The MLA Crib Sheet was inspired by the APA Crib Sheet developed by Russ Dewey (and updated by Doc Scribe). It closely follows the organization of the APA Crib Sheet. The MLA Crib Sheet is based on the sixth edition of the MLA Handbook (2003), and revised in September 2003. The MLA Crib Sheet may be freely reproduced as long as the content remains unchanged. The page is optimized for viewing at 800x600 resolution. Download the MLA Crib Sheet PDF and other MLA style resources from Dr. Abel Scribe PhD at http://www.docstyles.com.

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INTRODUCTION

MLA style is the style of writing used by Modern Language Association as reflected in the journal published by the organization--PMLA (Publications of the Modern Language Association) and kindred journals. The style is documented in the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers (6th ed., 2003). MLA style borrows heavily from the Chicago Manual of Style, but uses a unique author-page citation format. MLA style is an excellent general purpose style, useful for research papers where a particular style is not specified. The principal source for the MLA Crib Sheet is:


What's Changed? The fifth edition expanded instructions for very precisely quoting material from other sources, instructions that were then reversed in the sixth edition. Unfortunately, MLA references to Internet sources are extremely complex, and this complexity has increased with the new edition, not diminished! References may be comprised of up to 15 elements! These are explained [?] in the MLA Handbook on pages 214-15. The style otherwise remains largely unchanged from earlier editions.

MLA Crib Sheet. Some of the more commonly used rules and reference formats from the manual are listed here. However, this Web page is no substitute for the 360 page MLA Handbook, which should be purchased by any serious student in the humanities. The MLA Handbook can be found in almost any college bookstore--and many other bookstores--and at Amazon.com http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0873529863/drabelscriphd-20.

Chicago Manual of Style/PMLA. Occasionally there are features commonly used in scholarly writing that are not covered in the MLA Handbook. In these cases the Crib Sheet defers to the Chicago Manual of Style (CMS), 14th edition, or recent issues of PMLA, the MLA's own journal.

Dictionaries. “A good dictionary is an essential tool for all writers. Your instructor will probably [?] recommend a standard American dictionary such as The American Heritage College Dictionary, Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, or Random House Webster's Collegiate Dictionary. Because dictionaries vary in matters like word division and spelling preference, you should, to maintain consistency, use the same one throughout your paper” (Gibaldi 71).

NBs “Spelling, including hyphenation, should be consistent throughout the manuscript—except in quotations, which must retain the spelling of the original, whether correct of incorrect” (Gibaldi 79).
STYLE NOTES

Style Notes cover details commonly encountered when drafting a research paper. These are also the details that knowledgeable readers are likely to note when you get them wrong. You may elect to apply your own best judgment on the more esoteric features, as long as you remember to be slavishly consistent throughout your paper.

Abbreviations

“Abbreviations are used regularly in the list of works cited and in tables but rarely in the text of a research paper (except within parentheses). In choosing abbreviations, keep your audience in mind. While economy of space is important, clarity is more so. Spell out a term if the abbreviation may puzzle your readers” (Gibaldi 262).

1. Never begin a sentence with a lowercase abbreviation. Avoid beginning a sentence with an acronym.
2. Common abbreviations such as etc., e.g., and i.e. may be used only in parentheses. In the text write for example (e.g.); and so forth (etc.); that is (i.e.).
3. Spell out the names of countries, states, counties, provinces, territories, bodies of water, mountains, in the text.
4. Most prefixes to places, such as Fort, North, Port, South, are spelled out in the text; as are suffixes such as Peak or Fork. Write: North Platte, Fort Collins, Port Huron, South Bend, Long’s Peak.
5. When writing initials, the traditional format is still preferred—put a period and a single space after each. For example, write: J. S. Bach, E. E. Cummings, C. S. Lewis.

Acronyms. “The trend in abbreviation is to use neither periods after letters nor spaces between letters, especially for abbreviations made up of all capital letters” (Gibaldi 262). For example, write: CA, PhD, MLA, CD-ROM, US, UK.

- If an acronym is commonly used as a word, it does not require explanation (IQ, LSD, FBI, ESP).
- A term must be fully written the first time it is used, thereafter just the acronym is used.
- If an acronym is not familiar to your readers use an expanded abbreviation. For MLA write Mod. Lang. Assn.
- Use two-letter postal codes for U.S. states and Canadian provinces in references only (GA, PQ, etc.).
- Write the plural form of an acronym without an apostrophe (e.g. some MBAs command high salaries).

NB> It is common practice in research writing to spell out the name or phrase to be abbreviated followed by the acronym in parentheses. Thereafter, just the acronym is used. For example, the Modern Language Association (MLA) publishes a journal. The MLA also publishes the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers.

Capitalization & Spacing

Capitalization in MLA style is mostly conventional, with the exceptions noted below. There is considerable ambiguity on whether some terms are capitalized or not. Generally, specific designations may be capitalized: the American West. But more general designations—or designations used as adjectives—are lowercased: The western United States, eastern Europe.

1. The names of ethnic or racial groups are capitalized if they represent a geographical region or language group. For example, Hispanic, Asian, African American, Appalachian.
2. Designations based only on color, direction, size, habitat, customs, or local usage are often lower cased.

NB> When in doubt, and when a good guide to grammar and usage is no help, follow whatever practice appeals to you but be consistent throughout your text!

Heading caps. "The rules for capitalizing are strict. In a title or subtitle, capitalize the first word, the last word, and all principal words, including those that follow hyphens in compound terms" (Gibaldi 103). These are commonly referred to as heading caps. Do not capitalize the following unless they begin a title or follow a colon:

- Articles: a, an, the.
- Prepositions: against, between, in, of, to.
- Conjunctions: and, but, for, nor, or, so, yet.
- Infinitive: to.

Sentence caps capitalize just the first word, the first word after a colon, and any proper nouns in a heading or title.

- Use heading caps for the titles of books and articles used in the text and in references.
- Use heading caps for major headings in your paper (except run-in headings).
- Use sentence caps for titles of most non-English works.
Use sentence caps for lower level run-in or paragraph subheadings.

NB> MLA style uses heading caps for the titles of sources—books, chapters, or articles—both in references and in text. However, the MLA Handbook also includes a section on capitalizing the titles in other languages. As a rule, titles in French, German, Italian, Spanish, or Latin are more conventionally rendered in sentence caps (capitalize just the first word, all proper nouns [according to the convention of the language], and the first word after a colon).

Character spacing. Conventional spacing after punctuation is practiced by MLA style, with the exception of putting a single space after most colons. Concluding punctuation (a question mark, exclamation point, or period) may be followed by one or two spaces as long as you are consistent throughout your text.

Using Italics & Quotation Marks

Italics. “Most word-processing programs and computer printers permit the reproduction of italic type. In material that will be graded, edited, or typeset, however, the type style of every word and punctuation mark must be easily recognizable, . . . you can avoid ambiguity by using underlining when you intend italics” (Gibaldi 94).

1. Emphasize a keyword or phrase in your text by placing it in italics (or underline). The next time the term or phrase is used it should be in plain text.
2. Underline (or italicize) the titles of books and the names of periodicals in your text and references.
3. Underline (or italicize) “words and letters that are referred to as words or letters” (Gibaldi 95). For example, write "The term American Indian is inclusive of over 500 Federally recognized ethnic communities."
4. Underline (or italicize) non-English words or terms used in your text. For example, “Ya-te-hay is a form of greeting in the Diné (Navajo) language.” This practice excludes those words that have become incorporated in the English language, such as laissez-faire, or arroyo.

Quotation marks. Use quotation marks only in the following circumstances:

1. “Place quotation marks around a word or phrase given in a special sense or purposefully misused” (Gibaldi 91). For example, The Population Council criticized the "outrageous" position of the Church on birth control.
2. Use quotation marks to enclose a translation of a non-English term in your text. Addis Ababa, the name of the capital of Ethiopia, is literally translated “new flower.”

Within quotations. Emphasis may be added to a word or phrase in a quotation by placing it in italics. When this is done the note [emphasis added] or [italics added] must be inserted in brackets at the end of the quotation (within the quotation marks), or if the emphasis comes at the end of the sentence, in parentheses outside the quotation marks.

NB> Add italics to a word or phrase only the first time it is used, thereafter use plain text.

Numbers & Dates

Numbers. If your topic makes little use of numbers, "you may spell out numbers written one or two words" (Gibaldi 98). Otherwise, use arabic numerals. Write: one, five, twenty-one, one hundred, eighteen hundred, but write 5½, 101, 3,810. If your writing contains the recurrent use of numeric statistical or scientific data, use numerals for those numbers but write out other numbers in the text if you can do so in one or two words. Please note the following rules:

1. Hyphenate compound numbers from twenty-one to ninety-nine, compounds with a number as the first element (e.g., three-way lightbulb), and the written form of fractions.
2. When numbers or a date are required to open a sentence, write them out. For example: “Five girls and 125 boys tried out for the varsity soccer team.” If you can, rewrite the sentence.
3. Do not mix numbers that are spelled out with symbols, write out the term for the symbols as well. For example, write: 45%, or forty-five percent; $20 or twenty dollars.
4. Do not mix numerals with written numbers when they refer to similar things. For example, "Only 10 of the 150 people on the tour (not ten of the 150 tourists) were willing to visit the city after the riot." But also write: "The President got 1.3 trillion of the 1.6 trillion dollar tax cut he proposed."
5. Use numerals with symbols and abbreviations (e.g., %, $, c, ft., lbs., p.m., ed. vol.) when these appear frequently in your text or are used in references. For example, write: 25%, $25, 50 lbs., 3rd ed., vol 5. Otherwise write out numbers with measures in your text (but not in references) when you can do so in three words or less, twenty-five percent, twenty-five dollars, fifty pounds.
Ordinal numbers follow the general rules for numbers. For example, "The window for applications was the third to twenty-third of August." But use numerals if more than two words are needed to write the number. For example, write "Haile Sellassie I was the 225th Emperor of Ethiopia." However, MLA style uses numerals exclusively in references (e.g., 2nd ed., 3rd ed.).

Inclusive range of numbers. MLA style drops digits in numbers above 99 according to specific rules. This is the process of eliding a range of inclusive numbers.

1. When writing numbers through 99 give the full digits. For example, write 42-48 not 42-8.
3. Write pages 1,584–621 not pages 1,582–1,621, and certainly not pages 1,584–21.
4. Elide dates only when they fall within the same century. Write the years 1865-1917 not 1865-917.

NB: When expressing a range of numerals in text do not use a dash unless the numbers reflect an inclusive range of dates, write "to" instead. For example, "The IQ range of the first group was 86 to 112." But also write "The years of the Great Depression, 1930–40, tested America severely."

Full dates when written in the text may be in US format: month day, year (e.g., August 21, 2001); or in universal or European format, day month year (e.g., 21 August 2001). MLA style requires universal format when writing dates in references so it makes sense to extend this practice to the text as well. Whatever format you select be consistent throughout the text.

Seriation

Seriation is a technique to itemize or enumerate the parts to a series or an argument. This can be helpful when the parts are complex, elaborate, or disparate. It is particularly useful in constructing a transition paragraph to introduce a series of topics. Chicago style refers to this as a process of enumeration.

Sentence seriation. A series or list of terms or phrases can be introduced following a colon: (1) marked by numbers in parentheses; (2) to enumerate a series of topics; (3) especially when the topics differentiated are complex, lengthy, or disparate. The MLA Handbook is silent on this practice, but recent papers in PMLA also use numbers.

Paragraph seriation. If each element in the series requires a separate paragraph, these are set flush with the left margin with each paragraph indented and numbered appropriately. An introductory clause or sentence ending with a colon typically introduces the series:

1. This form of seriation is useful in detailing and summarizing an argument, or perhaps the results of a research study.
2. Each element in the series may contribute to the general topic with extensive commentary.
3. But as a practical matter, this form of seriation is not particularly common in research papers. When the elements require this form of elaboration it is more common to set them under their own subheadings in the text, perhaps following sentence seriation in a transition paragraph under a major heading.

No Bullets! The Chicago Manual of Style advises that "the use of bullets (heavy dots) in place of enumeration is sometimes resorted to, but these may be considered cumbersome, especially in scholarly work" (314).

QUOTATIONS

Quotations must be placed in quotes or indented as a block quote. All quotations must include a citation referring the reader to the source document. As a matter of form, quotations should flow with your text, and may be edited to do so. But note that MLA style, like Chicago style, has complex rules for editing quotations, especially for deleting material from a quote.

1. "The accuracy of quotations in research writing is extremely important" (Gibaldi 109). "Direct quotations must reproduce exactly not only the wording but the spelling, capitalization, and internal punctuation of the original" (CMS 357–358).
2. "If you quote material in a foreign [sic] language, you must reproduce all accents and other marks exactly as they
appear in the original (école, pietà, tête, leçon, Fähre, año)” (Gibaldi 80).

3. If you quote material that contains a citation to another work, include this citation in your quotation. The work cited does not have to be included in the list of works cited if it is cited only in the quotation.

"Quotations are effective in research papers when used selectively. Quote only words, phrases, lines, and passages that are particularly interesting, vivid, unusual, or apt, and keep all quotations as brief as possible. Overquotation can bore your readers and might lead them to conclude that you are neither an original thinker nor a skillful writer” (Gibaldi 109).

I. QUOTATIONS IN RUNNING TEXT

Shorter quotations, most quotes in research writing, are embedded directly in the text. Place quotes in running text inside quotation marks.

1. When the author is introduced in the text the page number follows the quotation. Smith reported that "the creature walked like a duck and quacked like a duck" (23). Do not use the abbreviation "p." or "P." for "page" (nor "pp." or "Pp." for "pages").

2. Without an introductory phrase, the author and page are placed together. For example—It was reported that "the creature walked like a duck and quacked like a duck" (Smith 23). When citing a quote drawn from several pages in the source, separate page numbers in the citation with commas. For example, write (Thoreau, Walden 23, 129-31, 144).

II. BLOCK QUOTES

Block quotes are required with longer quotations, "more than four lines in your paper" (emphasis added) (Gibaldi 110). Block quotes are continuously indented from the left margin one inch (most styles indent only one-half inch). Double space within, before, and after a block quote, as with the rest of the text. Do not place the quote inside quotation marks.

1. "If you quote only a single paragraph or part of one, do not indent the first line more than the rest" (Gibaldi 110-111).

2. "If you need to quote two or more paragraphs, indent the first line of each paragraph an additional quarter inch. . . . If the first sentence quoted does not begin a paragraph in the source, however, do not indent it the additional amount. Indent only the first line of successive paragraphs" (Gibaldi 111).

What the MLA Handbook is trying to say is that the first paragraph of a block quote—whether it was indented in the original or not—is not indented if only one paragraph is quoted. But if two or more paragraphs are quoted, then all paragraphs begin with an indent—in addition to the one inch block quote indent—if they were indented in the original.

NB> Paragraph indents in block quotes are one-quarter inch, half the standard indent.

III. EDITING QUOTATIONS

MLA style has restored it traditional rules for editing quotations after expanding them in the last (5th) edition of the Handbook. Capitalization and punctuation may be freely changed to merge a quote into the text. Examples are drawn from the paragraph below.

Effective writing seeks to merge a quotation into the flow of the text. It is not necessary to indicate the minor changes needed to do so. The reader should not stumble over a quote. Edit a quotation according to the following rules.

1. If a quote begins in what is mid-sentence in the original, the first letter of the first word may be uppercased to open a sentence. "Merge quotations into the flow of the text." Do not write "[M]erge quotations . . . . . ."

2. An introductory phrase may lead into a quote that starts with an uppercased letter in the original. This should be changed to a lowercased letter to match the syntax. It is not necessary to indicate this change. For example, the effective writer understands that “the reader should not stumble over a quote.”

3. The punctuation mark at the end of a quotation may be changed to fit the syntax without indicating the change in the text. For example, good writers caution that a "reader should not stumble over a quote!" But, "if the [original] quotation ends with a question mark or an exclamation point . . . the original punctuation is retained" (Gibaldi 120).

4. Double quotation marks may be changed to single quotation marks, and the reverse, without indicating the change.

NB> "A quotation should never be presented in a way that could cause a reader to misunderstand the sentence structure
of the original source" (Gibaldi 114). Don't quote someone out of context. Leave that to politicians and journalists.

**Add text to a quotation.** It may be helpful to add text to merge a quote with the flow and tense of your text, to add emphasis, or to clarify the original. Brackets are required to indicate material or emphasis added to a quote. For example: "They [the Irish Republican Army] initiated a cease fire.

Emphasis may be added to a word or phrase in a quotation by placing it in italics. When this is done the note (emphasis added) or (italics added) must be added after the quotation marks (see Gibaldi 118).

**Correct errors.** Obvious typographical errors in a quotation may be corrected without making a special notation. But for an unusual word choice, concept, term, or spelling it may be appropriate to emphasize that the original is being quoted faithfully. This is done by inserting the Latin term *sic* (thus), in italics or underlined, in brackets within the quotation (but in parentheses at the end of a quote), immediately following the term. For example, "The ship struck an iceberg and floundered [sic], with the loss of all on board." Or write "The ship struck an iceberg and floundered" *(sic)*. (Note, to *flounder* is to thrash about wildly. To *founder* is to fill with water and sink.)

**IV. DELETING PARTS OF QUOTES**

*Ellipsis points* are used to indicate text omitted from a quotation. Three ellipsis points (periods with a single space before, between, and after each period) indicate material has been omitted within a sentence or at the end of a sentence. Unless clarity demands it, do not use ellipsis points to begin a quotation. For example, Henry David Thoreau asserts:

"To be a philosopher is not merely to have subtle thoughts, nor even to found a school, but to so love wisdom as to live according to its dictates, a life of simplicity, independence, magnanimity, and trust" (15, ch. 1).

An omission *within* the quote is edited:

"To be a philosopher is not merely to have subtle thoughts, . . . but to so love wisdom as to live according to its dictates, a life of simplicity, independence, magnanimity, and trust" (Thoreau 15; ch. 1).

An omission at the end of a sentence is edited:

"To be a philosopher is not merely to have subtle thoughts, nor even to found a school, but to so love wisdom as to live according to its dictates . . . “ (Thoreau 15; ch. 1).

**Delete entire sentences.** If the original text reads:

This is a delicious evening, when the whole body is one sense, and imbibes delight through every pore. I go and come with a strange liberty in Nature, a part of herself. As I walk along the stony shore of the pond in my shirt-sleeves, though it is cool as well as windy, and I see nothing special to attract me, all the elements are unusually congenial to me (Thoreau, *Walden*, 90; ch. 5).

Omitting a full sentence:

"This is a delicious evening, when the whole body is one sense, and imbibes delight through every pore. . . . As I walk along the stony shore of the pond in my shirt-sleeves, though it is cool as well as windy, and I see nothing special to attract me, all the elements are unusually congenial to me” (Thoreau 90).

Omitting the end of one sentence, and the next:

"This is a delicious evening, when the whole body is one sense. . . . As I walk along the stony shore of the pond in my shirt-sleeves, though it is cool as well as windy, and I see nothing special to attract me, all the elements are unusually congenial to me” (Thoreau 90).

Omitting text from the middle of one sentence to the middle of another:

"This is a delicious evening, when the whole body is one sense, . . . though it is cool as well as windy, and I see nothing special to attract me, all the elements are unusually congenial to me” (Thoreau 90).

**Delete the beginning a sentence.** General convention allows the leading portion of a sentence opening a quotation to be omitted from the quotation without indicating an omission as long as the original meaning is not marred.

**PAGE FORMATS**

**MLA style has a unique title page.** The block of information at the top of the first text page, the title page, is highly stylized—a trademark of MLA style. Follow this exactly; do not innovate. The writer's name, the name of their instructor, the class designation, and the date are all set against the left margin at the top of the page, before the title.
Text Details

The goal of any research style is clarity of communication. "Effective writing depends as much on clarity and readability as on content" (Gibaldi 60).

1. **Underline or Italics?** The MLA Handbook expresses a clear preference for underlining wherever you might use italics.

2. **Fonts** should be selected to make your paper easy to read. Most research style guides specify a large font to achieve this end, usually a 12-point font. The MLA Handbook expresses no clear preference for the size or type (e.g., Arial, Times Roman) of font.

3. **Indents.** The standard indent is one-half inch. This applies to all indents: paragraphs, and hanging indents in references, except block quotes. *Indent block quotes one inch.*

4. **Margins.** MLA style requires one inch margins on all four sides of a page. This applies to all pages, and the contents of all pages, but excludes the page header and page number.

5. **No footnotes!** Use only endnotes—if any—with MLA style. References in endnotes require a special style covered in an appendix to the MLA Handbook.

6. **Page numbers** are required on every page. The page header is the author’s last name. The header and page number go inside the margin space, one-half inch from the top margin (double spaced above the text), next to the right margin.

7. **Right Justification?** "Do not justify the lines of your paper at the right margin" (Gibaldi 132). While aligning text to the right margin makes for a neat page, hyphens introduced to break words and wrap lines can confuse a reader. Manuscripts submitted for publication usually use a ragged right margin for this reason.

8. **Spacing.** Double space everything, including long titles that may wrap to a second line.

**NB:** The MLA Handbook makes no provision for headings or subheadings in a research paper. However, the MLA’s own journal, *PMLA*, routinely publishes papers with headings and subheadings. These are covered in the *MLA Nota Bene* available at Doc Scribe’s Website [http://www.docstyles.com](http://www.docstyles.com).
MLA TEXT CITATIONS

MLA style use a parenthetical form of text citation. Unlike the author-date format used in the social sciences and psychology, MLA style place only the author’s name and the page number when citing a direct quote—in the citation. The MLA Handbook notes two basic rules to follow when citing sources:

1. "References in the text must clearly point to specific sources in the list of works cited." (Gibaldi 238).
2. "Identify the location of the borrowed information as specifically as possible." (Gibaldi, 239) Cite the specific chapter, act and scene, or section of a work when appropriate.

What to cite? Cite all direct quotations as well as significant ideas, concepts, or findings borrowed or adapted from others. The MLA Handbook warns that "forms of plagiarism include the failure to give appropriate acknowledgment when repeating or paraphrasing another’s wording, . . . another’s argument, or when presenting another’s line of thinking" (Gibaldi 71).

What not to cite. It is generally not necessary to cite: (1) dictionary definitions of words unless the specific dictionary is relevant to the context; (2) well documented historical facts; (3) conventional knowledge or knowledge broadly shared in a discipline.

I. CITATION FORMAT

Each separate referent to a source must be cited however many times this may occur in a paper. "To avoid interrupting the flow of your writing, place the parenthetical reference where a pause would naturally occur (preferably at the end of a sentence), as near as possible to the material documented" (Gibaldi 241). A page number is usually cited only with a direct quotation unless the reader needs to be referred to an unusual concept or idea for possible verification.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Citation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Author</td>
<td>(Book Title 12) (“Article Title” 12)</td>
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<td>1 Author</td>
<td>(Smith 123)</td>
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<td>2 Authors</td>
<td>(Smith and Jones 123)</td>
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<td>3 Authors</td>
<td>(Smith, Jones, and Garcia 123)</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 Authors+</td>
<td>(Smith et al. 123)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


1. **No Author?** Substitute the title of the work (title of an article or book) for the author in both the reference list and text citation. The first word in the citation must be the first significant word (ignore a, and, the) in the title as used to alphabetize the reference in the list of works cited. If the title is long use a short form or just the first word.

2. **Two or Three Authors.** Cite both authors’ names: (Smith and Jones 123). When there are two or more authors with the same surname repeat the surname for each author. For example, write (Smithe, Smithe, and Smithe 123).

3. **Four or More Authors.** You may cite the lead author plus et al. in all text citations (see Gibaldi 239). Be consistent in whatever practice you adopt, and consistent in matching the text citation with the entry in the reference list.

4. **Multiple sources** are cited enclosed in a single set of parentheses. List sources alphabetically in the order they appear in the reference list. Each citation is separated by a semicolon. For example, write (Alt 12; Brown 23; Car 123; Dean 123–46; Smith 99).

5. **Multiple works by one author** require the short title of the specific work be added to the citation (See Gibaldi 251). For example, write (Thoreau, *Walden* 123) to contrast the source of a quote from another work by Thoreau (Thoreau, "Life Without Principle" 23).

6. **Corporate Author.** To cite a corporate author use the full name of the group or institution as given in the reference list entry.

**NB:** The MLA Handbook offers no examples of acronyms used in references or citations.
II. LITERARY CITATIONS

MLA style makes special provision for the repeated citation of literary works. "In a reference to a classic prose work, such as a novel or play, that is available in several editions, it is helpful to provide more information than just the page number [. . .]" (Gibaldi 253). The objective is to help a reader with an edition different from the author’s to find the same passage. MLA style draws a distinction between prose books and plays and verse books, plays, and poems.

Prose works. MLA style wants writers to identify a source as specifically as may be reasonable. The style for doing this takes two forms, one for prose works, another for verse. Prose works cite the page followed by a semicolon, then additional identifying information.

1. Chapter. Cite the page followed by a semicolon, then additional identifying information. For example, in Walden Henry David Thoreau claimed "the mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation" (111; ch. 1). This same passage is found on different pages in other editions, but always in the first chapter (Thoreau 111; ch. 1).

2. Volume. Anthologies and other longer works often come in several volumes. "When citing a volume number as well as a page reference for a multivolume work, separate the two by a colon and a space: ’ (Wellek 2: + 10) ' " (Gibaldi 247).

3. When citing a specific page, the page number is understood to come after the volume. For example: “Few Moslems contemplate for the first time the Ka’abah [sic], without fear and awe: there is a popular jest against new comers, that they generally inquire the direction of prayer” (Burton 2: 161).

4. When citing an entire volume, add the abbreviation "vol." to the citation. For example, in his Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to Al-Madinah and Meccah, he includes a detailed account of a clandestine visit to Mecca in 1853 (Burton, vol. 2).

5. When citing an entire volume with the reference in the text, spell out volume. For example, “Burton provides an exacting account of his clandestine visit to Mecca in volume 2 of Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to Al-Madinah and Meccah” (159–258).

Verse works are cited in a manner many will find unconventional. MLA style advises use of a decimal notation system.

1. The following passage is from the Bible: "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." This is found in the book of Romans, Chapter 10, verse 13. MLA style cites this (Rom. 10.13). Conventional notation cites this (Rom. 10:13).

2. The following passage is from the Merchant of Venice (MV). Shylock is speaking: "I'll have my bond; speak not against my bond; I have sworn an oath that I will have my bond. . . ." MLA cites this (MV 3.3). Conventional notation might cite this (Merchant of Venice, act III, sc. iii).

NB> The MLA Handbook cautions that "some instructors prefer roman numerals, . . . but if your instructor does not require this practice, use arabic numerals (King Lear 4.1), [rather than (King Lear IV.i) or (King Lear act IV, sc. 1)]" (Gibaldi 254).

MLA WORKS CITED

Place references under the centered heading "Works Cited," one inch below the top of the page (just inside the top margin), on a new page, with the page numbering continuing from the previous page. The list of works cited comes after the text and endnotes (if any); it is the last part of your paper. Reference only what you cite in the text and cite in your text every entry in the reference list.

Arrange references alphabetically by author, if there is no author by title (ignore A, An, The, and non-English equivalents). "The alphabetical order of names is determined by the letters before the commas that separate last name and first names. Spaces and other punctuation marks [and case] are ignored" (Gibaldi 146).

NB> The MLA Handbook makes an obsession of using abbreviations in references (see Gibaldi 261–82). Many authors and journal editors dispense with the more esoteric of these in print.

1. Double space references. Use a hanging indent, with the indent one-half inch from the left margin.

2. The MLA Handbook suggests underlining in place of italics in both your text and references. Use whichever assures clarity to the reader, but be consistent in text and references.

3. Use decimal notation to indicate number in a volume of a journal paged by issue, that is, write volume four, number two "4.2" not in the more conventional format "4(2)."
4. Reprinted works require the original publication date as well as the date the reprint was published. The original publication date comes after the title.

5. Full dates require the day-month-year format: 1 April 2003.

6. Multiple works by the same author list alphabetically by title, not by date. MLA style approximates a three-em dash with three hyphens followed by a period. Use this "three-em dash" in place of the author’s name in subsequent works by the same exact author(s).

7. Give authors’ full names. List up to three authors to a work; with four or more authors, note the first plus "et al." if you wish (you may reference all authors, but you must cite them all in the text as well).

8. All titles use heading caps (in languages other than English use sentence caps as customary in that language). Titles of articles, reports, and chapters in edited books are placed in quotes. Titles of books and volumes, and the names of journals, are underlined or placed in italics.

NB> Your text and the reference list must agree.

Note, a few reference examples have been taken from MLA Handbook. These are marked with an asterisk.

**Books & Compilations**

**Anthology/Compilation (Web Source)**


References to anthologies may cite a specific work in the compilation, or the entire collection. References to works found on the Web also cite (1) the print edition (if it is known); (2) the title of the Web site, database, or project where it was found; (3) the name of the content editor (not webmaster) of the site; (4) the publication date of the site (if any); (5) the date you accessed the site; and (6) the URL (Uniform Resource Locator).

NB> Line wrap URLs by breaking them after a slash (or before a period). Do not insert a hyphen!

**Books: One Author - Reprint/Online**


The original publication date of a reprint usually goes immediately after the title.

**Books: Two or More Authors - Edition Other Than First**


When there are four or more authors to a work you may elect to cite just the lead author plus *et al.* (this is optional). If the edition is other than the first, that information follows the title.

**Books: Corporate Author - Government Publication**


**Books: Multivolume Work - Reprint**


**Books: Translator as Author**

**Journals, Magazines, & Newspapers**

**Journal Articles**


Most research journals are paged consecutively through a volume—the page numbers of each new issue pick up where the last issue left off. However, some journals start over at page one with each issue. These journals are *paged by issue* (see below).

**Online Journal**


This electronic journal numbers the paragraphs within articles. This issue is number three in volume eight, 8.3 in MLA notation.

**Online Facsimile of a Print Journal**


**Paged by Issue**


**Magazine Articles**


**Newspaper Articles**


**No Author**


**Online Newspaper**


**Reviews: Books - Films**


**Media, Papers & Reports**

**Conference Paper (Unpublished)**


**Dissertation**

Ph.D dissertation, Graduate School of the State U of NY at Binghamton, 1980.

Film


Musical Score*


Painting*


Sound Recording*


Web Sites & Pages

Professional Web Site


Personal Web Site


Page on a Web Site


When a page on a Web site has a unique title it should be cited along with the main title of the site. This is comparable to citing a chapter in an anthology.

Reference Encyclopedia


This reference notes that a subscription service was used: Encyclopedia Britannica Premium Service.