

MLA Basics: Guidelines and Examples

These guidelines are in accordance with the eighth edition of the MLA Style manual, published by the Modern Language Association in 2016. Students in their second or third year, who have been using the seventh edition, may continue using the previous format. All other documentation styles (such as Harvard or MHRA) should be avoided.

1) Works Cited

The word 'bibliography' denotes a list of books. Nowadays, sources are increasingly varied. In addition to books, they include:

- articles in journals and newspapers
- unpublished writings, such as dissertations and theses
- websites, blog posts, tweets
- video and audio recordings in various file formats (DVDs, YouTube videos, MP3s)
- live streaming, television programmes and radio broadcasts
- public lectures, speeches and performances
- personal interviews and correspondences (letters, emails, exchanges via social networking)

Instead of 'bibliography,' the list of sources in MLA style is therefore called Works Cited.

The Works Cited page should list **all** materials you cite (quote or paraphrase) in your essay – **but only those sources**. Sources you looked at and considered but did not quote or paraphrase must be omitted from a list of Work Cited. They may be listed separately under the heading Works Consulted.

The Works Cited list must be attached to your essay on a separate page or pages. The page(s), like your entire manuscript (including quotations), should be 1 ½ spaced.

The first line of each entry should be flush with the left margin. Each additional line must be indented (hanging indentation). This makes spacing between entries unnecessary.

All sources, whether you quoted or paraphrased them, must be properly identified.

- Borrowing without acknowledgment is theft (plagiarism).
- All names and titles must be accurate to enable your reader to retrieve the sources.

The list of Works Cited is ordered alphabetically, regardless of the nature of the source (e.g., print, recording, website or live performance). That means, compile a single list, not separate lists. This makes it easier for your reader to find the source on your Works Cited list, especially if the medium (print, video, website) is not identified in the essay.

Stricly speaking, Works Cited lists must contain all primary and secondary sources.

- **Primary sources** are your subject matter (works of art, for instance).
- **Secondary sources** are materials you use to write about your subject.

However, if you indentify your primary sources clearly in your essay (by title, date, and name of creator), they may be omitted from your Works Cited list.

Composing the List of Works Cited

Generally, begin each Works Cited entry with the author's last name. If no author is credited (which is often the case for websites), begin the entry with the title of the article or webpage.

Follow this general pattern:

Author's last name, First name. *Title of source*. Publisher, Year of Publication.

Generally, by 'Author' we mean any creative talent who is getting principal credit for a particular text (work of art, book, film, etc.). If you are quoting/paraphrasing someone else's words, that person must receive credit.

Example:

Tickner, Lisa. *Modern Life and Modern Subjects: British Art in the Early Twentieth Century*. Yale UP, 2000.

Titles of books, films, television series, journals, newspapers, as well as works of art, must always be italicised, both in your list of Works Cited and in your essay.

Titles of chapters in books, articles in journals and newspapers, as well as episodes in television series must be placed in double quotation marks.

Citing website, it does **not** suffice to cut and paste the web address into your document. State the title of the website/page, which is preceded by the name of the writer (if known). Stating the date on which you accessed the site is optional but useful, as online texts are sometimes revised or removed.

See sample entries below. For further details about MLA, consult the *MLA Handbook* (eighth edition) and the Online Writing Lab (OWL) at Purdue University:

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

2) Sample Entries in a List of Works Cited in MLA Style

a) Books by a single author

Cruise, Colin. *Pre-Raphaelite Drawing*. Thames and Hudson, 2011.

Heuser, Harry. *Immaterial Culture: Literature, Drama and the American Radio Play, 1929-1954*. Peter Lang, 2013.

Meyrick, Robert. *John Elwyn*. Ashgate, 2000.

Note: UP is short for University Press. Generally, refer to publisher by the last name of the publishing house, omitting 'Company,' 'Inc.,' 'and Sons,' etc.

b) Books by more than one author

Martineau, Jane, et al. *Shakespeare in Art*. Merrell, 2003.

Meyrick, Robert, and Harry Heuser. *The Prints of Stanley Anderson RA*. Royal Academy of Arts, 2015.

Note: If **more than** two authors are credited for one source (as in the entry for Martineau, above), state only the name of the first writer mentioned. Add 'et al' to indicate 'and others.'

c) More than one source by the same author

Myrone, Martin, editor. *Gothic Nightmares: Fuseli Blake and the Romantic Imagination*. Tate, 2006.

---. "Henry Fuseli and Gothic Spectacle." *Huntington Library Quarterly*, vol. 70, no. 2, 2007, pp. 289-310.

Note: List all titles in alphabetical order. In your essay, specify which source you quote or paraphrase by adding the title to the author's name (In *Gothic Nightmares*, Myrone argues ...) or to the page number in parenthesis.

d) Essays/book chapters in an edited anthology

Harvey, John. "The Ghost in the Machine: Spirit and Technology." *Ashgate Research Companion to Paranormal Cultures*, edited by Olu Jenzen and Sally R. Munt, Routledge, 2013, pp. 51-64.

Heuser, Harry. "'Please don't whip me *this* time': The Passions of George Powell of Nant-Eos." *Queer Wales*, edited by Huw Osborne, U of Wales P, 2016, pp. 45-64.

Note: Provide the entire page range for the essay/article. In your essay, state only the page(s) from which the quotation or paraphrase was derived.

While the author of the essay is mentioned first, the editors of the book in which the essay appears are named after the title of the book.

e) Articles in magazines and journals (print sources)

Heuser, Harry. "Bigotry and Virtue: George Powell and the Question of Legacy." *New Welsh Reader*, no. 110, Winter 2015, pp. 18-29.

Mirzoeff, Nicholas. "The Right to Look." *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 37, no. 3, 2011, pp. 473-96. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/659354.

Webster van Tonder, Christopher. "Colonising Visions: A Physiognomy of Face and Place in Erich Retzlaff's Book *Länder und Völker an der Donau: Rumänien, Bulgarien, Ungarn, Kroatien*." *PhotoResearcher*, no. 23, 2015, pp. 66-77.

Note: If you used an online database instead of a physical library such as Hugh Owen to retrieve the source, identify the database and state the access date (see entry for Mirzoeff above). The access date must be the day on which you retrieved the article.

f) Webpage or article published online only

“Landscape Painting in Chinese Art.” *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/clpg/hd_clpg.htm. Accessed 20 Sept. 2016.

Note: The access date must be the day on which you retrieved the article. Since most of your essays are submitted electronically, turn the web address (stable URL or DOI) into a hyperlink.

g) Journal article retrieved online from a digital library (such as JSTOR)

Ward, Maryanne C. “A Painting of the Unspeakable: Henry Fuseli’s *The Nightmare* and the Creation of Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*.” *Journal of the Midwest Modern Language Association*, vol. 33, no. 1, 2000, pp. 20-31. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/1315115. Accessed 30 Sept. 2016.

Note: The access date must be the day on which you retrieved the article.

h) Definition of a term in a reference book (encyclopedia or dictionary)

“La Farge, John.” *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, www.britannica.com/biography/John-La-Farge. Accessed 10 Sept. 2016.

“Uncanny.” *Oxford English Dictionary*. 2nd ed., 1989.

Note: Many reference texts are written by anonymous contributors. Whenever the writer is unidentified, start with the title of the work.

Regard the word, phrase or name you look up in a reference text (such as ‘Uncanny,’ above) as an essay title.

i) Unpublished thesis or dissertation

Potter, Andrew William. “A Self Portrait of Desire: The Illustrations of Keith Vaughan.” MA Dissertation, U of Wales, Aberystwyth, 1995.

j) Broadcast or audio/video recording

“Marina Abramović: Live at MoMA.” YouTube, uploaded by Museum of Modern Art, 31 Mar. 2010, https://youtu.be/2GD5PBK_Bto. Accessed 21 Aug. 2016.

Perry, Grayson. “I Found Myself in the Art World.” *Grayson Perry: Playing to the Gallery*. Reith Lectures, BBC Radio 4, 9 Nov. 2013.

Note: You may begin the entry with the name of any individual involved in the production (writer, actor, presenter, director, set designer) or with the title of the programme. It depends on who or what is most relevant to your discussion and how you identify the source in your essay. Unless you mention a director’s name in your essay, for instance, do not begin your entry in Works Cited with that name. Your reader will struggle to match the citation with the source on your list.

k) Personal interview conducted by the researcher (you)

Prichard, Gwilym. Interview by Harry Heuser and Robert Meyrick. 29 Aug. 2012.

Note: You must have the consent of the person you are quoting or paraphrasing. Begin the Works Cited entry with the name of the person you interviewed.

l) Letter or email message to the researcher (you)

Williams, Claudia. “School Motto for Eothen.” Received by Harry Heuser, 15 Apr. 2013.

Note: Begin the entry with the name of the person who corresponded with you. For a title, state the subject of the message.

m) Work of art in an exhibition or collection

Croft, Paul. *Minokami Idol*. Lithograph on hot pressed rag paper, 1993, School of Art Gallery and Museum, Aberystwyth University.

Taeuber-Arp, Sophie. *Tête Dada*. Painted wood with glass beads on wire, 1920, Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Whall, Miranda. *Untitled. (Birds on my Head #2)*. German etch on watercolour paper, 2011, *Shifting Subjects: Contemporary Women Telling the Self through the Visual Arts*, Abbey Walk Gallery, Grimsby, 2 Sept.-31 Oct. 2015.

Note: The medium may be omitted in the Works Cited entry if it is mentioned in the essay or stated in a caption for a reproduction of the object in question. When a work of art/object of visual culture is discussed in an essay, the medium should be identified. Avoid vague terms such as 'piece' or 'work.'

n) Work of art reproduced in a book or on a website

Knorr, Karen. *Pleasures of the Imagination: Connoisseurs*. Photograph, c-print, 1986, Interim Art, London. *Landscape and Western Art*, edited by Malcolm Andrews, Oxford UP, 1999, plate 1.

Martin, John. *The Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah*. Oil on canvas, 1852, Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle upon Tyne. *John Martin: Apocalypse*, edited by Martin Myrone, Tate, 2011, no. 116.

Note: Unless you identify the location in your essay, state both the name of the institution/collection where the work is housed or displayed **and** the title of the text in which the work was reproduced.

Instead of plate or figure numbers, you may specify the number of the page on which the work may be found in a print publication.

3) Citations

To ensure clarity, cite your sources at least once in a paragraph. So, when you start a new paragraph and still use the same source, state it again. Rather overstate sources than leave doubt as to when you paraphrased from them. Quotations are clearer because they are placed in quotation marks. The question you should ask yourself is: Will it be clear to my reader when/from which source I have extracted material?

Do not use footnotes to reference your sources. Instead, use parenthetical citations each time you quote or paraphrase a source. The parenthesis includes the page number, in case of print sources. As it is implied that the number in parenthesis refers to a page in a text, do not indicate page numbers using 'p' or 'pp.'

Quotation in your essay

As Sarah Burns argues, '[v]isions of the black man as a new model of Frankenstein's monster incorporated the full measure of white horror and fear' (114).

Corresponding entry in the list of Works Cited:

Burns, Sarah. *Painting the Dark Side: Art and the Gothic Imagination in Nineteenth-Century America*. U of California P, 2004.

You may use occasional footnotes to provide information about related sources or to reference texts you consulted but did not quote or paraphrase (e. g., 'For a detailed study of this painting, see ...'). However, avoid using footnotes to add material that is marginal to your discussion. Either insert the researched bit into your discussion or, if it is not relevant, omit it altogether and save it for another project.

4) Quotation basics

Quotations must be accurate. All changes to the original (omissions, rewording, added emphasis) must be signalled to your readers.

Changes in wording (corrections/adjustments) must be indicated by brackets [].

Errors in the original are either pointed out by adding [sic] (e.g., 'the mountain peek [sic] ...') or corrected within brackets (e.g., 'the mountain pe[a]k ...'); else, paraphrase. Using [sic] tends to suggest the unreliability of a source.

To avoid the excessive use of brackets, articles (*the*, *a*) may be placed outside of an opening quotation mark, even if they were originally part of the quoted passage:

The 'Gothic ... is a genre that glorifies transgression' (Cohen 883).

rather than

'[T]he Gothic ... is a genre that glorifies transgression' (Cohen 883).

Omissions of parts of the original are signalled by ellipses: [. . .]. Ellipses are not needed at the beginning and end of quoted words or phrases (**not**, using the above example, '... increasingly secularized . . .').

If a passage you quote already contains a quotation, use "double quotation" marks to set apart the quotation within the text you quoted.

When quoting a passage you found quoted elsewhere, cite only the text you consulted. Use the phrase 'qtd. in' in parenthesis. Example:

'Landscape,' according to W. J. T. Mitchell, 'is a medium of exchange between the human and the natural, the self and the other' (qtd. in Andrews 15).

Corresponding entry in Works Cited:

Andrews, Malcolm. *Landscape and Western Art*. Oxford UP, 1999.

Longer quotations (passages taking up four or more entire lines of your manuscript) should be indented, in which case the quoted passage is not placed in quotation marks.

Quotations must not be distorted once they are taken out of the original context. Readers unfamiliar with original should be able to understand them.

The signal phrase introducing the quotation (such as *According to X, ...* or *X argues that ...*) and the quotation that follows must form a complete sentence. If you quote a complete sentence, a colon may be used to separate it from the signal phrase. Example:

On the subject of identity, Andrews remarks: 'Landscape in art tells us, or asks us to think about, where we belong' (8).

5) Illustrations (Figures)

Images may be attached to your essay or inserted into your essay text. Use (fig.) to identify illustrations (figures) in numerical order when you mention them in your essay.

Source illustrations responsibly. Use museum websites and quality scans from scholarly publications.

Captions for works of art/objects of visual culture reproduced in your essay should be presented as follows:

Fig. 1: John Martin, *The Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah*. 1852. Oil paint on canvas, 136.3 x 212.3 cm. Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle upon Tyne.

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