in your choice of keywords. The vastness of the World Wide Web means you must be very specific.
2. Make use of social bookmarking sites, such as Del.icio.us and Digg. In lieu of bookmarking search findings to your own computer, these sites allow you to access your saved pages from any computer. You can also tag online resources, and since tags are visible to all users, you can browse similar tags to find other helpful websites.

A Note about Wikipedia:

“Why won’t my teacher let me use Wikipedia as a source?” Wikis are sites that users can add to and edit as they see fit; as a result, their contents are not always reliable. It is true that Wikipedia, a hugely popular site, has such a large and enthusiastic audience that users are likely to catch mistakes and remove deliberately false information quickly. But you can never be certain that a Wiki entry has not been tampered with. Use Wikis as sources for preliminary research and then double-check any information you find there.

Evaluating Sources

Since you want the information and ideas you glean from sources to be reliable and persuasive, you must evaluate each potential source carefully. The following guidelines can help you assess the usefulness and credibility of sources you are considering:

General Guidelines for Evaluating Sources:

EVALUATING ARTICLES

Determine the relevance of the source.

- Look for an abstract, which provides a summary of the entire article. Is this source directly related to your research? Does it provide useful information and insights? Will your readers consider it persuasive support for your thesis?

Determine the credibility of the publication.

- Consider the publication's title. Words in the title such as *Journal*, *Review*, and *Quarterly* may indicate that the periodical is a scholarly source.
- Try to determine the publisher or sponsor. For example, a journal published by an academic press, like Johns Hopkins University Press, generally reviews articles carefully before publishing them.

Determine the credibility of the author.

- Evaluate the author's credentials. There may be a note of some kind, indicating the education or other publications of the author.

Determine the currency of the article.

- Look at the publication date and think about whether your topic and your credibility depend upon your use of very current sources.

Determine the accuracy of the article.

- Look at the sources cited by the author of the article, often found in footnotes. Ask yourself whether the works the author has cited seem credible and current. Are any of these works cited in other articles you have considered?

In addition, consider the following questions:

- What is the article's stance or point of view? What are the author's goals? What does the author want you to know or believe?
- How does this source fit in with your other sources? Does any of the information it provides contradict or challenge other sources?

EVALUATING WEB SOURCES

Determine the credibility of the sponsoring organization.

- Consider the URL, specifically the top-level domain name. (.edu or .org for example). Could the sponsor be biased at all?
- Look for an *About* page or a link to the home page for background information on the sponsor, including a mission statement. What is the sponsoring organization's stance or point of view? Does the mission statement seem biased or balanced? Does the sponsor seem to take other points of view into account? What is the intended purpose of this site? Is the site meant to inform, or is it trying to persuade, advertise, or accomplish something?

Determine the credibility of the author.

- Evaluate the author's credentials. Does the author seem qualified to write about the issue?
- Look for the date that indicates when the information was posted or last updated.
- Check to see if the sources referred to are also up-to-date. Ask yourself if, given your topic, an older source is acceptable or if only the most recent information will do.

Determine the accuracy of the information.

- How complete is the information in the source? Examine the works cited by the author. Are sources for statistics included? Do the sources cited seem credible? Is a list of additional resources provided?

The Working Bibliography

A working bibliography is a list of sources that you are considering using for your project. As you find research sources—articles, books, Websites, and so on—you should record the MLA citation information for every source you think you might use. Include everything you need to find the source again and cite it correctly; the information you will need varies based on the type of source, whether you found it in a library or not, and whether you consulted it in print or online.

The emphasis in a working bibliography is on *working* because it will frequently change during your research as you add titles and eliminate those that do not prove useful and as you probe and emphasize some aspects of your topic in preference to others. The working bibliography will eventually evolve into the list of Works Cited that appears at the end of the research paper. Two options are available for putting together a working bibliography:

Computer File

Create a computer file and enter full information about sources into the file as you proceed with your research. Then it is possible to add new works to the list, to remove works you no longer think helpful, or to correct entries already stored. Also, if you write out your entries in MLA style, that part of your work will be done when you prepare the final draft. As you research, you can arrange and rearrange your sources however you wish (alphabetical order, chronological order, topic relevance, etc.). Always print out a hard copy just in case.

Index Cards

Using a 3” x 5” index card and a consistent style, record full information, one card per resource. You may also want to include helpful information for yourself such as: the name of the library if you are using more than one, the call numbers of books, and a brief notation about important features for key references.

Some teachers may require you to submit an annotated bibliography, which means you include your own description and comments as well as publishing information. Annotations can help you understand and remember what the source says. See below for an example.

Gere, Anne Ruggles. “Kitchen Tables and Rented Rooms” *Literacy: A Critical Sourcebook*. Ed. Ellen Cushman, Eugene R. Kintgen, Barry M. Kroll, and Mike Rose. Boston:Bedford, 2001. 275-89.
Print.

This history of writing instruction argues that people teach writing and learn to write more often in informal places like kitchens than in traditional writing classrooms. Gere presents numerous examples and comments on their importance to the study of writing today.

Note-Taking and Note Cards

While note-taking methods vary from one student to another or as required by your specific teacher, you should

1. record enough information to help you recall the major points of the source;
2. put the information in the form in which you are most likely to incorporate it into your research essay;
3. note all the information you will need to cite the source accurately.

There are three general types of note-taking:

- **Summary.** Summarize if you want to record only the general idea of large amounts of material.
- **Paraphrase.** If you require detailed notes on specific sentences and passages but do not need the exact wording, you may wish to paraphrase—that is, to restate the material in your own words.
- **Quotation.** When you believe that some sentence or passage in its original wording might make an effective addition to your paper, transcribe that material exactly as it appears, word for word, comma for comma. Whenever you quote verbatim from a work, *be sure to use quotation marks* scrupulously in your notes to distinguish the quotation from summary and paraphrase. Remember to avoid excessive quotations, using them for fewer than 20% of your notes. Also, only use direct quotations under these conditions:
 1. When an authority's words carry weight.
 2. When the quotation is concise and powerful.
 3. When it would be impossible to restate as effectively in your own words.

You may take notes using a computer or by hand on paper or index cards. If you are using a computer you have several advantages over index cards: you can type or copy/paste material, create one file for all sources or separate files for different sources, and so forth. However, sometimes you may find yourself taking notes when a computer is not available, in which case note cards can be the best choice.

Regardless, a note should include these major items:

- *Use a subject heading.* Label each note with a brief but descriptive subject heading (called a slug) so you can group similar subtopics together.
- *Identify the source.* List the author's name and a shortened title of the source. Your working bibliography or cards will contain the full bibliographic information, so you do not have to repeat it on each note. You may want to number each source and write the corresponding numbers to code your note cards instead.
- *Record exact page references (if available).* For online or other sources without page numbers, record the paragraph, screen or other section number(s) if indicated.
- *Indicate whether the note is a summary, paraphrase or direct quotation.* Make sure your quotations are copied accurately. Put square brackets around any change you make, and use ellipses if you omit material.

Examples:

<p>Child labor statistics Arat, <i>Analyzing Child Labor</i>, p. 180</p> <p>Accurate statistics are hard to gather Between 200 and 500 million child laborers worldwide 95% are in the third world 2 million in the US and UK (Summary)</p> <p>“[O]ne in three children in Africa works, one in four in Asia, and one in five in Lating America.” (Quotation)</p>	<p>←Heading</p> <p>←Identification and page #</p> <p>←Indication of note type</p> <p>←Indication of note type</p>
<p>Comments from educators</p> <p>Lee, “I Think,” <i>NY Times</i> (Web site)</p> <p>Melanie Weaver was stunned by some of the term papers she receivede from a 10th-grade class she recently taught as part of an internship. “They would be trying to make a point in the paper, [so] they would put a smiley face in the end,” said Ms. Weaver, who teaches at Alvernia College in Reading, PA. “If they were presenting an argument and they needed to present an opposite view, they would put a frown.” (Quotation)</p>	

Outlines and Thesis Statements

Once you have gathered information from all of your sources, it is time to make an outline. Your outline must therefore reflect your thesis; in other words, the sum of the parts of your outline must equal the thesis statement. Use these guidelines, and follow this procedure:

1. Write a thesis statement. The thesis is the heart of the research paper, and the most important thing to remember is that your thesis statement answers your research question. An effective thesis statement:

- Is a single declarative sentence with one main clause.
- States your position or findings on the topic.
- States the specific focus the paper will have.
- Suggests what the conclusion will say.
- Answers your research question.

A thesis is **NOT**

- A question.
- A statement beginning “The purpose of this paper is...”
- A statement of the topic.
- Made of multiple main clauses.

Examples of effective thesis statements:

When wetlands are destroyed, the reduction of the water table affects life of all kinds, even that of the average city dweller.

While Steinbeck’s depiction of the Great Depression in *The Grapes of Wrath* bears historical accuracy, at least one family showed little similarity between its life and that of the Joads.

Government, private organizations, and individuals are all working to solve what seems to be the insurmountable problem of homelessness.

2. Sort your notes according to their subject headings. Review them to see how strongly they will support your various points. Keep your thesis statement and audience in mind and delete irrelevant or repetitive material.

3. Choose an organizational pattern that will best reflect your purpose and topic:

- Chronology (useful for historical discussions—e.g. how the Mexican War developed)
- Cause and effect (e.g. the consequences a scientific discovery will have)
- Process (e.g. how a politician got elected)
- Deductive logic (which moves from general to the specific—e.g. from the problem of violence in the U.S. to violence involving handguns)
- Inductive logic (which moves from specific to general—e.g. from violence involving handguns to the problem of violence in the U.S.)

4. Write the outline. The outline gives order to your paper. It includes the important elements of the topic and promotes unity in the paper. The thesis statement should be included at the top of the outline. Using an outline can help organize material and can also indicate connections between pieces of information. It can also expose material that is not really relevant to the purposes of the paper or material that has been covered before and should be removed.

Form: The topic should be divided into an appropriate number of major divisions. Your outline is not just a running list of bullets. Each division must have two or more parts (I must have II, A must have B, etc.). Although the first paragraph in the actual paper will be an introduction to the topic and the final paragraph a conclusion, those words do not appear in the outline. The tentative title of the paper should be centered at the top.

Types: The two primary types of outlines are sentence outlines and topic outlines. Topic outlines are more common and use only short phrases throughout, listing the major ideas and using no end punctuation. Sentence outlines use complete sentences throughout as well as end

punctuation. In all, remember to maintain parallel structure and label the parts of the outline in the traditional Roman-numeral format as follows:

- I.
 - A.
 - 1.
 - a.
 - (1)
 - (a)
 - (b)
 - (2)
 - b.
 - 2.
 - B.
- II.

Example:

Tragedy at Columbine

Thesis: The violent tragedy at Columbine High School has actually had a positive impact on American education in general.

- I. The event at Columbine.
 - A. Occurrence
 - 1. Date
 - 2. Place
 - 3. People
 - B. Students
 - 1. Perpetrators
 - 2. Others
 - C. Results
 - 1. Impact on the community
 - 2. Punishment of perpetrators
 - 3. Copycat crimes
- II. Causes
 - A. Competition for status
 - B. Acceptance with the “in” crowd
 - C. Allegiance to a subculture
 - D. Values of society in general
 - E. Failure to respond to warning signals
 - F. Alienation at school
 - G. Isolation at home
- III. Positive impact
 - A. Increased security
 - 1. Police in schools
 - 2. Tougher laws
 - B. Increased sensitivity
 - 1. Values education
 - 2. Opportunities for help

Writing Drafts

Two key rules to pay attention to when beginning to write drafts is:

1. Plan ahead and leave plenty of time for revision. Some students write more slowly and come close to a final draft the first time through. Others prefer to work in stages and expect to undertake several drafts.
2. Save everything! If you are handwriting, save all copies and note cards. If you are typing on a computer, save often and print out a hard copy every so often. Again, leave yourself time to cope with any technical problems that may come up!

Introduction

Set the scene for your reader by providing a general overview of the topic. The thesis statement is generally the last sentence of the paragraph; as you lead up to your thesis, consider the following techniques to engage the reader:

- Provide a meaningful frame of reference for the reader
- Explain why this particular topic is important or worthy of study
- Startle the reader with interesting facts or statistics.
- Relate your topic to current events.
- Describe a compelling condition or situation.
- Explain a conflict or inconsistency.
- Ask a provocative question.

Body Paragraphs

Use the following guidelines for writing effective body paragraphs:

- Make your paragraphs correspond to your outline.
- Include in each paragraph a stated or implied topic sentence.
- Use your notes to develop support for each paragraph.
- Maintain unity.
- Blend material from your note cards into your own sentences.
- Use transitional words, phrases, sentences, and paragraphs to connect ideas within and between paragraphs.
- Document all quotations with quotation marks and citations!!!

Conclusion

The end of your paper should be the strongest part of your entire work. Some ideas:

- Provide a summary.
- Refer to the introduction.
- Reach a conclusion.
- Make an insightful observation.
- Issue a challenge.
- And most importantly... make sure you have used compelling logic and strong evidence to support your claim (which is essentially your thesis).

Part II: Formatting the Research Paper

Basic Format

MLA format governs all aspects of a research paper, not just the in-text citations and Works Cited page. Therefore, there are uniform aspects of layout and design that all MLA papers have in common. Some of these expectations are:

- Use standard 8 1/2" x 11" white paper, printed only on one side.
- Maintain a 1" margin on all four sides of all pages.
- Size 12 font, usually Times New Roman; if using something else, make sure your font is legible
- Enter your heading on the upper left corner of the first page: (1) your name. (2) your teacher's name. (3) course title. (4) due date.
- The title of the paper should be centered. Do not underline, italicize, or use quotation marks.
- Double-space the entire paper, including long quotations and the Works Cited page. Be careful not to insert extra spaces between your heading, title, or paragraphs.
- Maintain a running header made up of your last name and the page number, 1/2" from the top of each page, with page numbers flush with the right margin. It is teacher's preference whether the header appears on the first page.
- Indent with the Tab key (or 5 spaces) for each paragraph.
- Leave only one space after periods or other punctuation, unless otherwise instructed by your teacher.
- Do not forget to include your Works Cited page as the last page.
- Put one staple in the upper left corner of the final copy. No cover pages or plastic page protectors. Staple papers before coming to class.

Example:

↑
1"
↓
Your Name (First Last)
Instructor's Name
Course
Day Month Year
Title of the Paper
← 1" → First paragraph begins here.

Documentation Part I: In-Text Citations

In MLA style, referring to the works of others in your text is done by using what is known as in-text, or parenthetical, citation. This method involves placing relevant source information in parentheses after a quote or a paraphrase. A source of information **must** be cited in the following cases:

1. If an author's exact words are used.
2. Any idea, argument, or theory that is not the student's own, *even if it is paraphrased*.
3. A fact that would not ordinarily be known, such as statistics, translations, dates.
4. First-person accounts of incidents that are not common knowledge.

General Guidelines

- The source information required in a parenthetical citation depends upon the source medium (e.g. print or digital) and upon the source's entry on the Works Cited page.
- Any source information that you provide in-text must correspond to the source information on the Works Cited page. More specifically, *whatever signal word or phrase you provide to your readers in the text must be the first thing that appears on the left-hand margin of the corresponding entry in the Works Cited list*; this is the fundamental rule of citation.

Author-Page Style

MLA format follows the author-page method of in-text citation. This means that the author's last name and the page number(s) from which the quotation or paraphrase is taken must appear in the text, and a complete reference should appear on your Works Cited page. The author's name may appear either in the sentence itself OR in parentheses following the quotation or paraphrase, but the page number(s) should always appear in the parentheses, not in the text of your sentence.

Examples:

Wordsworth stated that Romantic poetry was marked by a "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" (263).
Romantic poetry is characterized by the "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" (Wordsworth 263).
Wordsworth extensively explored the role of emotion in the creative process (263).

Both citations in the examples above, (263) and (Wordsworth 263), tell readers that the information in the sentence can be located on page 263 of a work by an author named Wordsworth. If readers want more information about this source, they can turn to the Works Cited page, where, under the name of Wordsworth, they would find the following information:

Wordsworth, William. *Lyrical Ballads*. London: Oxford U.P., 1967. Print.

In-Text Citations for Print Sources with Known Author

For print sources like books, magazines, scholarly journal articles, and newspapers, provide a signal word or phrase (usually the author's last name) and a page number. If you provide the signal word/phrase in the sentence, you do not need to include it in the parenthetical citation.

Human beings have been described by Kenneth Burke as "symbol-using animals" (3).
Human beings have been described as "symbol-using animals" (Burke 3).

These examples must correspond to an entry that begins with Burke, which will be the first thing that appears on the left-hand margin of an entry in the Works Cited:

Burke, Kenneth. *Language as Symbolic Action: Essays on Life, Literature, and Method*.
Berkeley: U of California P, 1966. Print.

In-text Citations for Print Sources with No Known Author

When a source has no known author, use a shortened title of the work instead of an author name. Place the title in quotation marks if it is a short work (e.g. articles) or italicize it if it is a longer work (e.g. plays, books, television shows, entire websites) and provide a page number.

We see so many global warming hotspots in North America likely because this region has “more readily accessible climatic data and more comprehensive programs to monitor and study environmental change . . .” (“Impact of Global Warming” 6).

In this example, since the reader does not know the author of the article, an abbreviated title of the article appears in the parenthetical citation that corresponds to the full name of the article, which itself appears as the first portion of its respective entry in the Works Cited. Thus, the writer includes the title in quotation marks as the signal phrase in the parenthetical citation in order to lead the reader directly to the source on the Works Cited page. The Works Cited entry for the example above appears as follows:

“The Impact of Global Warming in North America.” *GLOBAL WARMING: Early Signs*.
1999. Web. 23 Mar. 2009.

It is important to know that parenthetical citations and Works Cited pages allow readers to know which sources you consulted in writing your essay, so that they can either verify your interpretation of the sources or use them in their own scholarly work.

Citing Non-Print or Sources from the Internet

With more and more scholarly work being posted on the Internet, you will likely have to cite research you have completed in virtual environments. When creating in-text citations for electronic, film, or Internet sources, remember that your citation must reference the source in your Works Cited, just as it does for traditional print media. For electronic and Internet sources, use the following guidelines:

- Include in the text or parenthesis the first item from the corresponding Work Cited entry (e.g. author’s name, article’s name, website’s name, film’s name)
- Page numbers are not used with non-print sources and may be omitted when citing, with the exception of online journals or other periodicals that contain specific page numbers.

More General Guidelines for Citation

- Place the citation reference at the end of the sentence, unless you are quoting from two different sources in the same sentence.
- Except for documentation having to appear mid-sentence or block quotes, the closing period always follows the parenthetical reference.
- For up to three joint authors, include the last name of each author: (Epstein, Brown and Pope 71).
- When there are four or more joint authors, use the name of the first author listed followed by et al. and the page number (Starret et al. 84)
- If you add a word or words in a quotation, you should put brackets around the words to indicate they are not part of the original text.
- If you omit a word or words from a quotation, you should indicate the deleted words or words by using ellipsis marks, which are 3 periods (. . .) preceded and followed by a space.
- Quoted materials should comprise only between 10-20% of the paper!
- REMEMBER: IF IN DOUBT, DOCUMENT!
- More specific guidelines can be found in the resources listed at the end of this packet.

Incorporating Sources

A research paper should be the writer's own position supported by facts and opinions of others. Therefore, the writer must incorporate his/her research into the body of the paper by using parenthetical citations. The writer has several options as to how to incorporate the information into the paper, depending on length:

Short Quotations

To indicate short quotations (fewer than 4 typed lines of prose or 3 lines of verse) in your text, enclose in quotations marks and cite it as discussed above. Punctuation marks such as periods, commas, and semi-colons should appear *after* the parenthetical citations. Question marks and exclamations points should appear *within* the quotations marks if they are part of the quoted passage but *after* the citation if they are part of your text. Mark breaks in short quotations of verse with a slash (/) at the end of each line of verse, a space preceding and following the slash.

According to some, dreams express "profound aspects of personality," though others disagree (Foulkes 184).

According to Foulkes's study, dreams may express "profound aspects of personality" (184).

Is it possible that dreams may express "profound aspects of personality" (Foulkes 184)?

Cullen concludes, "Of all the things that happened there / That's all I remember" (11-12).

Long Quotations

For quotations that are 4 or more lines of verse or prose: place quotations in a free-standing block of text and omit quotation marks. Start the quotation on a new line, with the entire quotation indented 1" from the left margin; maintain double-spacing. Only indent the first line of the quotation by ½" if you are citing multiple paragraphs. Your citation should come *after* the closing punctuation mark. When quoting verse, maintain original line breaks.

Nelly Dean treats Heathcliff poorly and dehumanizes him throughout her narration:

They entirely refused to have it in bed with them, or even in their room, and I had no more sense, so, I put it on the landing of the stairs, hoping it would be gone on the morrow. By chance, or else attracted by hearing his voice, it crept to Mr. Earnshaw's door, and there he found it on quitting his chamber. Inquiries were made as to how it got there; I was obliged to confess, and in recompense for my cowardice and inhumanity was sent out of the house. (Brontë 78)

Paraphrasing

A paraphrase accurately states all the relevant information from a passage *in your own words and sentence structures*, without any additional comments or elaborations. Use a paraphrase when the main points of a passage, their order, and some details are important but the particular wording is not. Unlike a summary, a paraphrase always restates *all* the main points of a passage in the same order and often in about the same number of words. To paraphrase without plagiarizing inadvertently, do not simply substitute synonyms, and do not imitate an author's style. If you wish to cite some of an author's words within a paraphrase, enclose them in quotation marks.

Summarizing

A summary is a significantly shortened version of a passage or even of a whole chapter or work that captures main ideas *in your own words*. Unlike a paraphrase, a summary uses just enough information to record the main points you wish to emphasize. To summarize a short passage, read it carefully and, without looking at the text, write a one- or two-sentence overview.

When to Quote, Paraphrase, or Summarize

Quote

- Wording that is so memorable or powerful, or expresses a point so perfectly, that you cannot change it without weakening its meaning
- Authors' opinions you wish to emphasize
- Authors' words that show you are considering varying perspectives
- Respected authorities whose opinions support your ideas
- Authors whose opinions challenge or vary greatly from those of others in the field

Paraphrase

- Passages you do not wish to quote but that use details important to your point

Summarize

- Long passages in which the main point is important to your point but the details are not

Plagiarism

According to *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, plagiarism means “to commit literary theft” and to “present as new and original an idea or product derived from an existing source. In short, it is the use of another person’s ideas without giving credit, or trying to pass off another’s thoughts as one’s one. The purpose of a research paper is to incorporate outside research and data with your ideas. You may use another person’s ideas as long as you properly document all information you borrow. This includes not only quotations and paraphrases, but also ideas and information from other sources.

Plagiarism includes:

- Using a direct quotation without quotation marks, even if it is cited.
- Changing a few words of a sentence without citing the idea.
- Rewording another’s ideas without citing the original author.
- Using another student’s paper and passing it off as your own.
- Having someone else write all, or even part, of your paper.
- Copying and pasting directly from an Internet source without quotation marks.

Consequences:

At BHS, cheating on any work produced for a grade will be penalized. Students who cheat, including those who help others cheat will receive no credit for the assignments in question. While work receiving a zero because of cheating cannot be made up for credit, the teacher may require the student(s) to make up work for educational purposes. The teacher will contact the parent/guardian, and a report will be kept in the student’s discipline file for the duration of the student’s time at BHS. This report may impact the student’s ability to gain entrance into National Honor Society or obtain scholarships. Remember that colleges and businesses alike will not tolerate any form of plagiarism. Consequences may include loss of college credit or expulsion, or loss of wages, job termination, or lawsuits.

A Note about TurnItIn:

Many teachers choose to use the website TurnItIn.com which allows students to upload their assignments and then cross-checks their assignment against other student papers, periodicals, journals, other publications, and the Internet. If your teacher allows you to see your originality report, anything in the green to yellow, or 10-20% range is generally fine. However, if you see orange or 30% and up, you either have been marked for plagiarizing or for including far too much quoted material. If your teacher requires you to use TurnItIn, do not forget to upload your paper!

Documentation Part II: The Works Cited Page

Use the following guidelines to format your Works Cited page:

- Continue the running header of your last name and page on the Works Cited page.
- Center the words Works Cited one inch from the top of the page. Do not use quotation marks, underlining, or italics. Use initial uppercase letters.
- Double-space the entire page.
- Begin the first entry one space below the title. Begin all entries at the left margin, but subsequent lines are indented one Tab (5 spaces). This is called a hanging indent.
- Enter all sources in alphabetical order by the first word: author's last name or title. If a title begins with *A*, *An*, or *The*, alphabetize by the next word.
- Be sure every parenthetical citation included in your text has a corresponding entry on the Works Cited page.
- If you cite two or more sources by the same author: give the author's name in only the first entry, subsequent entries indicate the same author by beginning with three hyphens followed by a period, arrange all the publications in alphabetical order by title.
- Every entry receives a medium of publication marker, such as Print, Web, or Performance. Markers for Web sources are followed by the date of access.
- Some web sources may not supply certain information; if that is the case use the following rules: (1) Write n.p. for no publisher given (2) Write n.d. for no date of publication given (3) Write n. pag. for no page numbers given.

Example:

↑
1"
↓
Works Cited

Edwards, Brent Hayes. "The Literary Ellington." *Representations* 77 (2002): 1-29.
JSTOR. Web. 7 Dec. 2007.

Harbord, Jane. *The Evolution of Film: Rethinking Film Studies*. Cambridge: Polity,
2007. Print.

Ouellette, Marc. "Theories, Memories, Bodies, and Artists." Editorial. *Reconstruction*.
7.4 (2007): n. pag. Web. 5 June 2008.

Citation Formats

- Considering the frequent updates to digital sources and the constantly-evolving landscape of 21st century research, specific requirements for MLA citation regularly change. An online resource such as Purdue University's Online Writing Lab (OWL) is your best source for the most up-to-date MLA information.

BOOK BY ONE AUTHOR

MLA Last, First M. *Book*. City Published: Publisher, Year Published. Print.

Ex: Franke, Damon. *Modernist Heresies: British Literary History, 1883-1924*. Columbus: Ohio State UP, 2008. Print.

BOOK BY TWO OR MORE AUTHORS

MLA Last, First M., First M. Last, and First M. Last. *Book*. City Published: Publisher, Year Published. Print.

Ex: Booth, Wayne C., Gregory C. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. *The Craft of Research*. 2nd ed. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2003. Print.

BOOK BY AN ORGANIZATION OR GROUP

MLA Name of Organization. *Book*. City Published: Publisher, Year Published. Print.

Ex: Urban Land Institute. *Cities Post-9/11*. Washington: Urban Land Inst., 2002. Print.

ANTHOLOGY (collection of works by different authors)

MLA Last, First M., and First M. Last, eds. *Book*. City Published: Publisher, Year Published. Print.

Ex: Buranen, Lisa and Alice M. Roy, eds. *Perspectives on Plagiarism and Intellectual Property in a Postmodern World*. New York: State U of New York P, 1999. Print.

Book Editor



WORK IN AN ANTHOLOGY

MLA Last, First M. *Section Title*. * *Book/Anthology*. Ed. First M. Last.

Edition. City Published: Publisher, Year Published. Page(s). Print.

↑
Ex: 5th ed.

*If the work was originally published independently, italicize the section title. If not, enclose the title in quotation marks.

Ex: Melville, Herman. *Hawthorne and His Masses*. *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*. Ed. Nina Baym. 3rd ed. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1989. Print.

Translator



Ex: Allende, Isabel. "Toad's Mouth." Trans. Margaret Sayers Peden. *A Hammock beneath the Mangoes: Stories from Latin America*. Ed. Thomas Colchie. New York: Plume, 1992. 83-88. Print.

ARTICLE IN A REFERENCE BOOK

MLA "Article Title." *Book*. Edition. Year Published. Print.

Ex: "Azimuthal Equidistant Projection." *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*. 11th ed. 2003. Print.

Ex: "Ginsburg, Ruth Bader." *Who's Who in America*. 62nd ed. 2008. Print.

Ex: 1-5 or 37



ARTICLE IN A MAGAZINE

MLA Last, First M. "Article title." *Magazine* Day Month Year: Page(s).
Print.

Ex: Pressman, Aaron. "Bottom Fishing in Rough Waters." *BusinessWeek* 29 Sept. 2008: 27. Print.

Ex: 1-5 or A12



ARTICLE IN A NEWSPAPER

MLA Last, First M. "Article Name." *Newspaper* Day Month Year: Page(s).

Print.

Ex: Campoy, Ana. "Gasoline Surges in Southeast after Ike." *The Wall*

Street Journal 23 Sept. 2008: A14. Print.

Ex: 13



ARTICLE IN A SCHOLARLY JOURNAL (PRINT)

MLA Last, First M., and First M. Last. "Article." *Journal Name* Volume.

Issue (Year): Page(s). Print.



Ex: 2-7 or 32

Ex: Bharadwaj, Parag, and Katerine T. Ward. "Ethical Considerations of

Patients with Pacemakers." *American Family Physician* 78 (2008): 398-99.

Print.

Date electronically published



WEBSITE

MLA Last, First M. "Website Article." *Website*. Publisher, Day Month

Year. Web. Day Month Year.



Date Accessed

Ex: Friedland, Lois. "Top 10 Natural and Wildlife Adventure Travel

Trips." *About.com*. New York Times Company, 22 Sept. 2008.

Web. 25 Sept. 2008.

ARTICLE IN A SCHOLARLY JOURNAL (ONLINE DATABASE)

↓ Ex: 12.3

MLA Last, First M. "Article." *Journal* Volume.Issue (Year): Pages.
Database. Web. Day Month Year.

Ex: Ahn, Hyunchul, and Kyoung-jae Kim. "Using Genetic Algorithms to Optimize Nearest Neighbors for Data Mining." *Annals of Operations Research* 263.1 (2008): 5-18. *Academic Search Premier*. Web. 25 Sept. 2008.

TV/RADIO

MLA "Episode." Contributors. *Program*. Network. Call Letter, City, Date.
Medium.

Ex: "The Saudi Experience." Prod. Mary Walsh. *Sixty Minutes*. CBS.
WCBS, New York, 5 May 2009. Television.

DVD, Film, etc.

↓

FILM

MLA *Title*. Contributors. Distributor, Year of release. Medium viewed.

Ex: *The Dark Knight*. Dir. Christopher Nolan. Perf. Christian Bale, Heath Ledger, and Aaron Eckhart. Warner Bros., 2008. DVD.

MP3, CD etc.

↓

SOUND RECORDING

MLA Contributors. "Song." *Album*. Band. Manufacturer, Year. Medium.

Ex: Corgan, Billy, and Butch Vig. "Today." *Siamese Dream*. Smashing Pumpkins. Virgin Records America, 1993. CD.

VISUAL ART/PHOTGRAPH

MLA Last, First M. *Painting*. Year created. Medium of work. Museum or collection, City.

Ex: Picasso, Pablo. *Three Musicians*. 1921. Oil on panel. Museum of Modern Art, New York.

LECTURE/SPEECH

MLA Last, First M. "Speech." Meeting or organization. Location. Date. Description.

Ex: Obama, Barack H. "Inaugural Address." 2009 Presidential Inaugural. Capitol Building, Washington. 20 Jan. 2009. Address.

INTERVIEW

If any
↓

MLA Interviewee. "Title." Interview by interviewer. Publication information. Medium.

←Magazine, newspaper, television information

Ex: Abdul, Paula. Interview by Cynthia McFadden. *Nightline*. ABC. WABC, New York. 23 Apr. 2009. Television.

CARTOON

If any
↓

Magazine, newspaper, book
↓

MLA Last, First M. "Title." Cartoon or comic strip. Publication information. Medium.

Ex: Trudeau, Garry. "Doonesbury." Comic strip. *New York Times* 8 May 2008: 12. Print.

Appendix A: Basic Rules of Writing

1. Titles of books, plays, collections of poems published as books, periodicals, and films are italicized. Titles of articles, essays, short stories, poems within larger words, and chapters of books are put in quotation marks.
2. Pay attention to verb tenses—use present tense and active voice.
3. Avoid using first or second person (I, me, my, you, your, we, etc.)
4. Avoid contractions (can't should be cannot).
5. Use the digits for dates, addresses, and numbers greater than ten. Spell out all numbers beginning a sentence; in that case use a hyphen for numbers twenty-one to ninety-nine.
6. Use the last name when referring to authors and historical figures (Shakespeare, not William).
7. Pay attention to vocabulary—avoid slang, colloquialisms, and clichés.
8. The thesis is not the title.
9. Be careful when checking spelling using Microsoft Word. Proofread for errors (for example use the right “there,” “they’re,” or “their” and the right “your” or “you’re”)
10. Proofread, proofread, proofread!

Appendix B: Rough Draft Revision Checklist

- Does my paper do what the thesis statement says it will: i.e., answer the research question?
- Did I follow my outline or its revision?
- Do I have solid reasons for arranging the body paragraphs in the order I do?
- Have I maintained the same attitude, tone, and style throughout my paper?
- Are all of my paragraphs well written?
 - Does each have a topic sentence, stated or implied?
 - Does each include enough supporting details to defend its topic?
 - Does each paragraph maintain unity, i.e., does every detail included support the topic sentence?
 - Do transitional words, phrases, or sentences connect ideas within paragraphs?
 - Does each paragraph have a concluding idea or sentence (where needed)?
- Do transitional words, phrases, or sentences connect ideas between paragraphs?
- When I combine the topic sentences from each of the paragraphs, do they logically equal the thesis statement?
- Have I written grammatically sound sentences, avoiding fragments, run-ons, comma splices, dangling and misplaced modifiers, and redundancies?
- Have I used parallel structures for coordinating elements?
- Have I varied my sentences by length?
- Have I varied my sentences by structure (compound and complex)?
- Do my sentences create emphasis for important points?
- Did I check for accurate word choice?
- Did I check the grammar, mechanics, and usage?

Appendix C: Proofreading Checklist

- Look carefully at every word, checking for keyboarding errors or misspellings.
- Check for accurate punctuation.
- Check for grammatical errors, especially errors that you know you have made in the past.
- Check for consistent point of view, most likely 3rd person point of view (no “I” or “you”).
- Use consistent verb tenses.
- Use correct MLA manuscript style through the text.
- Check the Works Cited page for accuracy:
 - Are the title and running header accurate?
 - Are names spelled correctly?
 - Have you capitalized correctly?
 - Are punctuation marks correct, especially in relationship to other punctuations?
 - Does each entry end with a period?
 - Have you italicized and used quotation marks accurately?
 - Is the list of entries correctly alphabetized?
 - Have you correctly cited multiple works by the same author?
- Check direct quotations to make sure they are accurate.
- Check your text against your note cards to make sure you used necessary quotation marks, thus avoiding plagiarism.
- Check for accurate documentation, including correctly spelled names and correct page numbers.
- Check that every source cited in your paper is also listed on the Works Cited page.
- Check that only sources cited in your paper are included on the Works Cited page.
- Make sure your paper reflects your best effort.

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