

# The MLA style

As used in:

English (as well as Chicago)



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# Why reference?

You will probably be aware that plagiarism is an important issue and you must avoid it at all costs, but do you know why referencing is so crucial to your essay writing?

References to other sources are useful and beneficial to presenting your argument; don't be scared of using them. However, be selective. Don't just cram your work full of citations in a bid to impress the marker that you've read a massive amount. Your references should be relevant and provide evidence for and against your argument.

For example, you can include a citation to...

- give a source of information (eg tables, statistics, diagrams etc)
- describe or discuss a theory, model or practice from a particular writer
- give weight and/or credibility to your argument
- provide a counter-argument
- provide quotations or definitions in your essay
- paraphrase another person's work, which is not common knowledge.

Additionally, the 'in-text citation' included in the body of your text is there to **DIRECTLY** show the reader where the idea and/or quotation is from. Therefore, include a page number to the footnote.

Basic common elements in a ‘work consulted’ list:

## BOOKS:

Clarke, Alan.	<u>E-Learning Skills</u>	Basingstoke:	Palgrave Macmillan,	2008.
Author's name	Title of book	Place of publication	Name of publisher	Date of publication

## JOURNAL ARTICLES:

Shaw, Peter.	“Plagiary.”	<u>American Scholar</u> ,	51. Summer (1982):	325–337.
Author's name	Title of article	Name of the journal	Volume number and year	Page numbers

## Examples of the MLA style

### Book (one author):

**In-text:** (Neville 42)

**Bibliography:** Neville, Colin. The complete guide to referencing and avoiding plagiarism. Maidenhead: Open University Press, 2007.

### Book (two or more authors):

**In-text:** (Peck & Coyle 110)

**Bibliography:** Peck, John and Coyle, Martin. The student's guide to writing. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.

### Chapter in an edited book:

**In-text:** (White 209)

**Bibliography:** White, Edward. "Student plagiarism as an institutional and social issue." Perspectives on plagiarism and intellectual property in a postmodern world. Eds. Lisa Buranen & Alice Roy. New York: State University of New York Press, 1999. 205-210.

## Journal article

**In-text:** (Ashworth, Bannister and Thorne 191)

**Bibliography:** Ashworth, Peter, Bannister, Philip and Thorne, Pauline “Guilty in whose eyes? University students’ perceptions of cheating and plagiarism in academic work and assessment.” Studies in Higher Education, 22.2, (1997): 187–203.

## Journal article (electronic):

**In-text:** Liddell and Fong state...

**Bibliography:** Liddell, Jean and Fong, Valerie. “Honesty, integrity and plagiarism: the role of student values in prevention.” Plagiary 3. (2008): 1–5. 5 November 2008: <[http://www.plagiary.org/papers\\_and\\_perspectives.htm](http://www.plagiary.org/papers_and_perspectives.htm)>

## Newspaper article (with author):

**In-text:** (Swain 11)

**Bibliography:** Swain, Harriet. “The art of doing an assessed assignment.” Guardian: Education supplement 23 September 2008.

## Newspaper article (with no author):

**In-text:** (Half of Cambridge students cheating 14)

**Bibliography:** “Half of Cambridge students admit cheating.” Daily Telegraph. 31 Oct. 2008.

## Website with author:

**In-text:** As Swain explains...

**Bibliography:** Swain, Harriet. “The art of avoiding plagiarism.” The Guardian. 7 Oct. 2008. 5 November 2008. <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2008/oct/07/students.highereducation>>

## Website with no author:

**In-text:** (Acknowledging your sources)

**Bibliography:** Princeton University. Acknowledging your sources. 5 Nov. 2008: <<http://www.princeton.edu/pr/pub/integrity/pages/acknowledge.html>>

## Secondary referencing

**In-text:** Carroll argued that...(qtd. in Sutherland-Smith 23)

**Bibliography:** Sutherland-Smith, Wendy. Plagiarism, the internet and student learning: improving academic integrity. Abingdon: Routledge: 2008.

## MLA Frequently Asked Questions

### ***How do I use quotations?***

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Use double quotation marks to enclose the direct text. For short quotations (of less than four typed lines), use a brief phrase to introduce the quotation. For example:

**As Neville emphasises, “you should cite all sources and present full details of these in your list of references” (36)**

For longer quotations (of four types lines or more) you use a block quotation, without quotation marks, but clearly indented to indicate these words are not your own. For example:

Neville comments that:

**It can sometimes be difficult, if not impossible, to avoid using some of the author’s original words, particularly those that describe or label phenomena. However, you need to avoid copying out what the author said, word for word. Choose words that you feel give a true impression of the author’s original ideas or action. (36)**

For a summary or paraphrase, you must include an in-text citation to the author and page number. For example:

**Sometimes it is unavoidable you will use a few words that the author used (Neville 36).**

### ***What is the MLA convention for using capital letters?***

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You should capitalise the first words, the last words and all principle words, but not articles or prepositions.

### ***Are in-text citations included in my word count?***

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Yes – this does not mean you should leave out citations where they are appropriate.

### ***What if an author I am referencing has published two or more works in one year?***

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You can either clarify this difference in the text introduction, or include an abbreviated version of the title in the in-text citation:

**In-text:** Carroll, in her book ‘A Handbook for Deterring Plagiarism’, put forward the case for...

OR

(Carroll, Handbook 42)

### ***Should I put a web address in an in-text citation?***

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No! If the website has an author, cite the source as you would anything else (Swain). If there is no author or date given, give the title of the page. For example: (Acknowledging your sources.)

What if I want to use a number of sources in one in-text citation?

If, for example, you are pulling together a number of sources to support your argument, you may want to use a number of sources in one in-text citation. For example:

**As is widely stated in the literature....  
(Carroll 42; Mallon 101; Neville 56)**

They should appear alphabetically, matching the order in which they will appear in your bibliography.

### ***What if I want to cite two different authors who have the same last name?***

You can include their initial to differentiate them: A. Smith 52, B. Smith 104.

### ***What if I want to summarise an author's ideas over a number of different pages?***

You simply include all the relevant different numbers after the author's name. For example: (Carroll, 24, 42, 106)

### ***What abbreviations can I use?***

Abbreviation	Meaning
ch. or chap.	chapter
Ed. Or Eds.	Editor (s)
et al.	and others
n.d.	no date
p.	Page (single)
p.p.	Pages (page range)
ser.	series
supp.	supplement
vol.	volume
Jan. Feb. Mar. Apr. Aug. Sept. Oct. Nov. Dec.	Within the list of word cited, you should abbreviate all months, except May, June and July.

### ***Further information:***

A more comprehensive guide is available on-line at: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/557/01/>

Gibaldi, Joseph. MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers. New York: MLA, 2004

Neville, Colin. The Complete Guide to Referencing and Plagiarism. Maidenhead: OUP, 2007.

## Paraphrasing: some examples

The following is taken from *The Guardian* newspaper:

Is Persaud a narcissist, in other words, or a man so plagued by self-doubt that he doesn't obey the rules of academia because he doesn't think he belongs in it? He claims to have been so busy he became confused. (37)

Williams, Zoe. "Persaud's disorder." The Guardian 20 June, 2008, 37.

**An example of incorrect paraphrasing of this passage could be as follows:**

It could be questioned whether Raj Persaud was either a narcissist or full of self-doubt. Could it be he felt he didn't belong to the world of academia, so didn't have to obey the rules? Could he really have been so busy that he got confused?

**This is incorrect paraphrasing because:**

- Only a few phrases have been changed; this is not sufficient as it is too close to the original.
- The writer does not even give a citation, eg (Williams 37), to the author of the article.

**Correct paraphrasing could be as follows:**

Williams argues that Persaud could be viewed as a man consumed by ego, or alternatively, a writer that felt he didn't belong to the academic community, so there was no need to abide by their conventions. Within the comment piece it is questioned whether overwork could be seen as a defence.

**This is correct paraphrasing because:**

- Proper citation of the author and her ideas have been provided by the in-text citation.
- The writer of the paraphrased passage has written the argument in their own words.



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