

# Formatting a Paper in M.L.A. Style

**GENERAL GUIDELINES:**

- Type or word-process paper on white, 8 ½ by 11-inch paper.
- Margins should be one-inch at top, bottom, and both sides of the paper.
- Paragraph indentation should be ½ inch (five spaces) from the margin.
- Set-off quotations should be one inch (ten spaces) from the margin.
- Paper should be double-spaced throughout—including quotations, notes, and the list of works cited.
- Unless instructed otherwise, use 12-point Times New Roman as your font choice.

**HEADING AND TITLE:**

**SAMPLE FIRST PAGE**

\*\*\*\*\*

(header w/ name and page) **Schuebel 1**

**Dane Schuebel** (your name)

**Mrs. Krizan** (your instructor’s name)

**English Essentials 4<sup>th</sup> Hour** (the course paper is being submitted for)

**25 November 2003** (the paper’s due date)

**Cerberus, the Three-Headed Dog** (the paper’s title)

**Monsters and myths have fascinated mankind since the dawn of time. The ancient Greeks, in fact, even had myths that told of monstrous pets! One of the best-remembered of these Greek monster-pets was the three-headed** (paper’s text)

\*\*\*\*\*

- Page numbers for an M.L.A research paper are numbered consecutively beginning ½” down and flush with the right margin (select right justification). A running header which includes the author’s last name and the page number protects against misplaced or out-of order pages. In some cases, the paper’s author will need to included a first initial as well as the last name; this is only necessary if there is a possibility that two students with the same last name could get their papers mistaken for each other’s work.

- An M.L.A research paper does not need a cover (title) page. Begin 1” from the top of the first page and select left justification. Enter the heading information as shown above. Double-space between lines.
- The title for an M.L.A research paper should be centered. DO NOT underline, enclose in quotation marks, or all-capitalize the title. Like the rest of the M.L.A., only double spacing is necessary. The point size of the title will either be two-point larger than the rest of the paper (14-point is standard) or kept consistent (12-point) with the rest of the paper’s text.

**DOCUMENTING YOUR RESEARCH:**

- As you gather your information, it is imperative that you take notes that record the information necessary for citing the sources that deserve credit. Failure to properly attribute another’s work is plagiarism, a serious academic offense.
- A “working bibliography” is a list of EVERY research source you used as you explored the topic.
- M.L.A. format does not require you to list all sources in the final paper. Your paper’s draft will need to include only those sources—including pictures—that were actually used in the finished paper. This abbreviated list is called the “works cited” page and is the final page of your research.
- The purpose of the works cited list is to allow others to locate the information that you used. It is common for researchers to begin any research-related project by studying the past work in that area of study. Then a researcher can choose what he/she considers relevant from previous research and can build his/her new insights on the topic on the foundational ideas of his/her predecessors. This systematic reworking and expansion of ideas allows for a continuing development of human knowledge.

**SAMPLE WORKS CITED PAGE**

\*\*\*\*\*

(header w/ name and page) Schuebel 12

**Works Cited**

**Evslin, Bernard. Cerberus. New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1987.**

Author’s last name, Author’s first name. Title of the book. Place of publication:  
Publishing company, year of publication.

\*\*\*\*\*

- The entry above is for a book. There are several other media formats that may be followed. (SEE BELOW FOR THE MOST COMMON FORMATS. If there is a format you have used that is not on the list, it can be easily documented by getting a copy of the M.L.A. Handbook for Writers of Research Pare: Fifth Edition from the IMC or an English teacher.)
- Like the other pages, the works cited page begins 1/2” down and flush with the right right-justified running header which includes the author’s last name and the page number.

- The title for the works cited page should be centered. DO NOT underline, enclose in quotation marks, or all-capitalize the title.
- The works cited page, like the rest of an M.L.A.-styled paper, is double spaced.
- The point size of the title (Works Cited) will either be two-points larger than the rest of the paper (14-point is standard) or kept consistent (12-point) with the rest of the paper's text at your instructor's discretion.
- All entries on this page are listed in alphabetical order.
- To format each entry, Select FORMAT from your tool bar. Choose PARAGRAPH. Under "Paragraph Indentation," select SPECIAL. You will have a pull-down menu here that allows you to pick HANGING INDENT. This is what you should use for each entry on the works cited page.

### THE MOST COMMON CITATION FORMATS:

#### *Book:*

- 1.) Author's full name (last name first)
- 2.) Full title (including any subtitle)
- 3.) Edition (if the book is a second or later edition)
- 4.) Number of the volume and the total number of volume (if the book is a multivolume work)
- 5.) City of publication
- 6.) Shortened form of the publisher's name
- 7.) Year of publication

For example:

Budden, Julian. The Operas of Verdi. Rev. ed. 3 vols. Oxford: Clarendon, 1992.

#### *Newspaper or Magazine Article:*

- 1.) Author's name
- 2.) Title of the article
- 3.) Title of the periodical
- 4.) Date of publication
- 5.) Inclusive page numbers of the article

For example:

Shea, Christopher. "The Limits of Free Speech." Chronicle of Higher Education 1 Dec. 1993: A37-38.

#### *Internet Source:*

- 1.) Author's name
- 2.) Title of the document
- 3.) Title of the scholarly project, database, periodical, or professional or personal site
- 4.) Name of the editor of the scholarly project or database
- 5.) Date of electronic publication or last update
- 6.) Name of the institution or organization sponsoring or associated with the site
- 7.) Date when you accessed the source
- 8.) Network address, or URL

For example:

Oakley, John H. "The Achilles Painter." The Perseus Project. Ed. Gregory Crane. Mar 1997. Tufts U. 14 May 1998 <[http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/Secondary/Painter\\_Essays?Achilles\\_toc.html](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/Secondary/Painter_Essays?Achilles_toc.html)>.

### ***A Book by Two or More Authors:***

To cite a book by two or three authors, give their names in the same order as on the title pages—not necessarily in alphabetical order. Reverse only the name of the first author, add a comma, and give the other name or names in normal form. Place a period after the last name. Even if the authors have the same last name, state each name in full. If the persons listed on the title page are editors, translators, or compilers, place a comma after the final name and add the appropriate abbreviation.

For example:

Eggins, Suzanne, and Diane Slade. Analyzing Casual Conversation. London: Cassel, 1997.

### ***An Anonymous Article:***

If no author's name is given for the article you are citing, begin the entry with the title. Ignore any initial A, An, or The when you alphabetize the entry.

For example:

"The Decade of the Spy." Newsweek 7 Mar. 1994: 26-27.

### ***An Article in a Reference Book:***

Treat an encyclopedia article or a dictionary entry as you would a piece in a collection, but do not cite the editor of the reference work. If the article is signed, give the author first. If it is unsigned, give the title first. If the encyclopedia or dictionary arranges articles alphabetically, you may omit volume and page numbers. When citing familiar reference books, especially those that frequently appear in new editions, do not give full publication information. For such works, list only the edition and the year of publication.

For example:

"Azimuthal Equidistant Projection." Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary. 10<sup>th</sup> ed. 1993.

"Ginsburg, Ruth Bader." Who's Who in America. 52<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1998.

### ***A Work in an Anthology:***

If you are citing an essay, a short story, a poem, or another work that appears within an anthology or some other book collection, you need to add the following information to the *basic book entry*.

Author, title, and (if relevant) translator of the part of the book being cited. Begin the entry with the author and title of the piece, normally enclosing the title in quotation marks.

Allende, Isabel. "Toad's Mouth."

But if the work was originally published independently, underline its title instead. Follow the title of the part of the book with a period. If the anthology contains the work of more than one translator, give the translator's name next, preceded by the abbreviation Trans. ("Translated by").

Allende, Isabel. "Toad's Mouth." Trans. Margaret Sayers Peden.

Then state the title of the anthology (underlined).

Allende, Isabel. "Toad's Mouth." Trans. Margaret Sayers Peden. A Hammock beneath the Mangoes: Stories from Latin America.

*Name the editor, translator, or compiler of the book being cited.* If all the works in the collection have the same translator or if the book has an editor or compiler, write Trans., Ed., or Comp. as appropriate, after the book title and give that person's name.

Allende, Isabel. "Toad's Mouth." Trans. Margaret Sayers Peden. A Hammock beneath the Mangoes: Stories from Latin America. Ed. Thomas Colchie.

If someone served in more than one role—say, as editor and translator—state the roles in the order in which they appear on the title page. Similarly, if more than one person served in different roles, give the names in the order in which they appear on the title page.

*Page numbers of the cited piece.* Give the inclusive page numbers of the piece you are citing. Be sure to provide the page numbers for the entire piece, not just for the material you used. Inclusive page numbers, usually without any identifying abbreviation, follow the publication date and a period.

Allende, Isabel. "Toad's Mouth." Trans. Margaret Sayers Peden. A Hammock beneath the Mangoes: Stories from Latin America. Ed. Thomas Colchie. New York: Plume, 1992. 83-88.