



## **Documentation Guide**

for students and faculty

# **MLA**

**This is a condensed guide to the mechanics of research writing, based on guidelines determined by the Modern Language Association. For more thorough and detailed instruction, refer to the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, 7<sup>th</sup> ed.***

**All materials are available at the FLCC library and The Write Place**

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## FLCC Style Sheet—MLA Guidelines

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### Preface

This style sheet, which has been funded by a grant from the Write Place, FLCC's writing center, represents a collaborative effort by the Write Place, FLCC's English Department, and the librarians from the Charles J. Meder Library. It is important to note that these guidelines are intended to serve as a classroom tool that beginning college writers can use independently when referring to another author's ideas, facts, and words. This handout provides an introduction to the MLA's style of documenting sources. A more comprehensive guide can be found in college handbooks such as *The Open Handbook*, *The Scott Foresman Handbook for Writers*, or *The MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* (7<sup>th</sup> edition). The MLA style of documentation is primarily used in the Humanities. Many disciplines have their own documentation system, but the MLA style is widely used on this campus.

### Formatting Your Paper

- Your paper should be typed on a computer and printed on standard, white 8.5x11-inch paper.
- Your entire paper should be double-spaced. It is best to use a legible and traditional font such as Times New Roman (12 point).
- Unless otherwise instructed, leave only one space after periods and other punctuation marks.
- The margins of your document should be one inch on all sides. The first line of each paragraph should be indented one half-inch (five spaces or press tab once) from the left margin.
- A header that identifies your last name and numbers all pages consecutively is standard. This header should be one-half inch from the top and flush with the right margin.

### Formatting the First Page of Your Paper

- Unless specifically requested, you do not need a separate title page.
- In the upper left-hand corner of the first page, list your name, your instructor's name, the course number and section, and the date. Please remember that everything in your paper is double-spaced.
- Center your title and do not underline it or put quotation marks around it. Write the title in Title Case, not in all capital letters.

### Evaluating Sources for Credibility

At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, information is readily available through the World Wide Web. One of the greatest challenges for students who are writing research papers is evaluating the credibility of a source. Even today, traditional sources of research are still the most reliable: books, periodicals, and scholarly journals.

The primary problem with Internet sources is that they are self-published, and often the credentials of the person who is publishing the information are not credible. Therefore, be discerning when using the Internet for research papers, and please verify with your instructor that it is all right to do so.

According to *The MLA Handbook* (7<sup>th</sup> ed.), Section 1.6, use the following guidelines for evaluation sources:

**Authority:** The author and his or her credentials for writing and publishing this work should be clearly identified. The type of publication you consult also matters. For example, an article from a mainstream magazine, such as *Time*, is more reputable than one from a tabloid such as *The Star*.

**Accuracy:** A scholarly article, book, or Web publication should have sources that can be verified, such as those found on a Works Cited list. A reputable author of a Web publication will include hypertext links to other sources.

**Currency:** All publication dates should be clearly listed, so that the reader can determine how old the information is. This is easily discernable on a hard copy of any source. While many people assume that information found on the Internet is up-to-date, this is not always so.

### **Citing Titles of Texts: Italics or Quotation Marks?**

In general, works that are published independently are italicized. These include: a book, a newspaper, a CD or a television show or series.

Quotation marks are used to indicate that a title of a work is within a larger work: for example, a chapter in a book, an article in a newspaper, a song on a compact disc, or an episode of a television series.

The rules governing the punctuation of titles are strict, and there is no room for deviation or creativity. Copy titles **exactly** as they appear on title pages. Capitalize the first word, the last word, and all principal words of a title. Do not capitalize the following: articles (*a, an, the*), prepositions (*in, of, to*), and coordinating conjunctions or “fanboys” (*for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so*). For a complete guide to title of works in the research paper consult *The MLA Handbook* (7<sup>th</sup> ed.), section 3.6.

Sacred writings appear without underlining or quotation marks: Bible, Koran.

## Quotations

The inclusion of quotations in your paper should be selective. It is important that quotations not be used to comprise your paper but rather to add clarity, emphasis, or authority.

If a quotation is four or fewer lines of your paper, then incorporate it within the body of the paper.

Concerning the devastation of the beach following Hurricane Dora, Myers writes, "Dilapidated and unsafe buildings, overtime, were torn down and removed" (7).

## Block Quotations

If a quotation is more than four lines of text, it is usually introduced with a colon, separated from the text by indenting ten spaces from the left margin (tab twice), and quotation marks are not used. The right margin remains the same.

After the devastation of Hurricane Dora, American Beach was plagued with problems and desperately needed revitalization:

Although the problem did not go away, the beach community began to make improvements. Beach cleanups began to take place. Some dilapidated and unsafe buildings, overtime, were torn down and removed, Other structures, in later years, due to absentee property owners and neglect, eventually, became eyesores in the community.  
(Myers 7).

Note: notice with the longer quotation, the period follows the end of the quotation. It does not follow after the in-text citation (Myers 7). Also, since Myers has not been mentioned in the text, her last name and page number must d included in the in-text citations.

When using quotations, it is imperative that you be accurate. The use of quotations is treated much more thoroughly in *The MLA Handbook* (7<sup>th</sup> ed.), section 3.7.

## Ellipses

Ellipses indicate that a word, phrase, sentence, or more from the original source has been deleted from the quotation. Ellipses within a sentence are indicated with three spaced periods, with a space before the first period and a space after the last period

Here is an original passage from a writer whose last name is Rudnik:

Marilyn's media-drenched image as a tragic dumb blond has become an American archetype, along with the Marlboro Man and the Harley-straddling wild one. Yet biographical trauma, even when packed with celebrities, cannot account for Marilyn's enduring stature as a goddess and postage stamp.

If you quote a word or phrase, it is obvious that something has been left out. In these instances, ellipses are not necessary.

While Anna Nicole Smith endeavored to be like her idol in every way, it is doubtful she will ever have "Marilyn's enduring stature as a goddess and postage stamp" (Rudnick).

Here is the same quotation with ellipses:

Rudnick laments the loss of classic sex symbols when he writes Monroe's "Media-drenched image as a tragic dumb blond has become an American archetype, along with the Marlboro Man and the Harley-straddling wild one. Yet biographical trauma...cannot account for Marilyn's enduring stature as a goddess and postage stamp."

There are many ways that ellipses can be used in a paper and some are quite complicated. For a full discussion of how to use ellipses, please consult *The MLA Handbook* (7<sup>th</sup> ed.), section 3.7.5

### **In-Text Citations**

Any time you use another person's ideas, words, or facts, you must include a parenthetical reference (also referred to as a parenthetical reference or in-text citation) that directly corresponds with an entry on the Works Cited list. **This information in the in-text citation must coincide with a specific entry in your Works Cited list.** This is so readers can easily identify the complete text from which the passage originated. If available, the in-text citation should include the author's last name and the page number. For in-depth information the in-text citations see *The MLA Handbook* (7<sup>th</sup> ed.), section 6.

Nature Conservationists bemoan the fact that American Beach, an historically African American Beach, is "being discovered and developed" (Myers 57).

If the writer's name appears in the same sentence as the quotation, then only the page number the quotation is taken from should be cited parenthetically.

Annette Myers, writer, teacher, and historian, is saddened by the fact that American Beach, an historically African American Beach, is "being discovered and developed" (57).

The in-text citations "(Myers 57)" or "(57)" as cited above indicate that the quoted material came from page 57 of a work by Myers. This is done so that the full source of the quoted material can be found in the alphabetized entries on the Works Cited page that follows the last page of your paper.

Myers, Annette McCollough. *The Shrinking Sands of an African American Beach*.

Marceline, MO: Walsworth, 2006.

### **Exceptions**

Works from on-line database subscription services differ slightly from traditional sources only in regard to pagination. If an article from the on-line service does not have fixed page numbers (and only a very few do), then you do not include a page number in the in-text citation or the Works Cited entry, the author's last name(s) is sufficient for the parenthetical citation.

If the author's last name is not provided in a source, then an abbreviated form of the title is used in the in-text citation: for example, the title of the book *The Shrinking Sands of an African-American Beach* would be abbreviated as follows in the in-text citation (Shrinking Sands 57).

### **Works Cited List**

Entries on the Works Cited list, placed after the research paper, should be double spaced and alphabetized, with no extra spaces between any lines. Indent on the second and every subsequent line for each entry.

Here is the basic format for typical entries, with components labeled, including any necessary italics and quotations. For other examples, see the attached Works Cited list. An even more extensive selection can be found in *The MLA Handbook* (7<sup>th</sup> ed.).

#### **A book with one author:**

Author's last name, first name. Title of Work, City, State: Publisher, Year of publication.

Medium of publication.

#### **Or, a typical online source:**

Author's last name, first name, "Title of Work, Article, or Chapter." Sponsor or Publisher. Date

of publication or last update [day month year]. Medium of publication. Access date [day month year]. <URL> [optional, according to assignment instructions.]

### **What about Missing Information?**

If, for example, there is not author given, skip to the next item: the title. For missing components of online sources, follow these guidelines:

- If there is **no sponsor or publisher name**, use “n.p.” (for “no publisher”).
- If there is **no date of publication or update**, use “n.d.” (for “no date”).
- Entries for articles from online journals or databases require page numbers. If there is **no page number available**, use “n. pag.”

### **Medium of Publication**

Every entry identifies the medium of publication for the work being cited, such as Print, Web, CD, Performance, Film, PDF file, and so on. See the attached MLA Works Cited List for examples.

### **Punctuation**

Be sure to remember that a period follows each individual item—author, title, publisher—in each entry. Punctuation is placed inside quotation marks. The Modern Language Association currently asks for a single space after each item. Remember, also, that a period goes at the very end of the entry as well.

### **Other Helpful Guides to MLA Documentation**

Listed below are just a few of the excellent Internet web sites that are available to help you with the intricacies of MLA Documentation:

- Purdue University’s OWL MLA Format: Giving Credit to Sources  
<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/557/01/>
- Bedford St. Martin’s Online! Using MLA Style to Cite and Document Sources  
<http://www.dianahacker.com/resdoc/>
- Dr. Mary Ellen Guffey’s MLA Style: Electronic Formats  
[http://www.library.miami.edu/research/userguides/citing\\_sources.html](http://www.library.miami.edu/research/userguides/citing_sources.html)
- Middlebury’s Citing Electronic Sources-MLA  
[http://www.middlebury.edu/academics/lis/lib/guides\\_and\\_tutorials/style\\_citation\\_guides/mla\\_style\\_guides/](http://www.middlebury.edu/academics/lis/lib/guides_and_tutorials/style_citation_guides/mla_style_guides/)

1" margins  
on all sides

1/2" above header

Smith 1

Header on every page -  
Last name and page number

Jane Smith

Professor Jones

ENG 102-99

11 June 2007

Center title

Mythical Journey: The Myth of the Phoenix in Eudora Welty's "A Worn Path"

According to literary critic Robert Phillips, Jr., "[Eudora Welty] did not begin

with myth and fantasy and make them native to Mississippi; rather, she found that fantasy

and myth are expressions of things she found 'around [her] in life'" (57). In Welty's

short fiction, reality and myth operate as an inextricable pair that serves one another.

Specifically, in "A Worn Path," she delineates the protagonist's character as a direct

representation of the mythological bird, the Phoenix. The story first was published in

*Atlantic Monthly* in February of 1941 and later was included in her collection *The Wide*

*Net*; this tale of death and rebirth also won the O. Henry prize for short fiction

("Winners"). Examining the physical similarities between the protagonist and the

mythical bird reveals a calculated step that Welty takes in aligning her protagonist with

the legendary bird. Also, the emotional nature of Phoenix Jackson's character parallels

the nature of the Phoenix. Finally, the setting and the title point to a cyclical theme of

death and rebirth. Clearly, Phoenix Jackson represents a modern incarnation of the

mythical Phoenix.

One of the similarities between the protagonist and the mythical bird is her

appearance. The initial description of Phoenix reveals that there is "an old Negro woman

with her head tied in a red rag . . . moving a little from side to side in her steps" (Welty

165). This depiction not only describes the way that birds waddle from side to side; it

Double-spaced  
throughout; no  
extra space  
above or below  
title

Single  
quotation  
marks denote  
material that  
is quoted  
within original  
passage.

Underline the  
title of book,  
magazine,  
newspaper,  
journal,  
website, film,  
play, etc.

Brackets are  
used to insert  
words that  
clarify or  
grammatically fit  
quotation into  
sentence, without  
altering intended  
meaning.

Use quotation  
marks for title  
of an article,  
short story,  
poem, song, or  
chapter.

Ellipses (3  
spaced dots)  
within a  
quotation  
denote omitted  
words from  
original text.

Discuss text in present tense.

Cite author  
and page in  
parentheses  
before period.

also shows one of the principal colors associated with the mythical Phoenix – the color red. According to the website entitled *mythicalrealm.com*, the bird was a “fabulous mythical bird . . . with brilliant scarlet and gold plumage” (Dawn). She also references other physical similarities between her protagonist and the legendary bird:

Long quotations of 4 or more lines are called block quotations. Indent block quotation; no quotation marks are needed

Her skin had a pattern all its own of numberless branching wrinkles and as though a whole little tree stood in the middle of her forehead, but a golden color ran underneath, and the two knobs of her cheeks were illuminated by a yellow burning under the dark. . . . Under the red rag her hair came down on her neck in the frailest of ringlets, still black, with an odor like copper.

Ellipses after period denote that additional sentences have been omitted from original source.

(Welty 165)

Cite block quotations after period.

She uses the simile of a tree, a bird’s perch, to describe the wrinkles in her forehead, and this quote also alludes to the element of fire, another association with the Phoenix.

However, her physical appearance is only one aspect that positions her as the symbolic equivalent of the Phoenix.

Transitional sentence leads to next paragraph.

Her actions also mirror the emotional nature of the mythical Phoenix. The Phoenix is known for its ability to help others. Just as the protagonist makes a journey for her grandson, the Phoenix lived to help others. According to a popular website concerning the role of the Phoenix in the Harry Potter series, “Phoenix tears have a healing property . . . [and] the song of the Phoenix gives strength and hope to the ones it sings for” (Morris). After Phoenix Jackson momentarily forgets the mission of her trip, she finally exclaims, “My grandson. It was my memory had left me. There I sat and forgot why I made my long trip” (Welty 170). Obviously, Phoenix Jackson lives for her grandson, but other things point to the cyclical nature of her mission.

Websites are generally without pages; cite author.

In addition to her physical similarities and actions, the setting and the title indicate a sense of the cyclical nature of her journey, much like the reincarnation of the Phoenix. With the initial setting described as a pine forest and the subsequent setting in an oak forest, readers may surmise some symbolic meaning in the setting and its similarity to the maturation of human beings. Welty writes that Phoenix has gone “Up through the pines . . . [and] down through the oaks” (166). Pine forests resemble the early growth of a young person. The trees grow quickly, have soft wood, and they retain their needles throughout the year. Similarly, young people grow quickly, have soft, pliable bones, and they retain all of their hair. Conversely, oak trees mature more slowly, consist of hard, brittle wood, and they lose their leaves in the winter, much like aging people who lose their hair. Also, the title, “A Worn Path,” indicates the repetitive cycle indicative of the myth of the Phoenix and Phoenix’s journey.

If author is mentioned in sentence, cite only page # in parentheses.

Obviously, Eudora Welty infuses the myth of the Phoenix into her story. Through the physical similarities of the mythical bird and the protagonist, the emotional nature of both, and the significance of the setting and title, readers easily can identify Phoenix Jackson as a symbolic representative of the mythical bird, the Phoenix.

Conclusion returns to the thesis without restating it.

Continue to double space throughout,  
with no extra spaces.

Smith 4

### Works Cited

End each entry  
with a period.

List alpha-  
betically by  
author, last  
name first.

Dawn, April. "Classical Arabian Phoenix." *Lady Gryphon's Mythical Realm* 2006. Web.

14 July 2007.

Morris, Phyllis D. "Phoenixes: Fawkes." *Harry Potter Lexicon* 6 Apr. 2006. Web 21

Aug. 2007.

Periods and  
commas within  
quotation marks

Phillips, Robert L., Jr. "A Structural Approach to Myth in the Fiction of Eudora Welty."

*Eudora Welty: Critical Essays*. Ed. Peggy Whitman Prenshaw. Oxford: U P of

Mississippi, 1979. 56-67. *Literature Resource Center*. Web. 21 July 2007.

First line of  
each entry is  
flush left;  
second & sub-  
sequent lines  
of each entry  
are indented.

"Winners List." *O Henry Award Winners 1919-2000*. n.d. Web. 26 March 2010.

If no author is  
given, list source  
with title first,  
placed alpha-  
betically in list.

## MLA Works Cited List Examples

### Book with Single Author:

Gore, Albert. *An Inconvenient Truth: The Planetary Emergency of Global Warming and What We Can Do About It*. Emmaus, PA: Rodale, 2006. Print.

**In-text citation:** (Gore 32)

### Book with Two Authors:

Michaels, Patrick J., and Robert C. Balling, Jr. *The Satanic Gases: Clearing the Air About Global Warming*. Washington, DC: Cato Institute, 2000. Print.

**In-text citation:** (Michaels and Balling 107)

### Book with Editor as Author:

Galley, Krista E. M., ed. *Global Climate Change and Wildlife in North America*. Bethesda: Wildlife Society, 2004. Print.

**In-text citation:** (Galley 125)

### An Anonymous Book:

*Environmental Resource Handbook*. Millerton, NY: Grey House, 2001. Print.

**In-text citation:** (*Environmental Resource Handbook* 252)

### Citing Common Literature such as the Bible or Shakespeare:

*The New Jerusalem Bible*. Ed. Henry Wansbrough. New York: Doubleday, 1985. Print.

**In-text citation:** (*The New Jerusalem Bible*, Deut. 22.23-24)

Shakespeare, William. *The Tragedy of Othello: The Moor of Venice*. Ed. Tucker Brooke and Lawrence Mason. New Haven: Yale UP, 1947. Print.

**In-text citation:** (IV.i.181-185)

**Article from a Reference Book (unsigned and signed):**

“Greenhouse Effect.” *American Heritage Science Dictionary*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2005. Print.

**In-text citation:** (“Greenhouse” 277)

Schneider, Stephen H. “Greenhouse Effect.” *World Book Encyclopedia*. Millennium ed. 2000. Print.

**In-text citation:** (Schneider 382)

**Article in a Literary Criticism Set:**

Knott, John R. “Into the Woods with Wendell Berry.” *Essays in Literature* 23.1 (1996): 124-140. Rpt. in *Poetry Criticism*. Ed. Anne Sheets Nesbitt and Susan Salas. Vol. 28. Detroit: Gale, 2000. 36-44. Print.

**In-text citation:** (Knott 39)

**Work in an Anthology or Literature Textbook:**

Hansberry, Lorraine. *A Raisin in the Sun*. *The Compact Bedford Introduction to Drama*. 6<sup>th</sup> ed. Ed. Lee A. Jacobus. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2009. Print.

**In-text citation:** (Hansberry 828)

Hobby, Elaine. “Courtship and Marriage in *The Rover*.” *The Compact Bedford Introduction to Drama*. 6<sup>th</sup> ed. Lee A. Jacobus. Boston: Bedford/St Martin’s, 2009. Print.

**In-text citation:** (Hobby 358)

Jacobus, Lee A. “Commedia dell’Arte.” *The Compact Bedford Introduction to Drama*. 6<sup>th</sup> ed. Ed. Lee A. Jacobus. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2009. Print.

**In-text citation:** (Jacobus 156)

Lear, Edward. "The Owl and the Pussy-cat." *The Norton Anthology of Children's Literature*.  
Ed. Jack Zipes. New York: Norton, 2005. 1155. Print.

**In-text citation:** (Lear 1155)

**Magazine Article:**

Allen, Leslie. "Will Tuvalu Disappear Beneath the Sea? Global Warming Threatens to Swamp a  
Small Island Nation." *Smithsonian* Aug. 2004: 44+. Print.

**In-text citation:** (Allen 43)

Begley, Sharon, and Andrew Murr. "Which of These Is Not Causing Global Warming Today?  
A. Sport Utility Vehicles; B. Rice Fields; C. Increased Solar Output." *Newsweek* 2 July  
2007: 48-50. Print.

**In-text citation:** (Begley 49)

**Newspaper Article (unsigned and signed):**

"College Officials Agree to Cut Greenhouse Gases." *Albany Times Union* 13 June 2007:  
A4. Print.

**In-text citation:** ("College" A4)

Landler, Mark. "Bush's Greenhouse Gas Plan Throws Europe Off Guard." *New York Times*  
2 June 2007, late ed.: A7+. Microfilm.

**In-text citation:** (Landler A7)

### **Article from a Scholarly Journal:**

Miller-Rushing, Abraham J., Richard B. Primack, Daniel Primack, and Sharda Mukunda.

“Photographs and Herbarium Specimens as Tools to Document Phenological Changes in Response to Global Warming.” *American Journal of Botany* 93.11 (2006): 1667-1674. Print.

**In-text citation:** (Miller-Rushing, Primack, Primack, and Mukunda 1668)

### **Article from an Online Database:**

Mora, Camilo, and Maria F. Maya. “Effect of the Rate of Temperature Increase of the Dynamic Method on the Heat Tolerance of Fishes.” *Journal of Thermal Biology* 31.4 (2006): 337-341. *ScienceDirect*. Web. 2 July 2007.

**In-text citation:** (Mora and Maya 340)

### **Website:**

“Climate Change.” *United States Environmental Protection Agency*. 4 May 2007. Web. 6 July 2007. <<http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/>>

**In-text citation:** (“Climate Change”)

### **A Film or Movie:**

*Othello*. Dir. Stuart Burge. Perf. Laurence Olivier, Maggie Smith, Joyce Redman, Frank Finley. Warner Home Video, 2007. DVD.

**In-text citation:** (*Othello*)