

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 (A. 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 free-standing 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.
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You’re Not In Trouble~ We Just Want to Talk. Dir. R. Cromer. Perf. Jeff
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