



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

Tan, Amy. *The Bonesetter's Daughter*. New York: Putnam, 2001. Print.

Article in a Magazine

Fay, J. Michael. "Land of the Surfing Hippos." *National Geographic* Aug. 2004: 100-167. Print.

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

Ryan, Katy. "Revolutionary Suicide in Toni Morrison's Fiction." *African American Review* 34.3 (2000): 389-412. Print.

Article in a Journal Paginated by Issue

Weed, Michael. "Broken Dates: Fiction and the Century." *Kenyon Review* 22.3 (2000): 50-64. Print.

Article From a Database

Jenson, Jill D. "It's the Information Age, so Where's the Information?" *College Teaching* 52.3(2004): 107-12. *Academic Search Complete*. Web. 2 Feb. 2009.

Article in an Online Newspaper

Rubin, Joel. "Report Faults Charter School." *Los Angeles Times*. Los Angeles Times, 22 Jan. 2005. Web. 24 Jan. 2009.

Website

Zoo Atlanta. Atlanta Fulton County Zoo, 2010. Web. 30 Mar. 2010.

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