

Guide to MLA Style Basics

Meriam Library - California State University, Chico

For more information consult the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 6th edition (Call Number: ref LB2369 G53 2003) or visit <http://www.csuchico.edu/lref/newciting.html>

Formatting the Works Cited List

1. Works cited list starts on a new page. Type the words “Works Cited” centered at the top of the page.
2. Double space within and between entries.
3. Use hanging indent form. The first line of each citation is set flush left and subsequent lines are indented one-half inch.
4. Arrange **alphabetically**, not by format of publication: book, journal, etc.
5. The author should be the first element of a citation, even for web pages. If no author is present, use editor name. If no editor is present, start with book title or article title.
6. List author’s last name, followed by a comma then the author’s first and/or middle name. Spell out author’s name. Do not use initials.
7. If a work has more than one author, only invert the first author’s name.
8. Underline or italicize titles of books, journals, magazines, newspapers and films.
9. Article titles are placed within quotation marks. Also use quotation marks for the titles of short stories, book chapters, poems and songs.
10. Capitalize each word in the titles of articles, books, etc. This rule does not apply to indefinite or definite articles (a, an, the), short prepositions, or conjunctions unless one is the first word of the title or subtitle.
11. Elements of a citation are separated by a period and one space.

See Chapters 4 and 5 of the *MLA Handbook* for details on formatting and citation style.

Citation Examples

Book, one author:

Fussell, Paul. *The Great War and Modern Memory*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1975.

Chapter from book:

Marcus, Jane. “The Asylums of Antaeus: Women, War, and Madness—Is There a Feminist Fetishism?”
The New Historicism. Ed. H. Aram Veerer. New York: Routledge, 1989. 132-151.

Journal article (print, microform, PDF), one author:

Mott, Frederick Walker “The Effects of High Explosives Upon the Central Nervous System.” *The Lancet* 1
(Feb. 1916): 331-38.

Journal article (online from a library subscription database), two authors:

Schneiderman, Lawrence and Nancy Jecker. “Judging Who Should Live: Schneiderman and Jecker on the
Duty Not to Treat.” *Journal of Medicine & Philosophy* 23.5 (Aug. 1998): 500-515. *Academic Search*.
EBSCO. Meriam Library. Chico, CA. 20 March, 2005. <<http://search.ebscohost.com>>.

Journal article (online from an Internet-only journal), one author:

Fredrickson, Barbara L. "Cultivating Positive Emotions to Optimize Health and Well-being."

Prevention & Treatment 3, (March 7, 2000). April 4, 2004

<<http://www.journals.apa.org/prevention/volume3/pre0030001a.html>>.

Newspaper article, one author:

Tommasini, Anthony. "Master Teachers Whose Artistry Glows in Private." *New York Times* 27 Oct. 1998: B2.

Newspaper article, no known author:

"Cigarette Sales Fall 30% as California Tax Rises." *New York Times* 14 Sept. 1999: A17.

Article from CQ Researcher (electronic version):

Hatch, David. "Drug Company Ethics." *The CQ Researcher Online*, 13.22 (2003). Meriam Library.

Chico, CA. 16 May 2005 <<http://library.cqpress.com/cqresearcher>>.

Web page with no known author and no known date:

"GVU's 8th WWW user survey." n.d. 2 April 2004. <http://www.cc.gatech.edu/gvu/user_surveys/survey-1997-10/>.

Parenthetical Documentation

When writing your paper, whenever you express words, facts, or ideas that are not your own, you need to refer the reader to the original source of that information. Within the body of the paper use parenthetical references to refer the reader to the sources listed in the Works Cited. Usually the author's last name and a page number are used to identify the source and the specific location from which you borrowed the material.

See Chapter 6 of the *MLA Handbook* for more details on citing sources in the text.

Parenthetical Examples

Author's name in text (page number):

Tannen has argued this point (175-85).

Author's name in reference (page number):

This point has already been argued (Tannen 175-85).

Author's name in text (no page number):

Fukuyama's *Our Posthuman Future* includes many examples of this trend.

Citing a work listed by title (no author): Use an abbreviated version of the title in quotation marks to substitute for the name of the author. Example:

International espionage was as prevalent as ever in the 1990s ("Decade").