

Essentials of the MLA Format

What is the MLA Format?

The MLA Format is a writing style established by the Modern Language Association that governs:

- ◆ The Paper Format
- ◆ Punctuation and Quotations
- ◆ Documentation of Sources and Works Cited

It is used for Research Papers in many classes at Richland, including English, but it is *not* the only Research Paper Format.

Learn more about MLA format by consulting the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*.

Also, you can see examples of the MLA Format for both print and web sources at

<http://www.rlc.dcccd.edu/library/pdfs/ToCite.pdf>.

Paper Format

Always follow your Instructor's instructions!

- ◆ 1 inch margins on all sides
- ◆ Double spaced
- ◆ A header on each page in the upper right-hand corner, ½ inch below the top edge, that includes:
 - Your last name
 - The page number

The First Page

- ◆ No Title Page (unless your instructor requests a title page)
- ◆ In the upper left-hand corner:
 - Your Name
 - Your Instructor's name
 - The Course
 - The Date
- ◆ Center the title of your paper in the next line

Your first page should look like this: (from the webpage at <http://ollie.dcccd.edu/library/Module5/Sample.htm>)

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                                                                 Doe 1

John Doe
Professor Smith
English 1302
1 May 1996

                Just Sheer Naked Magic

        What weighs about three pounds but has more
parts than there are stars in the Milky Way galaxy
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Works Cited Page

- ◆ Begin on a new sheet of paper
- ◆ Title it Works Cited
- ◆ Arrange entries in Alphabetical order
- ◆ Begin each entry at the left margin and indent all lines of the entry (except the 1st) by ½ inch. This is called Hanging Indentation.

Your Works Cited Page should look like this:

Thunderduck 4

Works Cited

- Agnew, Bruce. "The Potential Effects of Global Warming on Human Health." *Global Warming*. Ed. Shasta Gaughen. Contemporary Issues Companion Ser. San Diego: Greenhaven, 2005. N. pag. Rpt. of "Planet Earth Getting Too Hot for Health." *Bulletin of the World Health Organization* 79 (Nov. 2001): 1090. *Opposing Viewpoints Resource Center*. Web. 27 Aug. 2009.
- Calvin, Carlye. "No Doubt Human Activity Is Affecting Global Climate, Top Scientists Conclude." *NCAR News Release*. National Science Foundation, 4 Dec. 2003. Web. 27 Aug. 2009.
- Choo, Kristin. "Feeling THE HEAT." *ABA Journal* 92.7 (2006): 28-35. *Academic Search Complete*. Web. 27 Aug. 2009.
- Cooper, Mary H. "Global Warming Update." *CQ Researcher* 1 Nov. 1996: 1-24. Print.
- "Early Warning Sings: Spreading Disease." *Global Warming*. Union of Concerned Scientists, n.d. Web. 27 Aug. 2009.

Citing your Sources

Whenever you use somebody else's idea in your Research Paper you must:

1. Acknowledge the source in the text of your paper (Parenthetical Documentation)
2. Give the complete source citation in your works cited list

Parenthetical Citation (also called In-text Documentation)

Include the last name of the author (or the first word of the title) and the page number. If you don't have a page number, just put the author or title.

Examples:

David Considine sees the conflict as chalk boards and talking by teachers versus an environment of electronic marvels (635).

What fills the space occupied by only three pints of milk yet includes components that, laid end to end, would stretch several hundred thousand miles (Diagram 19)?

Works Cited

See the handouts *Writing Citations for Print Materials* and *Writing Citations for Electronic Sources*.

Quotations

When you use somebody else's words, you are quoting them. Short quotes must be inside quotation marks.

Example:

"The marriage contract," according to Dr. Clifford Sager (48), "becomes a therapeutic and educational concept that tries to spell out the vague and intuitive."

A quotation longer than 4 lines must be put into a Block Quotations.

Block Quotations:

- ◆ NO quotation marks
- ◆ Start on a new line
- ◆ Indent 1 inch from margin