

MLA Parenthetical Documentation & Bibliography

essay writing / summer stretch / university of washington / chang

Different disciplines use different documentation and bibliographic conventions. For the humanities—such as the discipline of English—the standard is set by the Modern Language Association (MLA). MLA guidelines or style requires in-text parenthetical documentation after quotations, paraphrases, some summaries, and other borrowed material. Parenthetical citations (as opposed to the footnote or endnote) contain certain pieces of information (e.g. author’s name, page number, title of work) that correspond to full entries in a works cited or bibliography. Consult a style or usage manual such as Andrea A. Lunsford’s *The Everyday Writer* for full details on MLA citation and bibliographies.

In-Text Parenthetical Citations

Remember that a quotation should never stand completely alone (i.e. a dropped quote). Quotations, even paraphrases and summaries, should be framed by your own words, given a speaker or a signal phrase, or incorporated into the flow of your language. Citations fall at the end of quoted or borrowed material. End punctuation generally falls outside the quotation marks save for the question mark. The following is a sample of the format, punctuation, detail, and style of typical citation entries:

Single Author Named in Citation (Incorporated Quote)

The central argument of the essay is that teaching a slave to read and write was teaching a slave to not be a slave, “that education and slavery were incompatible with each other” (Douglass 72).

Single Author in Signal Phrase

Frederick Douglass in “Learning to Read and Write” argues that literacy was tantamount to his freedom saying, “I wish to learn how to write, as I might have occasion to write my own pass” (74).

Two or More Authors in Citation

Literacy cannot be monolithic, unchanging, and dictated by the few over the many for there is “no single literacy, instead a multiplicity of practices and values” (Collins & Blot 3).

Organization as Author

According to the university’s student handbook, the primary mission of the school “is the preservation, advancement, and dissemination of knowledge” (University of Washington vi).

Unknown Author (Title Only)

The state continues to perpetuate an “ideological monopoly over those that do not have the resources to enact change themselves” (“State Problems” 3A).

Author of Two or More Works (Include Abbreviated Title of the Work in Citation)

In the first of Sherman Alexie’s essays, he vividly defines the paragraph as “a fence that held words” (“The Joy” 62).

Sacred Text

He ignored the admonition: “Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall” (*New Oxford Annotated Bible* Prov. 16.18).

Secondary Source or Indirect Source (Someone Quoted Within the Text of Another)

Mina Shaughnessy says, “No education can be *total*, it must be *continuous*” (as qtd. in Bartholomae 419).

Work Without Page Numbers (Use Paragraph Numbers)

The argument follows that “any attempt to reconcile the differences between groups will only result in further conflict” (Jones par. 7).

Web Source (Give Author or Page Number If Available)

The hope of GIS 140 is to foster the idea that “learning and knowledge and experience are more than just rubrics, rote, numbers, syllabuses, tests, grades, and graduation requirements—that learning and knowledge are fundamentally interconnected, intertextual, personal, political, cultural, and mutually enhancing” (Chang).

Bibliographies

Keep in mind the differences between bibliographies and works cited lists—the first is a complete list of all research consulted and the second is a list of only the sources used in the text. Bibliographic entries are alphabetized by last name (or title if there is no author). The first line of each entry is not indented; however subsequent lines are indented half an inch. Titles of books, magazines, newspapers, and films are underlined or italicized. Titles of articles, essays, songs, poems, and chapters are in quotation marks. The following is a sample of the format, punctuation, detail, and style of typical bibliographic entries:

One Author

Lunsford, Andrea A. The Everyday Writer. 3rd ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2005.

Two or Three Authors

Collins, James and Richard Blot. Literacy and Literacies. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003.

Editor or Editors

Blaylock, Cameron, ed. Falling Down the Mountain (and Other Essays). Chattanooga: Little Brick Press, 2006.

Work in An Anthology or Chapter in a Book with An Editor

Douglass, Frederick. "Learning to Read and Write." Eds. Nancy R. Comley, David Hamilton, and Carl H. Klaus. Fields of Reading: Motives for Writing. 6th ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2001.

Article in a Monthly Magazine

Broadway, Lillian. "Looking for Mr. Puppydog." Life. Jan. 2005: 33-35.

Article in a Weekly Magazine

Patterson, Michael S. "Tom Tom and the Train to Nowhere." Newsweek. 17 Aug. 2004: 48.

Article in a Newspaper

Abshard, Vincent. "The Best Places to Eat Under a Bridge." New York Times. 2 Sep. 2005: C7+.

Article in a Journal Paginated by Volume

Florence, Tyler. "Eating With Rapineux." Odyssey 33 (2004): 331-339.

Article in a Journal Paginated by Issue

Yamay, Shin-lee. "Fire in the Attics." Literature of the Lowlands 12.2 (2003): 18-20.

Unsigned Article

"These Won't Be My Friends." Celebrity 7 Oct. 2006: 89.

Work from a Personal Website

Lunsford, Andrea A. Home page. 15 Mar. 2003. 5 Sep. 2006. <<http://www.stanford.edu/~lunsfor1/>>.

Work from a Profession Website

Lunsford, Andrea A. "20 Most Common Errors." The Everyday Writer. 15 Mar. 2003. 5 Sep. 2006. <http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/everyday_writer3e/20errors/default.asp>.