

MLA STYLE: AN INTRODUCTION

Presented by the ULM Library Reference Department

Session Overview

- What is MLA style?
- General Guidelines
- Quotations/Paraphrasing
- In-text Citations
- Works Cited
- Resources
- Q & A Time



What Is MLA Style?

- ⦿ a set of rules intended to encourage and maintain clear, concise writing
- ⦿ provides guidelines for formatting papers
- ⦿ used to create citations for resources



What Is MLA Style?

Primarily used by **the liberal arts and humanities**, like **Art and English**, but sometimes used in disciplines like:

- ▣ Communication Studies
- ▣ Foreign languages and literatures
- ▣ Cultural Studies
- ▣ Media Studies



What Is MLA Style, Continued

- ⦿ Like any style format, it is intended to establish and maintain consistency and quality in research
- ⦿ It also supports scholarly communication by facilitating documentation, i.e., it demonstrates a common way of citing sources so other scholars can consult the resources you used

So You Will Use It To...

- Format your paper, including...

- ▣ Margins
- ▣ Spacing
- ▣ Font selection and size
- ▣ Headers/footers



- Guide the style of your paper, including...

- ▣ Quotations
- ▣ In-text citations
- ▣ Voice



General Guidelines

- 1-inch margins on all sides
- Double-spaced
- 12 point font
- Times New Roman or a similar font
 - i.e., something legible and professional
 - Examples: Arial, Century Gothic, or Garamond



General Guidelines

- Page headers
 - ▣ Includes page numbers and author's name
 - ▣ May be omitted from first page
- Only one space following ending punctuation of sentences
- Indent first sentence of paragraphs 1/2 inch from margin – MLA recommends simply using the Tab key (versus spacing over manually)
- Use an active voice whenever possible



Guidelines: First Page

- MLA papers don't typically need cover pages – so unless your professor asks for one, it's not necessary to create one
- MLA papers do need a heading in which you list your name, your professor's name, the class, and the date – this is typically double-spaced



Guidelines: First Page

Catlin 1

Beth Catlin

Professor Elaine Bassett

English 106

3 August 2009

Andrew Carnegie: The Father of Middle-Class America

For decades Americans couldn't help but love the red-headed, fun-loving Little Orphan Annie. The image of the little girl moving so quickly from poverty to wealth provided hope for the poor in the 1930s, and her story continues to be a dream of what the future just might hold. The rags-to-riches phenomenon is the heart of the American Dream. And few other people have embodied this phenomenon as much as Andrew Carnegie did in the late 1800s and early 1900s. His example and industry caused him to become the father of middle-class America.

Andrew Carnegie can be looked to as an ideal example of a poor immigrant making his way up to become leader of the capitalist world. Carnegie was born into a poor working-class

Guidelines: First Page

- After the heading, double space down and center the title of your paper
- The title of your paper should not be in quotation marks, underlined, italicized, or in all capital letters
- Titles within your title should have quotation marks or italics as needed

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Guidelines: First Page

Examples of titles within titles:

- The Function of Time in Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*
- Sexuality in Faulkner's "A Rose for Emily"
- Race and Race Relations in Baraka's "Dutchman"
- "As kingfishers catch fire": the Poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins

Quotations/Paraphrasing

When you're writing a research paper, you're going to have to work other people's research into your own, in order to:

- ▣ Demonstrate the validity of your point of view
- ▣ Inform your audience of what research has been done on the topic
- ▣ Show your audience how your point of view fits into what's been done

Quotations/Paraphrasing

- There are two ways of incorporating information into your paper – quoting and paraphrasing
- MLA has guidelines for how to use quotations and paraphrasing in your writing
- It's important to understand how these two methods differ

Quotations

- Quotations are straight from the horse's mouth – they are **the actual words taken from the text**, word for word, as they appear in the text itself
- Quotations can be **high impact** – the words of an expert that support your argument carry a lot of weight



Quotations & Quoting

- But including too many quotations **is lazy**; you're letting the research do all of the work
- Sometimes too many quotations looks like **plagiarism** – you're using someone else's ideas as your arguments, rather than as support
- ***You*** are supposed to be doing the work; quotations are **just tools** with which to do the work

Quotations & Quoting

- There are **two ways** to quote
- **Way #1: direct quotations** - include the author's or authors' names in the actual text of the sentence:

Zimbardo notes that “children are totally insensitive to their parents’ shyness” (62).

Author's name in the sentence

Quotations & Quoting

- **Direction quotations** do not allow for change – a direct quotation is, word for word, identical to the way it appears in the original text
- The original text **MUST HAVE QUOTATION MARKS** around it

Zimbardo notes that “children are totally insensitive to their parents’ shyness” (62).

The quotation marks show where the author’s words begin and end, distinguishing them from YOUR writing.

Indirect Quotations

- Way #2: indirect quotations - DO NOT include the author's or authors' names in the sentence
- But you still have to use quotation marks, and you can't make changes to the text

Not the author's name

Some researchers note that "children are totally insensitive to their parents' shyness" (Zimbardo 62).

So it's got to be here

Paraphrasing

- A **second way** you can incorporate information into your writing is to **paraphrase**
- **Paraphrasing** is the act of taking information from a text and either
 - ▣ **Summarizing it** – taking a whole paragraph's worth of information and boiling it down to a few sentences, or
 - ▣ **Rewording it** - demonstrating your understanding of the information by putting it into your own words, in such a way that is significantly different from the original text

Paraphrasing: Summary

- The paragraph you're about to see is very long, **too long to quote effectively**
- One of your options is to **summarize the paragraph** in your own words, reducing and simplifying
- Remember, though, **you'll still have to do an in-text citation** (more on that in a minute)
- Summaries **do not require quotation marks**

Paraphrasing: Summary

ORIGINAL TEXT – TOO LONG TO QUOTE

Children are totally insensitive to their parents' shyness; it is the

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SUMMARY OF ORIGINAL TEXT – EASIER TO USE

Because parents are authority figures in the home, children are not immediately aware of their parents' shyness; it may be too scary for the children to think of their parents in negative terms.

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Zimbardo, Philip G. *Shyness: What It Is, What to Do About It*. Cambridge, Mass.: Perseus Books, 1977. Print.

Paraphrasing: Rewording

- If you aren't concerned with the length of a section, or you feel you can't boil the information down without losing something important, you have the option of **putting the information in your own words**
- Make sure the info really is in **your own words** – if it's **too close** to the original text, it could be considered **plagiarism**

Paraphrasing: Rewording

- The result of paraphrasing a paragraph **may produce a paragraph of equal length**, and that's okay
- What's important is that the information is **actually in your own words** and
- That you **give credit where credit is due**
- Let's take a look at an example of rewording paraphrasing, shall we?

Paraphrasing: Rewording

- We'll start with the **original text** – look at it closely
- Then you'll see **a paraphrasing** of the text – the ideas are retained (that's **a key element** of paraphrasing), but notice **how different the wording is**
- The wording **HAS to be significantly different**, or it looks like plagiarism
- The more different the wording is, **the more you demonstrate how well you understand the info** and are able to relay it to the audience

Paraphrasing: Rewording

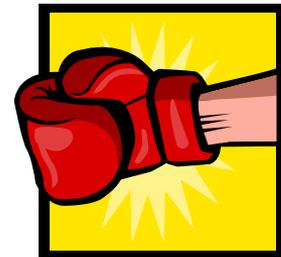
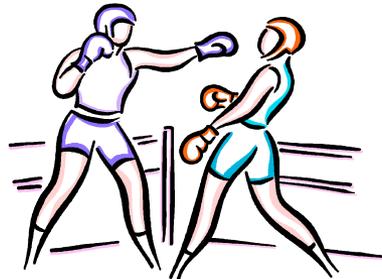
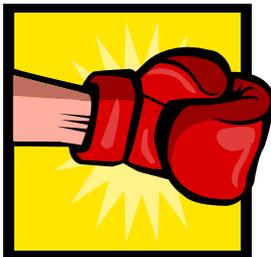
REWORDED/PARAPHRASE

- C A parent's shyness is not often perceived by a child, and rarely
ch would a child describe a parent as being shy. Because parents
p are authority figures in the home, that shyness may not manifest,
m nor may the parent behave bashfully in front of the child.
vi Moreover, shyness is often valued in a negative fashion by
th children, so to think of a parent in this fashion can be unsettling
id to the child. The child idolizes the parent at this stage of
w development.

Zimbardo, Philip G. *Shyness: What It Is, What to Do About It*.
Cambridge, Mass.: Perseus Books, 1977. Print.

Quoting vs. Paraphrasing: When?

- Both of these methods of using resources in your writing have **many benefits** – so how do you decide **when to use which?**
- Remember: quoting is usually **high impact** – it's good for **emphasis**, when you think taking the words out of the horse's mouth is the **best means** of persuasion
- Quoting is like **a punch**: your opponent **CANNOT** ignore it!



Quoting vs. Paraphrasing: When?

- Paraphrasing is better for **condensing a lot of information into a more manageable amount** (like we saw in the summary example)
- It's also very useful **when the information is very technical or the author's style is very dry and inaccessible** – you can make the info **more easy to consume** for your audience
- You can also **combine authors' ideas that are similar** into one passage through paraphrasing

Mmmm...info smoothie



Paraphrasing: More on Combining Ideas

Let's say you have two authors who say similar things on a topic.

Zimbardo writes:

Children are totally insensitive to their parents' shyness.

Smith writes:

Children are usually unaware when their parents are shy.

Paraphrasing: More on Combining Ideas

These two passages of information **can be blended together** (mmmm...info smoothie) to **keep your information concise** and to **prevent unnecessary repetition**. So, a paraphrase of their information blended together would look like this:

Some researchers note that children are often ignorant with regard to their parents' shyness (Zimbardo 62; Smith 45).

Incorporating Info into Your Writing

- It's **NOT recommended** that you just put quotations in your writing without some kind of preamble or introduction or explanation
- A good rule of thumb is that **every sentence in your writing should contain something you wrote**, no matter what
- **Transitions are important**, particularly between your writing and thoughts, and the quotations

Incorporating Info into Your Writing

That Zimbardo quotation we've looked is a good example of an incorporated quotation, both in the direct and indirect style. Let's look at them again.

Zimbardo notes that "children are totally insensitive to their parents' shyness" (62).

Some researchers note that "children are totally insensitive to their parents' shyness" (Zimbardo 62).

Preamble/introduction/transition: it's simple, but it works. Things flow better!

Incorporating Quotations into Your Writing

And it's not necessary for every quotation to end the sentence – let's look at the variants on the Zimbardo quotations again.

Zimbardo notes that “children are totally insensitive to their parents’ shyness” (62), though some authors disagree.

Some researchers note that "children are totally insensitive to their parents' shyness" (Zimbardo 62), but other authors disagree.

Incorporating Paraphrases into Your Writing

Since paraphrases contain your words plus in-text citations, the presence of preambles, introductions, and/or presentations is assumed.

Some researchers note that children are often ignorant with regard to their parents' shyness (Zimbardo 62; Smith 45).

Some researchers note that children are often ignorant with regard to their parents' shyness (Zimbardo 62; Smith 45), but there are exceptions.

Authority & Introduction: People

- When using an author's name in a report or research paper, it is recommended that you use the author's full name, with titles, the first time s/he appears in the text.

Dr. Phillip Zimbardo notes that children are often unaware of their parents' shyness (62).

- Subsequent references to the author utilize the author's last name only.



Authority & Introduction: People

- By using the author's full name with titles, you establish their **authority** and signal to the reader that this person has expertise
- It's recommended that you briefly describe why the reader should care about the author's expertise – **you can mention the author's affiliation(s), accomplishments, and/or area of expertise** – think of it as an **introduction**



Authority & Introduction: Example

Dr. Phillip Zimbardo, a professor emeritus of psychology at Stanford University, has studied shyness for several years. Zimbardo has observed that children are often unaware of their parents' shyness (62).



Authority & Introduction: Example

Dr. Katherine Ramsland, author of several books on crime and a forensic psychologist, has studied criminal behavior. Ramsland, writing on dissociative identity disorder (commonly called multiple personality disorder), has observed that “there is probably no greater divide in the professional world than that regarding the authenticity and diagnosis of this disorder” (“Multiple Personalities”).

Authority & Introduction: Things

- Details, facts, statistics – information in general – also need something to **establish their authority** – or, at least, their **origin**
- When incorporating information into your paper, the introduction functions **both as a means of establishing authority (or origin) AND as a means of transition**

Authority & Introduction: Examples

One research study focusing on student research habits found that students tended to use Google more than the Library's resources when conducting research (Lowe).

While studying shyness, one researcher discovered that children are often “totally insensitive to their parents’ shyness” (Zimbardo 62).

Authority & Introduction: Examples

One area where shyness may not have a significant impact in an adult's life is in the family dynamic. Being in positions of authority, parents are not often perceived by their children as being bashful (Zimbardo).

Students often utilize counterproductive research habits. They admit to consulting Google rather than library resources (Lowe).

In-Text Citations

- When using someone else's work in your own – whether you're quoting or paraphrasing – you'll need to give credit where credit is due, or document what isn't your work
- This is where in-text citations come in – you've seen a few already, but we'll look at them more closely now

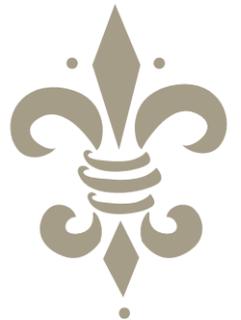
In-Text Citations

- ⦿ These are used to cite resources within the text
- ⦿ Every in-text citation should have a corresponding citation in the Works Cited section
- ⦿ If you quote something directly from a text, then the citation will include author's or authors' names and page number



In-Text Citations, Continued

- If a resource doesn't have an author, then you'll use an abbreviated version of the resource's title, in quotation marks (we'll see an example shortly)
- If you don't have page numbers, then don't worry about them
- In-text citations are also called parenthetical citations



In-Text Citations, Continued

- If you paraphrase something, the in-text citation will only have to contain the author's name, but a page number is okay, too
- If you use the author's name in the course of the sentence, that name will not appear in the in-text citation



In-Text Citations, Continued



Direct quotation, author named in sentence

According to Jones, "Students often had difficulty using APA style, especially when it was their first time" (199).

In-Text Citations, Continued

Direct quotation, author not named in sentence

According to some researchers,

"Students often had difficulty using

APA style, especially when it was their

first time" (Jones 1999).

Please note: the period doesn't come until AFTER the in-text citation. The sentence isn't complete until the citation is complete.

In-Text Citations, Continued

Direct quotation, author unknown

According to one website, “MLA format follows the author-page method of in-text citation” (“MLA In-Text Citations”).

The full title of this website is “MLA In-Text Citations: The Basics.”

In-Text Citations, Continued

- ⦿ Long quotations (more than four lines) should be set apart (that is, not within the text, but in a block quotation)
- ⦿ Omit quotation marks
- ⦿ Indent 1 inch (2 hits to the Tab key) from margin
- ⦿ Maintain double spacing
- ⦿ Same rules apply for in-text citation, EXCEPT that the quotation will end with its punctuation, then followed by the citation.

In-Text Citations, Continued

Long direct quotation

One study found the following:

Students often had difficulty using APA style, especially when it was their first time citing sources. This difficulty could be attributed to the fact that many students failed to purchase a style manual or to ask their teacher for help. (Jones 199)

In-Text Citations, Continued

- ◉ Even if you're paraphrasing something, you'll still need to identify the original source
- ◉ In-text citations work for paraphrasing, too
- ◉ The in-text citations will include the author's name and page numbers, if available; remember, if the author is unknown, use an abbreviated version of the title



In-Text Citations, Continued

Paraphrasing in-text citations

According to Jones, APA style is a difficult citation format for first-time learners (199).

APA style is a difficult citation format for first-time learners (Jones199).

MLA uses an author-page format in in-text citations (“MLA In-Text Citations”).

Works Cited

- The Works Cited page lists the resources you used in your paper – this is where you document those sources
- Remember: if you have an in-text citation, you will have a corresponding bibliographic citation in your references
- References are double-spaced, too

Works Cited, Continued

- On the Works Cited page: center the title “Works Cited” (without quotation marks) at the top of the page
- All lines following the first line of the citation will be indented a one half-inch from the margin (also known as a hanging indent)
- Italicize titles of long works, like books or journal titles
- Put quotation marks around the titles of short works, like essays or articles

Works Cited, Continued

- Author names are inverted; that is, last name first
- In resources with more than one author, all other authors' names are first name first, last name last
- If a source does not have an author, it will be alphabetized based on title

Works Cited, Continued

- MLA requires that citations include the format in which the resource appears – the most common are print and web
- MLA no longer requires the inclusion of URLs for websites, but some professors might require that you include them
- Sometimes you won't be able to provide all the elements that usually compose a citation; don't worry, just give what you've got

Works Cited: Book

Zimbardo, Phillip. *Shyness: What It Is, What to Do About It*. Cambridge, Mass.: Perseus Books, 1977. Print.

American Allergy Association. *Allergies in Children*. New York: Random, 1998. Print.

Encyclopedia of Indiana. New York: Somerset, 1993. Print.

** Most of these examples were taken from the OWL at Purdue's MLA website.**

Works Cited: Essay/Chapter in a Book

- Harris, Muriel. "Talk to Me: Engaging Reluctant Writers." *A Tutor's Guide: Helping Writers One to One*. Ed. Ben Rafoth. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2000. 24-34. Electronic.
- Burns, Robert. "Red, Red Rose." *100 Best-Loved Poems*. Ed. Philip Smith. New York: Dover, 1995. 26. Print.
- Kincaid, Jamaica. "Girl." *The Vintage Book of Contemporary American Short Stories*. Ed. Tobias Wolff. New York: Vintage, 1994. 306-07. Print.

** All of these examples were taken from the OWL at Purdue's MLA website.**

Works Cited: Articles

Bagchi, Alaknanda. "Conflicting Nationalisms: The Voice of the Subaltern in Mahasweta Devi's *Bashai Tudu*." *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* 15.1 (1996): 41-50. Print.

Langhamer, Claire. "Love and Courtship in Mid-Twentieth-Century England." *Historical Journal* 50.1 (2007): 173-96. *ProQuest*. Web. 27 May 2009.

** All of these examples were taken from the OWL at Purdue's MLA website.**

Works Cited: Websites

The Purdue OWL Family of Sites. The Writing Lab and OWL at Purdue and Purdue U, 2008. Web. 23 Apr. 2008.

Felluga, Dino. *Guide to Literary and Critical Theory. Purdue U, 28 Nov. 2003. Web. 10 May 2006.*

"How to Make Vegetarian Chili." *eHow.com. eHow, n.d. Web. 24 Feb. 2009.*

** All of these examples were taken from the OWL at Purdue's MLA website.**

MLA Resources

- The Online Writing Lab (OWL) at Purdue: MLA

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>

- Son of Citation Machine: Citation Generator

<http://citationmachine.net/>

- EasyBib: Free Automatic Bibliography & Citation Maker

<http://www.easybib.com/>



Q & A Time



Thanks for your attendance!

Remember, if you need research help, all you have to do is ask the librarians. You can...

- ❑ Visit the Reference Desk, Library 1st floor
- ❑ Email us at reference@ulm.edu
- ❑ Call us at (318) 342-1071

