MLA Basics:
Formatting, Documentation, and Works Cited


*Note:* Always refer to instructor- or assignment-specific instructions, which may differ from this summary or the complete guidelines handbook, especially inclusion of URLs. See the end of this guide for a sample paper in MLA format.

**Formatting your paper:**
- Use Times New Roman or similar font (12-point) throughout the text.
- All margins are one inch.
- Double-space the entire paper.

**Title information**
- A research paper does not need a title page.
- Give your name, professor’s name, class number, and date at the top of page one, flush left. See example at the end of the handout. Note: Some professors prefer this to be single-spaced.
- Center the title on the line below the date. Capitalize the first letters of each important word in the title.
- Do not underline, bold, or italicize the title, put in quotation marks, or use a different font size.

**Pagination**
- Paginate ½ inch from the top of the page, flush right.
- Create a header with your name, a space, and the page number.

**Citing sources in-text**
- You MUST give credit when you quote or paraphrase another work.
- To give credit for ideas or words from a source, give the author’s last name and a page reference in the text, after the quote or paraphrase.
- All references must clearly point to a specific source identified in your Works Cited page.

**One author**

Preliminary research shows that if a thousand monkeys type at a thousand typewriters, one will actually produce a great novel (Smith 131).

*OR*

In his research, Smith (131) discovered that a thousand …

**Two or three authors**

“A thousand moneys will never replace one good writer” (Smith and Jones 434).

*OR*

According to Smith and Jones (434-435), “a thousand moneys will never replace one good writer”.

**No author:** Use the title, shortened or in full.

Example: (The Sound and the Fury 2).

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**Need help citing sources? Ask a Librarian!**

In person @ the reference desk  
Email: reference@dbq.edu  
Call: 589-3770  
IM (AIM or Yahoo): udreference

Revised Sept. 2010
Works Cited page

- The Works Cited page is a list of the works you used to write your paper.
- Center the words Works Cited an inch from the top of the page.
- Double-space the entire page(s).
- Alphabetize entries alphabetically by authors’ last names. If no author, alphabetize by title.
- The first line of each entry should be flush with the left margin. Subsequent lines are indented one-half inch (a single tab). In Microsoft Word 2007, highlight the reference list. In the Paragraph box of the Home tab, click the arrow icon in the bottom right corner. Under Indentation/Special, Choose Hanging.

Books in the Works Cited page: Author’s name. *Title of Book*. Place of publication: Publisher, date. Medium of publication.

- **Book, one author:**


- **Book, two authors:**


Articles in the Works Cited page: Author’s name. “Title of the Article.” *Journal Title* vol.issue (year): pages. Medium of publication.

- **Scholarly journal articles:**


- **Journal, magazine, or newspaper articles found through a database (Academic Search Premier, LexisNexis, etc.):**


Films in the Works Cited page: *Movie Title*. Director. Distributor, Year of release. Medium of publication.

- **DVD**


Online Video in the Works Cited page*: *Name of clip. Website.* Publisher or poster, date uploaded. Medium of publication. Date viewed. <URL>.

- **YouTube**


Web pages in the Works Cited page*: Author’s name. “Title of the Work.” *Title of Website*. Sponsoring organization. Date of publication or latest update. Medium of Publication. Date of access. <URL>.


Web Site Sponsored by Newspapers and Magazines


*Check with your professor about including the URL. This is left to the discretion of the professor.

For more assistance, see Documenting Sources in MLA Style, 2009 Update:

[http://image.mail.bfwpub.com/lib/feed1c737d6c03/m/1/Hacker_MLA2009Update.pdf](http://image.mail.bfwpub.com/lib/feed1c737d6c03/m/1/Hacker_MLA2009Update.pdf)
An Examination of the Writing Skills of a Thousand Monkeys

Could a thousand monkeys typing at a thousand computers really write the great American novel? In a recent study, Smith proved that this was possible (131), although other research has found contradictory evidence (Jenkins, Harley, and Smith 54).