Citing Sources in the Text
Modern Language Association
(MLA) Style

There are many different guidelines for formatting papers. Your professor may require you to follow a particular style for your assignments. Using a style guide lends consistency to how you show where your research came from.

The MLA citation style uses parenthetical in-text references to document sources used in the paper. In this style, sources are briefly identified within the text of a research pa-per, using the author's surname and the page number of the specific material being used in the paper. At the end of your paper, you are to include a detailed list of all the sources (called a **Works Cited** list). References in your paper must point clearly to the corresponding entries in your Works Cited list.

The following examples briefly illustrate how to cite sources using the MLA style. For further clarification and examples, please consult the <u>MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers</u>, 7th ed. (LB 2369 G53 2009 SMREF).

For tips on citing electronic sources, consult the other side of this page. See our other handout on how to prepare your Works Cited list in MLA style. Note: the numbers in square brackets refer to the rule number found in the manual.

Examples of parenthetical documentation

<u>One author</u> [6.1 and 6.3]
Give the author and page number in parentheses when citing a source. If your sentence explains who the author is and it is clear which work you are referring to, then you only need to give the page number in parentheses.

Example:
Leisure time should not be considered time wasted or an unproductive pursuit (Gower 2).
OR:
As Susan Gower argues, leisure time should not be considered unproductive or wasted time (2).

<u>Two or three authors</u> [6.2]
Include each author's surname in the first and all subsequent citations to a source with two or three authors.

Example:
A recent study shows that many people plan their leisure time in advance in order to ensure that they allow time for it in their hectic schedules (Jackson and Mackaray 206).

<u>More than three authors</u> [6.2]
If there are more than three authors, follow the format of the Works Cited list entry: either give all the last names, or give only the name of the first author, followed by *et al.*

Example:
A recent study supports the notion that people schedule specific leisure time into their work week (Smith et al. 35).

<u>Works listed by title (i.e., no identified author)</u> [6.4.4]
For a source where there is no apparent author, cite by the full or shortened title of the work. Put article titles in quotation marks and italicize book titles.

Example:
Those surveyed believed that all of the activities they chose as part of their leisure time were entertaining ("Fun to be Had" 14).

Citing Quoted Material

<u>Short quotation (no more than 4 lines in your essay)</u> [3.7.2, 6.3]
If you are directly quoting a short passage from a source, place the quoted words in double quotation marks, with a citation at the end, inside a period to end the sentence. (See **[6.4.8]** for examples of citations to literary and religious works.)

Example:
Theories can shed light on how we view our leisure time activities: "No matter what we do, there is never enough time to accomplish everything on our 'to-do' lists" (Carlaw 24).

Citing Quoted Material continued

Block quotations (more than 4 lines in your essay) [3.7.2; 6.3]

For a quotation that occupies more than 4 lines of text in your paper, indent one inch from the left margin and double space. Block quotations do not require double quotation marks. Place the citation outside the final punctuation of the quoted passage. Use ellipsis points (three spaced periods) to indicate when you have omitted words, phrases, or sentences within a quotation. Be sure to add a fourth period if the omission includes the end of a sentence in the original text. See **[3.7.5]** for more instructions on ellipses.

Example:

Ralithan theorizes the causes behind our perceived loss of free time in the digital world:

> Technology has undoubtedly increased the speed at which we can complete tasks. . . . However, it seems that just as we complete one assignment, another is added to our list. This speed has not liberated our schedules, but rather we have filled them with ever more work as our technological capabilities have grown. Yes, we can indeed complete twice the work in half the time, but we are not any more at leisure than we were before. (39)

Citing indirect sources [6.4.7]

While it is always best to take material from the original source, not at second-hand, sometimes you may need to use indirect sources. If you quote or paraphrase from a quotation in your source, use *qtd. in* ("quoted in") before the citation of the source you have used.

Example:

Even varsity athlete Joe MacDonald acknowledges that making time for relaxation, no matter how beneficial, "is pretty well impossible until exams are over for another term" (qtd. in Winters 165).

Page Numbers and Non-Print Media

Citing a source with page numbers [6.4.1]

Whenever possible, cite by an author's surname and the page number of the text. When printing electronic documents, be sure to cite according to the original document's page numbers and not to any page numbers added by your browser at the bottom of each page.

Citing a source without page numbers [6.2; 6.4.1; 6.4.2]

When citing a source that has no numbering of any kind (e.g., no page, paragraph or section numbers), you must cite the entire source. Some electronic publications (e.g., web pages) and non-print sources such as films, performances and works of art fall into this category. It is acceptable to cite according to paragraphs (with "par." or "pars.") or sections (with "sec.") only if these are numbered as such in the original document. Do not create your own page numbers, paragraph numbers, section numbers, or scene numbers, etc.

Examples:

1. [source without page numbers or paragraph numbers]: Other critics, however, argue that a "'wikidentity' becomes a . . . collaborative process that changes according to purpose, context, and form" (Mallan).

2. [source without page numbers, but with paragraph numbers]: The period's literature reveals that the concept of the island nation is also "implicated in histories of invasion and of translation" (Griffiths, par. 12).

3. [non-print source]: The director demonstrates Romeo's immediate remorse by blending images of a slain Tybalt with Rio de Janeiro's statue of Christ the Redeemer, now an unfinished monument in Shakespeare's Verona (Luhrmann).

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One University. One World. Yours.