

Youth Christian School

Writing Style Guide

Introduction

The MLA (Modern Language Association) format is used by Youth Christian School as a resource for writing style. It provides writers with a system for cross-referencing their sources from their parenthetical references to their works cited page. This cross-referencing system allows readers to locate the publication information of source material. The proper use of MLA style shows the credibility of writers; such writers show accountability to their source material. Most importantly, the use of MLA style can protect writers from accusations of plagiarism.

Paper Format Guidelines

- Papers should be typed and double spaced on standard 8.5x11 inch paper with margins of 1 inch (2.5 cm) on all sides. Do not put extra spaces between paragraphs.
- Regular 12 pt. Times New Roman font and black ink should be used.
- Do not include any blank pages in your paper.
- Title or cover pages are not necessary unless required by your teacher. Instead, you should provide a double-spaced entry in the top left corner of the first page that lists your name, your teacher's name, the course, and the date. Then center your title on the line below the header and begin your paper immediately below the title.
- A table of contents or works cited page is not necessary unless required by your teacher.
- Page numbers are required to be in the lower, right-hand corner of *each page of content*. *Cover pages* should not be numbered.
- Unless instructed by your teacher, do not use headings or subheadings within your paper. Rather, make good use of transition sentences (at the end of a paragraph) and introductory sentences (at the beginning of a paragraph) to let your reader know that you are changing to a different point of emphasis.
- If an outline is requested by your teacher, it should be single-spaced and in point form. Make sure to provide all details in your outline that will appear in your paper.
- Exceptions to the format above may be made when doing creative writing of verse (poetry or songs). For these types of writing, you may single space, and use the margins you feel are appropriate.

Avoiding Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the act of taking information (ideas, facts, inventions, writings, etc.) from a source other than yourself, and then using the information as if it came from yourself. It is easily avoided by giving credit to any sources you use by proper documentation (including a written record of your sources as a part of your writing). Much of the MLA style sheet deals with correct documentation.

Handling Quotations or Research from Other Sources

Author's Name

MLA format follows the author-page method of citation. This means that the author's last name and the page number(s) from which the quotation or information is taken must appear in the text, and a complete reference should appear in your works cited list (see sample Works Cited page). The author's name may appear either in the sentence itself or in parentheses following the quotation or information, 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).

For non-print (films, TV series, etc.) or electronic sources, try to include the name that begins the entry in the Works Cited page.

Sometimes you may have to use an indirect quotation, that is, a quotation that you found in another source that was quoting from the original. For such indirect quotations, use “qtd. in” to indicate the source:

- Ravitch argues that high schools are pressured to act as “social service centers, and they don't do that well” (qtd.in Weisman 259).

Sometimes more information is necessary to identify the source from which a quotation is taken. For instance, if two or more authors have the same last name, provide both authors' first initials (or even her or his full name if different authors share initials) in your citation. If you cite more than one work by a particular author, include a shortened title for the particular work from which you are quoting to distinguish it from the other works by that same person.

Examples:

Two authors with the same last name:

- Although some medical ethicists claim that cloning will lead to designer children (R. Miller 12), others note that the advantages for medical research outweigh this consideration (Miller 46).

Two works by the same author:

- Lightenor has argued that computers are not useful tools for small children (“Too Soon” 38), though he has acknowledged that early exposure to computer games does lead to better small motor skill development in a child’s second and third year (“Hand-Eye Development” 17).

Short Quotations

To indicate short quotations (fewer than four typed lines of prose or three lines of verse) in your text, enclose the quotation within double quotation marks and incorporate it into your text. Provide the author and specific page citation (in the case of poetry, provide line numbers) in the text, and include a complete reference in the works cited list. Punctuation marks such as periods, commas, and semicolons should appear after the parenthetical citation. Question marks and exclamation points should appear within the quotation marks if they are a part of the quoted passage but after the parenthetical citation if they are a part of your text.

Examples:

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

Place quotations longer than four typed lines in a freestanding block of typewritten lines, and omit quotation marks. Start the quotation on a new line, indented one inch from the left margin, and maintain double-spacing. Your parenthetical citation should come after the closing punctuation mark. When quoting verse, maintain original line breaks (you may single space when quoting verse).

Examples:

- 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. (Bronte 78)

Your Works Cited List

- Your works cited list should begin on a separate page from the text of the essay with the title Works Cited (with no quotation marks, underlining, etc.) centered at the top of the page.
- Double-space all entries and double space between entries.
- This list, alphabetized by the first word in each entry (usually the author's last name), should appear at the end of your essay.
- Each source you cite in the essay must appear in your works-cited list; likewise, each entry in the works-cited list must be cited in your text.

Basic Rules

- Authors' names are inverted (last name first); if a work has more than one author, invert only the first author's name, follow it with a comma, then continue listing the rest of the authors. If you have cited more than one work by a particular author, order them alphabetically by title, and use three hyphens in place of the author's name for every entry after the first. When an author appears both as the sole author of a text and as the first author of a group, list solo-author entries first.
- If no author is given for a particular work, alphabetize by the title of the piece and use a shortened version of the title for parenthetical citations.
- The first line of each entry in your list should begin at the left margin. Subsequent lines should be indented. This is known as a hanging indent.
- Capitalize each word in the titles of articles, books, etc. This rule does not apply to articles (a, it etc.), short prepositions (for, to etc.) or conjunctions (and, so etc.) unless one is the first word of the title or subtitle.
- Underline titles of books, journals, magazines, newspapers, and films.
- Use quotation marks around the titles of articles in journals, magazines, and newspapers. Also use quotation marks for the titles of short stories, book chapters, poems, and songs.
- List page numbers efficiently, when needed. If you refer to a journal article that appeared on pages 225 through 250, list the page numbers on your Works Cited page as 225-50.

See the sample Works Cited page (next page)...

Works Cited

Appleby, R. Coaching Soccer with Powerpoint. Caronport, SK: Plaza Press, 2001.

Armstrong, J., ed. Puzzle Me This, Riddle Me That - A Collection of Brain Teasers.
Saskatoon SK: Mensa Publishers, 2000.

“Basketball Brainiacs — Hinz and Olney” Encyclopedia of Sport. 2001 ed.

Beck, D. and D. Reed. “Creative Classroom Decorating.” Canada AM. CTV, Canada. 22
Sep. 2001.

Brewer, A. and N. Lacey. “Everybody Have Pun Tonight.” Groaner Weekly 29
Feb. 1996: 33-38.

Frostad, D., and K. Guenter. Putting the “Fine” into Fine Arts. Caronport SK: Big Event
Books Inc. 1983.

Green, B. “Oh Canada — My Way.” Cacophony Recordings, 2000.

Guenter, J., J. Moen and T. Peter. “Raising Perfect Kids.” Supermoms Speak — Stories
of Success. Ed. V. Thiessen. Kincaid SK: Judy Cleaver Books Ltd., 1999. 24-113.

Hall, J. and R. Hall. Caronport Cougars. 30 Sep. 2000. Caronport High School. 4 Oct.,
2002. <www.cougarsrock.ca>

Peters, K. “Re: I can still count my kids on one hand.” E-mail to D. Reed. 2 Aug. 2000.

You’re Not In Trouble~ We Just Want to Talk. Dir. R. Cromer. Perf. Jeff

Gendron, Rick Zerk, Kathy Priebe, Catherine Moore and Marilyn Koop. SL
Entertainment, 2002.

Basic Forms for Sources in Print

If your particular case is not covered here, use the basic forms to determine the correct format.

Author(s). Title of Book. Place of Publication: Publisher, Year of Publication.

Book with one author

Peretti, Frank B. Prophet. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1992.

Two books by the same author

(After the first listing of the author's name, use three hyphens and a period for the author's name. List books alphabetically.)

Peretti, Frank E. Prophet. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1992

---The Oath. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1995.

Book with more than one author

LaHaye, Tim and Jerry B. Jenkins. Left Behind. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers
Inc., 1995.

If there are more than three authors, you may list only the first author followed by the phrase et al. (the abbreviation for the Latin phrase "and others") in place of the other authors' names, or you may list all the authors in the order in which their names appear on the title page.

Book with a corporate author

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

Book or article with no author named

Encyclopedia of Indiana. New York: Somerset. 1993.

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

AI7.

For parenthetical citations of sources with no author named, use a shortened version of the title instead of an author's name. Use quotation marks and underlining as appropriate. For example, parenthetical citations of the two sources above would appear as follows: (Encyclopedia 235) and ("Cigarette" 26).

Anthology or collection

Peterson, Nancy J., ed. Toni Morrison: “Critical and Theoretical Approaches”. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1997.

A part of a book (such as an essay in a collection)

Author(s). “Title of Article.” Title of Collection. Ed. Editor’s Name(s). Place of Publication: Publisher, Year. Pages.

Essay in a collection

Harris, Muriel. “Talk to Me: Engaging Reluctant Writers.” A Tutor’s Guide: Helping Writers One to One. Ed. Ben Rafoth. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann--Boynton/Cook, 2000. 24-34.

Cross-referencing: If you cite more than one essay from the same edited collection, you should cross-reference within your works cited list in order to avoid writing out the publishing information for each separate essay. To do so, include a separate entry for the entire collection listed by the editor’s name. For individual essays from that collection, simply list the author’s name, the title of the essay, the editor’s last name, and the page numbers.

For example:

L’Eplattenier, Barbara. “Finding Ourselves in the Past: An Argument for Historical Work on WPAs.” Rose and Weiser 131-40.

Peoples, Tim. ““Seeing the WPA With/Through Postmodern Mapping.” Rose and Weiser 153-167.

Rose, Shirley K., and Irwin Weiser, eds. The Writing Program - Administrator as Researcher. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann-Boynton/Cook, 1999.

Article from a reference book

“Saskatchewan.” Encyclopedia Britannica. 1999 ed.

An article in a periodical (such as a newspaper or magazine)

Author(s). "Title of Article." Title of Source Day Month Year: pages.

When citing the date, list day before month; use a three-letter abbreviation of the month (e.g. Jan., Mar., Aug.). If there is more than one edition available for that date (as in an early and late edition of a newspaper), identify the edition following the date (e.g. 17 May 1987, late ed.).

Magazine or newspaper article

Poniewozik, James. "TV Makes a Too-Close Call." Time 20 Nov. 2000: 70-71.

Moore, Rick. "Cougars Shine at Provincials." Moose Jaw Times Herald 18 Mar. 2001.

An article in a scholarly journal

Author(s). "Title of Article." Title of Journal Vol (Year): pages.

Duvall, John N. "The (Super)Marketplace of Images: Television as Unmediated

Mediation in DeLillo's White Noise." Arizona Quarterly 50.3 (1994): 127-53.

Basic Forms for Electronic Sources

If your particular case is not covered here, use the basic forms to determine the correct format. If no author is given for a web page or electronic source, start with and alphabetize by the title of the piece and use a shortened version of the title for parenthetical citations.

A web site

It is necessary to list your date of access because web postings are often updated, and information available at one date may no longer be available later. Be sure to include the complete address for the site. Also, note the use of angled brackets around the electronic address; MLA requires them for clarity.

Author(s). Name of Page. Date of Posting/Revision. Name of institution/organization

affiliated with the site. Date of Access <electronic address>.

Web site example

Felluga, Dino. Undergraduate Guide to Literary Theory. 17 Dec. 1999. Purdue

University. 15 November 2000

<<http://omni.cc.purdue.edu/%7Efelluga/theory2.html>>.

An article on a web site

Author(s). "Article Title." Name of web site. Date of posting/revision. Name of

institution/organization affiliated with site. Date of access <electronic address>.

Poland, Dave. "The Hot Button." Roughcut. 26 Oct. 1998. Turner Network Television. 28 Oct. 1998 <<http://www.roughcut.com>>.

Online posting

Karper, Erin. "Welcome!" Online posting. 23 Oct. 2000. Professional Writing Bulletin Board. 12 Nov. 2000
<<http://linnell.english.purdue.edu/ubb/Fomm2/HTML/000001.html>>.

An electronic database

Author. "Title of Article." Relevant information for the database. Date of access
<electronic address for retrieval>.

Provide the bibliographic data for the original source as for any other of its genre, then add the name of the database along with relevant retrieval data (such as version number and/or transcript or abstract number).

Article in a reference database on CD-ROM

"World War II." Encarta. CD-ROM. Seattle: Microsoft, 1999.

Article from a periodically published database on CD-ROM

Reed, William. "Whites and the Entertainment Industry." Tennessee Tribune 25 Dec. 1996: 28. Ethnic NewsWatch. CD-ROM. Data Technologies. Feb. 1997.

Other Types of Sources

Government publication

United States Dept. of Health and Human Services. Healthy People 2010: Understanding and Improving Health. Washington: GPO, 2000.

Pamphlet

Office of the Dean of Students. "Resources for Success: Learning Disabilities and Attention Deficit Disorders." West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University, 2000.

An article in an online journal or magazine

Author(s). "Title of Article." Title of Journal Volume. Issue (Year): Pages/Paragraphs.
Date of Access <electronic address>.

Some electronic journals and magazines provide paragraph or page numbers; include them if available. This format is also appropriate to online magazines; as with a print version, you should provide a complete publication date rather than volume and issue number.

Online journal article

Wheelis, Mark. "Investigating Disease Outbreaks Under a Protocol to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention." Emerging Infectious Diseases 6.6 (2000):
33 pars. 5 Dec. 2000 <<http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/eid/vol6no6/wheelis.htm>>.

E-mail

Author. "Title of the message (if any)" E-mail to the author. Date of the message.

This same format may be used for personal interviews or personal letters. These do not have titles, and the description should be appropriate. Instead of "Email to John Smith," you would have "Personal interview."

E-mail to you

Kunka, Andrew. "Re: Modernist Literature." E-mail to the author. 15 Nov. 2000.

Email communication between two parties, not including the author

Neyhart, David. "Re: Online Tutoring." E-mail to Joe Barbato. 1 Dec. 2000.

A listserv posting

Author. "Title of Posting." Online posting. Date when material was posted (for example:
14 Mar. 1998). Name of listserv. Date of access <electronic address for retrieval>.

Interview that you conducted

Teacher, Awanna B. Personal Interview. 1 Dec. 2000.

Advertisement in print or electronic

Pepsi. Advertisement. Time 20 Nov. 2000: 151.

Television or radio program

"The Blessed Event." The Flintstones. Hannah Barbera. YTV, Canada. 19 Jul.2001.

Sound recording

Jars of Clay. "If I Left the Zoo." Silvertone Records, 1999.

Film

Princess Bride, The. Dir. Rob Reiner. Perf. Cary Elwes, Mandy Pantinkin, Chris Sarandon, Christopher Guest, Wallace Shawn, Andre the Giant and Robin Wright.
Nelson Entertainment, 1987.

Advertisement on television or radio

Canadian Tire. Advertisement. CBC. 3 Dec. 2000.

Common Writing Errors

- Putting your spell checker on “auto pilot”. They’re our ah lot off miss takes that yore spell cheque will knot cache.
- Homonyms - its/it’s, there/their/they’re, to/too/two, etc. “Would of”/”could of” should be “would have”/”could have
- Sentence fragment - an incomplete thought written with a capital letter and a period. Example: “Before he was tackled.” Correction: :“Before he was tackled, Gene tossed the ball back to Don.”
- Comma splice - two complete sentences (independent clauses) are joined with a comma. Example: “The team has been picked, the list has not been posted.” Correction: “The team has been picked; the list has not been posted.” Or “The team has been picked, but the list has not been posted.” Or “The team has been picked. The list has not been posted.”
- Fused/Run-on sentence - two or more sentences are joined together. Example: “Hit the ball and run to first base if the pitcher catches the ball you are out.” Correction: “Hit the ball and run to first base. If the pitcher catches the ball, you are out.”
- Person agreement - the subject does not agree with its antecedent. Example: “A student can wear hats on Friday if they pay \$1.00.” Correction: “Students can wear hats on Friday if they pay \$1.00.”
- Faulty parallelism - not using the same form for words, phrases or clauses. Example: “I enjoyed watching *Gladiator* because of its music and it holds the viewer in suspense.” Correction: “I enjoyed watching *Gladiator* because of its music and its suspense.”

- Wordiness - using too many words. Use language to clarify, not mystify. Example - “The purple-blue icy cold water danced happily and vigorously under the hot glaring round late summer sun.” Correction: “The periwinkle water danced under the late summer sun.”
- Tense shift - changing from one verb tense to another within a sentence. Example: “The journal and pen was gifts from the grandparents.” Correction: “The journal and pen were gifts from the grandparents.”

Tips for Success

- Always use a word processor to do your writing.
- Make effective use of the planning stage of the writing process (brainstorming, concept webbing, outlining, etc.)
- Set your own deadlines for your outline, first draft, and final draft.
- Never hand in an assignment late.
- Ask if you can earn bonus marks for handing in your paper early.
- Always make your work look good.
- Remember that your paper will be compared to everyone else’s.
- Find someone reliable and intelligent enough to help you edit.
- Ask your teacher to check your thesis statement, outline, and draft.
- Follow instructions carefully (do exactly what your teacher wants).
- Find out what time of day, and under what circumstances you do your best work.
- Eliminate background noise.
- Work in bright light or sunshine.
- Get enough sleep, eat nutritious food, and get some exercise.