

# MLA Style Guide for Middle School



Guidelines for Making a Bibliography  
and Documenting Sources

**Draft Document**

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## Introduction

The purpose of this handbook is to provide you with some guidance on how to write your essays in MLA style. In the following pages you will find information about the basics of the style and how to correctly cite your sources. It is important to remember that in the space of this small handbook, only the most important elements of the style are covered; therefore, your teacher may need to share other material with you in order for you to complete your assignments in MLA format.

Kevin Costello  
Harding Middle School Librarian

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# 1. MLA Style Guide Basics

## What is MLA Style?

The **M**odern **L**anguage **A**ssociation (MLA) developed a style guide for academic writing. Part of the style guide deals with standardized ways to document the writer's source materials.

MLA provides guidelines for the creation of a bibliography (called a "Works Cited" page) and the corresponding parenthetical (within the text) citation.

## How do I use this MLA Style Guide?

Students and teachers in the middle schools are expected to use this MLA style guide when writing pieces that require information to be cited from other sources.

## Why is it Important that I Cite Sources?

As a writer, it is your responsibility to give proper credit to your sources. It is also very important that you give this credit in accordance with MLA style. If you fail to give proper credit to a source, you have committed plagiarism. (See [plagiarism](#)).

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## 2. Plagiarism—What is it? How can I avoid it?

### What is plagiarism?

If you have not given proper credit to your sources, you have committed plagiarism. Essentially, it is like you are lying to your reader. You have used someone else's ideas without telling your reader where you took it from.

Whether you have intentionally tried to pass off someone else's ideas as your own or, through careless research, you unintentionally "forgot" to cite a source, the charge is plagiarism.

### How can I avoid plagiarism?

Basically, any idea or fact that you received from a source needs to be cited. Any idea or fact that is common knowledge does not need to be cited. For example, facts like the earth rotates around the sun or Abraham Lincoln was assassinated while in office are common knowledge and would not have to be cited.

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## 3. Works Cited Page

### What is a “Works Cited” Page?

A “Works Cited” page is the name that MLA gives to a bibliography. It is a listing of all of the sources you cited in the body of your paper.

Here are a few things to keep in mind about the “Works Cited” page:

1. The “Works Cited” page is always going to be the last page of your essay or report. You should type the words “Works Cited” and center it on the page.
2. Each entry must be complete and accurate. To see examples of common sources in correct bibliographic format click [here](#).
3. Each entry reads like one long sentence. What this means is that it does not matter where the second line begins in an entry; it begins on the second line only because you ran out of room on the first line.
4. The second and subsequent lines are always indented five spaces.
5. The sources are listed alphabetically by the first word or name of the entry. This first word or name should be what you use in your parenthetical citation.

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## Example of a "Works Cited" page:

Works Cited

Casey, Maura. "Title IX Has Helped Women Make a Great Leap Forward." Christian Science Monitor 14 Apr. 1995: 19. Student Resource Center. EBSCO. Harding Middle School, LRC, Lakewood. 30 Oct. 2007.

Johnson, Tim, and Mary L. Smith. "Drug Testing of Students Helps to Reduce Drug Abuse." Time 05 Mar. 1999. Academic Search Premier. EBSCO. Harding Middle School LRC, Lakewood. 30 Oct. 2007.

Redford, Susan M. "Elephants." Encyclopedia Britannica. 18 Oct. 2007. 30 Oct. 2007  
<<http://www.eb.com>>.

Thomas, Ken. Dreams. New York: Paper and Pen, 2002.

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## 4. Parenthetical Citation

### What is Parenthetical Citation?

Parenthetical citation is when a writer directly puts into the text a note from where he or she got the information. Parenthetical or “in-text” citation allows your reader to know from what source each idea/fact came.

This is how it looks in the text of your paper:

**“In 2007, 37 percent of American adults sought medical information from the internet regarding a health problem they were experiencing before consulting a doctor” (Smith 38).**

In the example above, notice that the author’s name and the page number on which this fact was found are set off from the text within parenthesis. Note also that the punctuation of this parenthetical citation is also important. The reader would understand from this citation that on page 38 of Smith’s book, this fact is mentioned. Furthermore, since the words are contained within quotes, the above example illustrates that this is a **direct quote** from that page.

Here is an example of the same idea presented as an **indirect quote**:

**Instead of going to a doctor right away, a recent study found that 37 percent of Americans are now turning to the internet for medical information (Smith 38).**

See the difference between direct and indirect quotes in the [glossary](#) section.

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## 5. Examples of Common Forms of Sources for Citation

**\*\*NOTE\*\*** The details are important in these citations--the order of the information, punctuation, underlining and quote marks all must be exact.

### Print Resources (Viewed in Print Form)

#### Book by One Author

Last Name, First Name. Title. Place of publication: Publisher, Copyright Date.

*Example:*

Jameson, George P. Ellis Island. New York: Icon Press, 2006.

#### Book by Two Authors

Last Name, First Name and First Name Last Name. Title. Place of publication: Publisher, Copyright Date.

*Example:*

Smith, Henry G. and Betty Harmon. Freedom Rides. Chicago: Broad Shoulder Press, 2006.

**Encyclopedia** (NOTE: The author is usually listed at the end of the article. If an author is not listed, begin the entry with the title of the article.)

Last Name, First Name. "Title of Article." Name of Encyclopedia. Edition Year.

*Example:*

Franz, Charlene. "Goat." World Book. 2006 ed.

#### A Work within an Anthology

Last Name, First Name. "Title of work." Title of Anthology. Editor's First Name Last Name. Place of Publication: Publisher, Copyright Date. Page numbers.

*Example:*

Stevens, Wallace. "Sunday Morning." Modern American Poetry. Ed. Thomas J. Hines. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 2003. 20-22.

#### Newspaper Article

Last Name, First Name. "Title of Article." Newspaper Name Date: page(s).

*Example:*

Blake, Terry. "Attack in Bagdad: Two Marines Dead." The Plain Dealer 20 July 2006: A1.

#### Magazine Article

Last Name, First Name. "Title of Article." Title of Magazine Date: page numbers.

*Example:*

Thomasson, Ronald. "Salt Mines of Lake Erie." Cleveland Magazine 15 May 2004: 23-25.



## Non-Print Resources (Viewed Electronically)

### Online Database—Encyclopedia

"Title of Article." Name of Encyclopedia. Year. Name of online source. Date  
<URL (Persistent link)>.

*Example:*

"Whale Oil." Encyclopedia Britannica. 2006. Encyclopedia Britannica Online. 23  
August 2006 <<http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9076727>>.

### Online Database—Articles provided through Infohio.org Databases

Last Name, First Name. "Title of Article." Original Print Source Title. Date. Online  
source name. Date accessed <URL link>.

*Example:*

Freeman, Gregory A. "Code Alpha: The President is Coming!" American History.  
October 2006. Academic Search Premier. 6 October 2006  
<<http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail?vid=7&hid=1&sid=13275eeb-239a-4ec6-a998-d2dda6dc9f66%40sessionmgr101>>.

### Internet Website

Last Name, First Name. Title of Website. Date last updated. Author (if given). Name  
of organization that sponsors the site. Date accessed <URL link>.

*Examples:*

Flannery O'Connor Collection. 7 July 2006. Georgia College and State University.  
31 August 2006. <<http://library.gcsu.edu/~sc/foc.html>>.

Walker, Gary. "The Effects of Radiation." Hiroshima Atom Bomb. 15 Mar. 2000. Los  
Alamos Research Facility. 14 Oct. 2008. <<http://www.larf.org/hiro/radeffect.htm>>

### TV / Radio Transcript

"Title of TV / Radio episode or segment." Title of Program. Broadcast date.  
Transcript. Name of Database Used. Date accessed <URL link>.

*Example:*

"Special Edition: The War in Iraq Part II." CNN Special Report. 5 April 2003.  
Transcript. eLibrary. 27 March 2006. <<http://elibrary.bigchalk.com>>.

### Video Documentary

Title of Film. Director's First Name Last Name. Copyright Year. Medium.  
Production Company Name. Edition Date.

*Example:*

Finding Harmony. Kent Williams. 2003. DVD. Zen Buddhist Lecture Series Video.  
2003.

## 6. On-line Tools and Resources for Writing Citations In MLA Format

### [EasyBib.Com](#)

EasyBib.Com is an automated bibliography creator. The user fills in the required information in the separate fields and, with the press of a button, EasyBib creates the citation! Easybib will export the list into Microsoft Word in correct MLA format as a "Works Cited" page. The user must create a free account to login.

### [Middle School MLA Citation Handout](#)

This PDF file is a printable version of two pages earlier in this handbook called "Examples of Common Forms of Sources for Citation."

### [Essential Information Needed for Creating Bibliographic Citations](#)

This handout (PDF Format) is a tool that will help you collect the necessary information for citing each of the common sources.

### [MLA Citation Guide](#)

This PDF file is a condensed overview of MLA style.

### [Citation Data Form](#)

This is a single sheet for collecting citation data for each source. You may print it and use it while doing research.

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## 7. Glossary

**Bibliography**—a listing of sources that a student used to write his/her essay or report.

**Citation**—is the identification of a specific idea or quote taken from a source.

**Direct Quote**—is a quote in which the author uses words from a source exactly as they were written. The words are taken verbatim. A direct quote is indicated by putting the words in quotation marks (“ ”). A direct quote must be cited.

**Indirect Quote**—is a quote in which an author paraphrases, or puts into his/her own words, an idea from a source. An indirect quote must be cited.

**Works Cited**—is the name that MLA gives to a bibliography. It is the last page of an essay or report. It lists all of the sources the student has used in his/her writing.

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