MLA Style Basics

The Modern Language Association (MLA) style is a system for formatting and documenting essays for most humanities classes. In 2009, the guidelines were updated to include sources from the Web. Using MLA correctly increases your credibility as a writer and avoids accidental incidents of plagiarism. Below are a few basic MLA guidelines. For details, consult a 2009 handbook, the Purdue OWL (http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/), or visit the Writing Studio.

Tips for Using MLA Style:
1. Double-space every line (including title, Works Cited) and use a readable font (12 pt., Times New Roman).
2. Use 1-inch margins.
3. Do not use a title page. In the upper left-hand corner of the first page, list your name, instructor’s name, the course, and the date. Again, be sure to double-space between each of these lines.
4. Use a header on every page (including the first page) that includes your last name and the page number placed on the upper right-hand side of the page.
5. Put summaries and paraphrases in your own words but still cite them.
6. Cite all quotations and borrowed ideas. Limit your use of quotations to only the most essential language.
7. When you do quote, enclose all borrowed language in quotation marks.
8. Indent quotations longer than four typed lines of prose (three lines for poetry).
9. Use signal phrases (“According to Einstein,”) to integrate outside sources into your writing.
10. MLA uses in-text, parenthetical citations — never footnotes.
11. The Works Cited page lists references in alphabetical order by author last name.

In-Text Citations:
• The hippos are a graceful image on the landscape (Fay 100).
• According to Mirsky, hippos have very poor eyesight, and one two-ton male named Komir, who lived in a French zoo, mistook a tractor for a possible paramour (28).

Works Cited Basics:

Book

Article in a Magazine

Need more help? Schedule an appointment with the Writing Studio in 2420, 25 Park Place at http://gsu.mywconline.net/
MLA Style Basics (Continued)

**Article in a Journal Paginated by Volume**

**Article in a Journal Paginated by Issue**

**Article From a Database**

**Article in an Online Newspaper**

**Website**

Adapted from:
*MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, 7th Edition*