

First Name Middle Initial Last Name

Instructor's Name

Subject Name and Number

Date

Centered Title

This is a brief demonstration of the MLA style in action. If any of these rules contradict with what your instructor has specified, use the rule provided by your instructor.

It is important to provide a clear, visual distinction between ordinary text and the title of a work. The title of Ernest Hemingway's novel *The Sun Also Rises* needs to be italicized, while his short story "Hills Like White Elephants" is placed in quotation marks. I read an article in a newspaper called "Opening Day Review of *Romeo and Juliet*." Although I am using these titles, I am not quoting any material within them yet, so I do not need a parenthetical reference. However, if I were to say that in the article, Romeo is described as being "the worst actor that I have seen in years" (Johnson 3), I would need to include the reference. At times when I mention the author's name in the sentence, I need only the page number, and not the name, in the parenthetical citation, like so: Johnson claims that "Romeo stunk" (3).

In some circumstances, we have to use block quotes. The MLA manual explains this:

If a quotation extends to more than four lines, . . . set it off from your text by beginning a new line, indenting one inch from the left margin, and typing it double-spaced, without adding quotation marks. A colon generally introduces a quotation displayed in this way (94)

And then the paragraph continues, without indent, after the block quote. Unlike with other quoted material, the end punctuation goes before the parenthetical page number.

MLA Style Overview

The Modern Language Association (MLA) is an organization of teachers and scholars that was founded in 1883. Their belief is that agreeing upon rules for documenting quotations, facts, opinions, and paraphrases would simplify the task of preparing manuscripts for publication. More than 120 years later, the MLA style has become the standard in the fields of English, Foreign Languages, Philosophy, and many other humanities.

General Format:

- Font: 12-point Times New Roman or Arial.
- Margins: One inch top, bottom, left and right.
- Spacing: Double-spaced.
- Header: Right-aligned, last name followed by page number, like so: Name 1

Titles:

- *Italicize*: Books, plays, periodicals, radio and television programs, and other independently published works
- “Quote marks”: Articles, essays, short stories, short poems, chapters of books, individual episodes of television and radio programs, and other works published within larger works

Quotations:

When using someone else’s words, give that author proper credit. Place direct quotes in double quotation marks to set them apart from your own words, and follow the quotes with parenthetical citations.

It is preferred that you mention the author’s name in the sentence leading up to the quote, so that your parenthetical citation needs only a page number.

When a quote ends a sentence, place the period after the parenthetical citation, not inside the quotation marks.

Author’s name in parenthetical citation:
“We are all men” (Johnson 36).

Author’s name in text:
Johnson says, “We are all men” (36).

Block Quote:

When a quotation runs longer than four lines, use a block quote.

The sentence leading up to the block quote ends in a colon, and the block quote begins on its own line.

A block quote is indented one inch, or ten spaces, from the left margin.

It is not placed in quotation marks.

It is double-spaced, like the rest of the paper.

Unlike other quotes, it ends with a period before the parenthetical citation, not after.

The line after the block quote is not indented.

Omissions:

If omitting material within a quote, use ellipsis to take the place of the missing words, like so: “He is the worst actor ... in years” (Johnson 3).

Work Cited

Modern Language Association of America. *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. 7th ed. New York: MLA, 2009. Print.