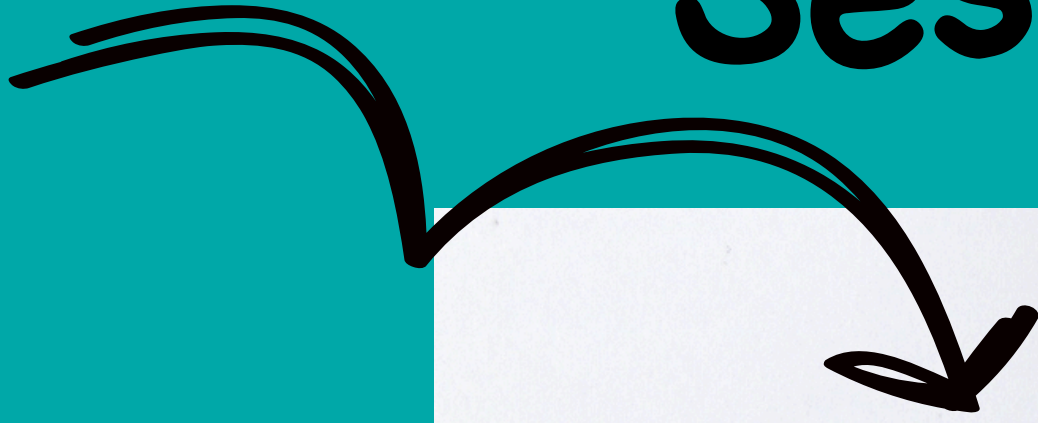# Introduction to MLA Format
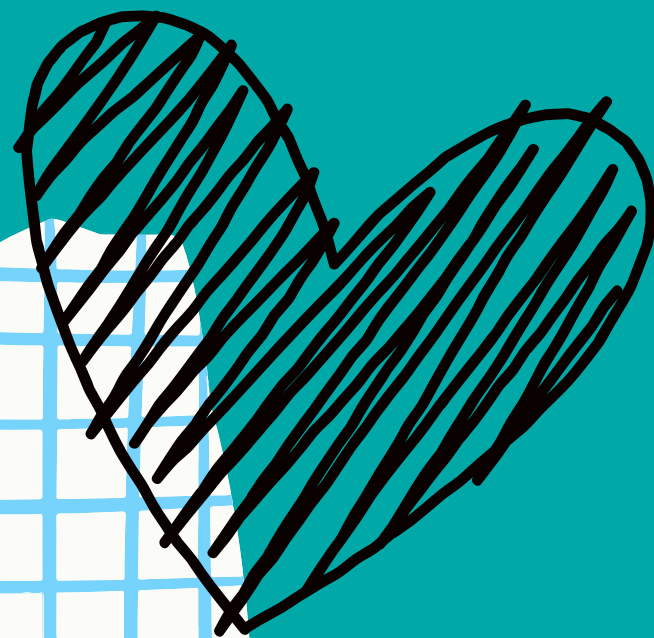
ULM Reference

Session Overview

1. What is MLA Format/How to Use it?
2. GuidelinesQuotes/Paraphrasing
3. In-Text Citations/Works Cited
4. Questions

What is MLA Format?

Defined

MLA Format is a system of documenting sources that was authored by the Modern Language Association.

Who Uses it?

This format is used for documenting sources in disciplines such as English and the Humanities.

Why Do We Use MLA?

MLA Format Users

Academic writers write for their peers and write in academic journals, books, novels, etc.

Give Authors Credit

MLA allows you as a writer to give credit to authors for using their work or ideas in your research paper.

Standardized Formatting

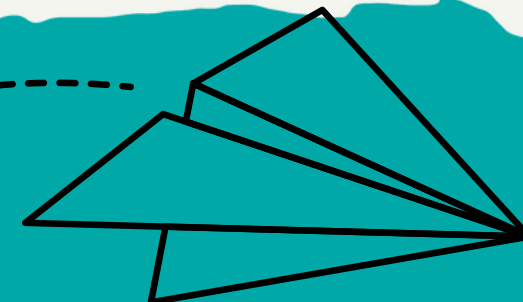Use MLA to format sources in research papers in a standardized way.

So You Will Use It To....

Format Your Paper

- Margins
- Spacing
- Font selection and size
- Headers/Footers

Guide the Style of Your Paper

- Quotations
- In-text citations
- Voice

General Guidelines

- 1 inch margin on all pages.

- Double space each line.

- Use 12 point font for the font size.

- Use a professional font type such as Times New Roman.

General Guidelines

Page Headers

- Include page numbers and author's name.
- May be omitted from first page.

Spacing

Only one space following ending punctuation of sentences.

Using Indents

Indent first sentence of paragraphs ½ inch from margin – MLA recommends simply using the Tab key (versus spacing over manually).

Refining Prose

Use active voice whenever possible.

General Guidelines

Cover Pages

MLA papers don't typically need cover pages – so unless your professor asks for one, it's not necessary to create one

Headings

MLA papers do need a heading in which you list your name, your professor's name, the class, and the date – this is typically double-spaced

Guidelines First Page

- Format your papers

Your name, the course number, the professor's name, and the date of the paper are double-spaced in 12-point, Times New Roman font. Dates in MLA are written in this order: day, month, and year.

Elizabeth L. Angeli

Professor Patricia Sullivan

English 624

12 February 2012

Green text boxes contain explanations of MLA style guidelines.

Blue boxes contain directions for writing and citing in MLA style.

Page numbers begin on and with page 1. Type your name next to the page number so that it appears on every page.

Toward a Recovery of Nineteenth Century Farming Handbooks

Titles are centered and written in 12-point, Times New Roman font. The title is not bolded, underlined, or italicized.
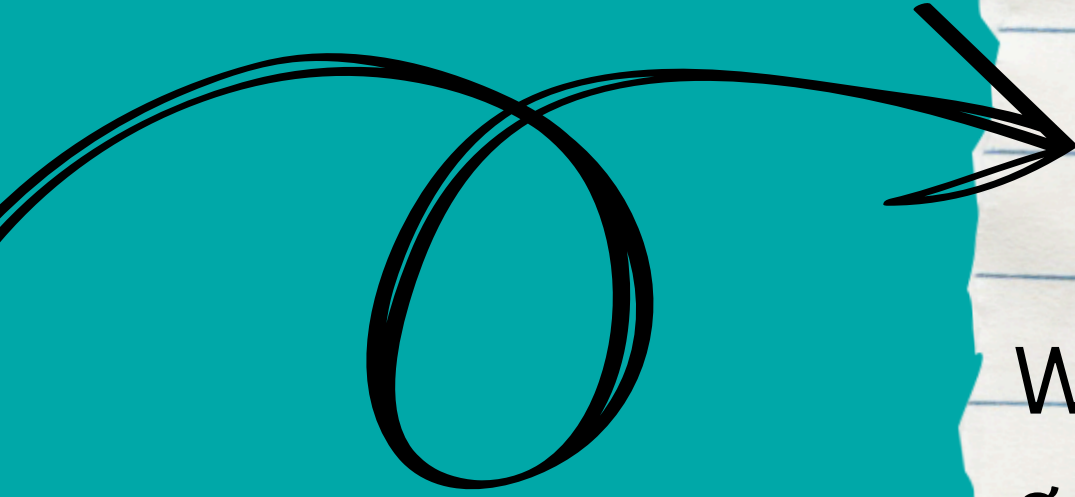
While researching texts written about nineteenth century farming, I found a few

authors who published books about the literature of nineteenth century farming,

particularly agricultural journals, newspapers, pamphlets, and brochures. These authors

The introduc-

often placed the farming literature they were studying into an historical context by
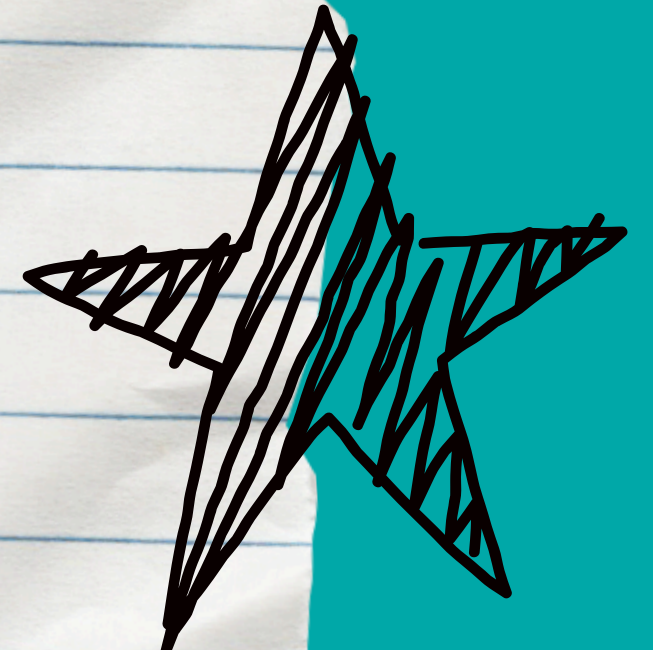
Guidelines First Page

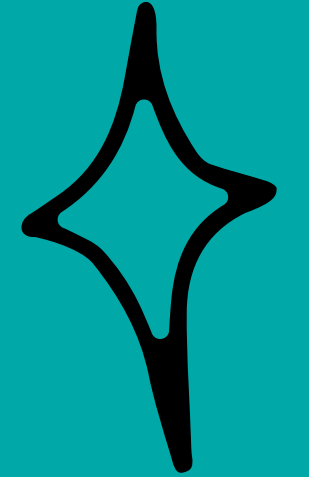Examples of titles within titles:

- The Function of Time in Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*.

- Sexuality in Faulkner's "A Rose for Emily".

- Race and Race Relations in Baraka's "Dutchman".

Quotations/ Paraphrasing

When you are writing a research paper, you are going to have to work other people's research into your own, in order to:

- Demonstrate your point of view
- Inform the audience of what research has been done on the topic
- Show your audience how your point of view fits into what's been done.

Quotations/Paraphrasing

- There are two ways of incorporating information into your paper – quoting and paraphrasing

- MLA has guidelines for how to use quotations and paraphrasing in your writing

- It's important to understand how these two methods differ
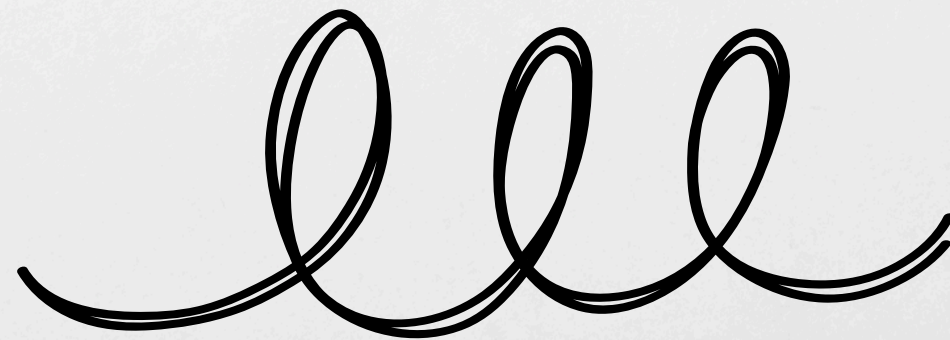
Quotations

- Quotations are the actual words taken from the text, word for word, as they appear in the text itself.

- Quotations can be high impact – the words of an expert that support your argument carry a lot of weight.

Quotations and Quoting

- Including too many quotations is lazy; don't let the research do all the work!
- Too many quotes can look like plagiarism- don't use someone else's ideas as your argument rather than as support.
- *You* are supposed to do the work; quotes are just tools with which to do the work.
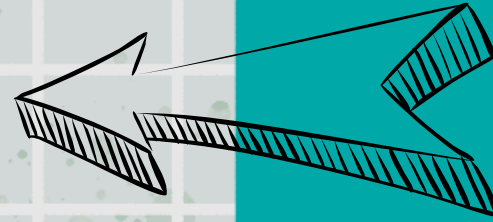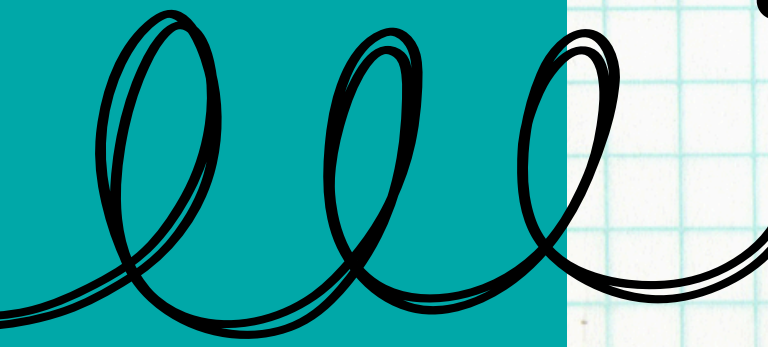
Quotations and Quoting

There are two ways to quote:
- 1st way- In direct quotations, use the author's name as part of the sentence.

Examples:
- Dickens said, "it was the best of times, it was the worst of times."
- According to Dickens, "it was the best of times, it was the worst of times."

Quotations and Quoting

- Direct quotations do not allow for change- a direct quotation is, word for word, identical to the way it appears in the original text.

- The original text MUST HAVE QUOTATION MARKS around it.

Examples:
- Dickens said, "it was the best of times, it was the worst of times" (62).
- According to Dickens, "it was the best of times, it was the worst of times" (62).

The quotation marks show where the author's words begin and end, distinguishing them from YOUR writing.
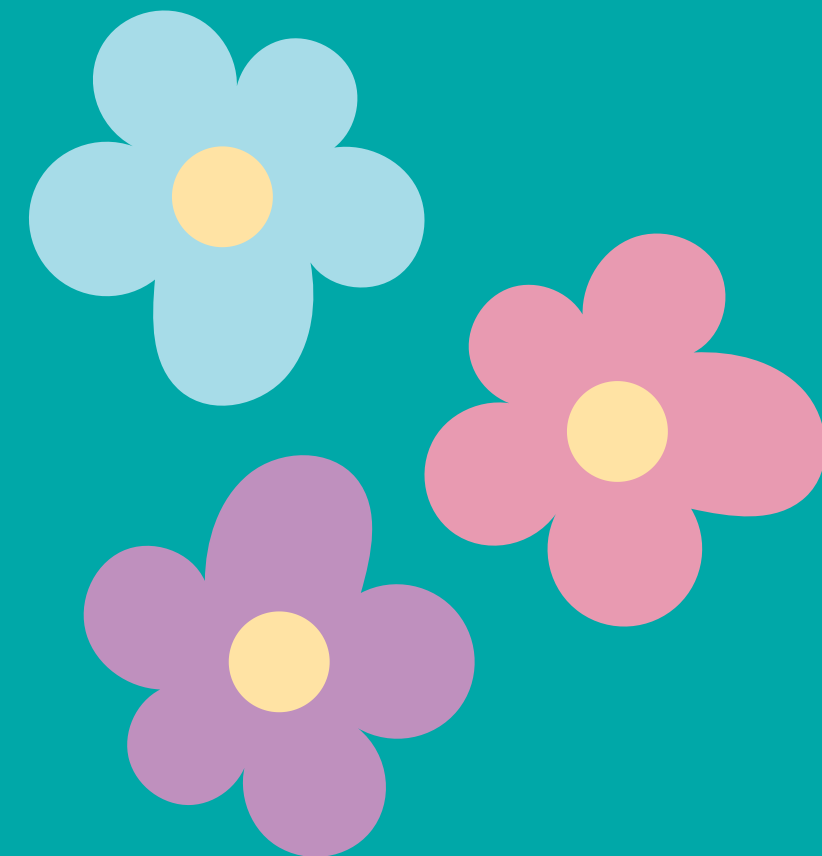
Quotes and Quotations

- 2nd way: indirect quotation - DO NOT include the author or author's names in the sentence.

- But you still have to use quotation marks, and you can't make changes to the text.

Not the author's name

Some researchers note that "children are totally insensitive to their parents' shyness" (Zimbardo 62).

Author's name is here

Paraphrasing

- A second way you can incorporate information into your writing is to paraphrase.

- Paraphrasing is the act of taking information from a text and either
  - Summarizing it – taking a whole paragraph's worth of information and boiling it down to a few sentences, or
  - Rewording it - demonstrating your understanding of the information by putting it into your own words, in such a way that is significantly different from the original text.

Paraphrasing Summary

ORIGINAL TEXT-- TOO LONG TO QUOTE

Children are totally insensitive to their parents' shyness; it is the rare child who labels a parent shy [...] This is understandable, since parents are in positions of control and authority in their homes and may not reveal their shy side to their children. Also, since shyness is viewed as undesirable by many children, it may be threatening to think of parents in these terms. At this young age, the parent is still idealized as all-knowing and all-powerful - - not dumb, ugly, or weak.

Zimbardo, Philip G. *Shyness: What It Is, What to Do About It*. Perseus Books, 1977.

Paraphrasing Summary

SUMMARY OF ORIGINAL TEXT – EASIER TO USE

Because parents are authority figures in the home, children are not immediately aware of their parents' shyness; it may be too scary for the children to think of their parents in negative terms.
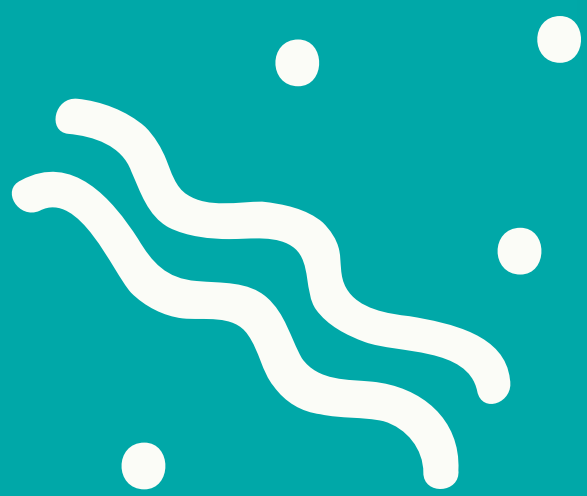
Paraphrasing: Rewording

In Your Own Words

If you aren't concerned with the length of a section, or you feel you can't boil the information down without losing something important, you have the option of putting the information in your own words.

Avoid Plagiarism

Make sure the info really is in your own words – if it's too close to the original text, it could be considered plagiarism.

Plagiarism: Rewording

Paraphrasing Result

The result of paraphrasing a paragraph may produce a paragraph of equal length, and that's okay.

In Your Own Words

What's important is that the information is actually in your own words.

Give Authors Credit!

Give authors credit for their ideas in the text of your papers and in the Works Cited section of your paper.

Paraphrasing: Rewording

ORIGINAL TEXT-- TOO LONG TO QUOTE

Children are totally insensitive to their parents' shyness; it is the rare child who labels a parent shy [...] This is understandable, since parents are in positions of control and authority in their homes and may not reveal their shy side to their children. Also, since shyness is viewed as undesirable by many children, it may be threatening to think of parents in these terms. At this young age, the parent is still idealized as all-knowing and all-powerful - - not dumb, ugly, or weak.

Zimbardo, Philip G. *Shyness: What It Is, What to Do About It*. Perseus Books, 1977.

Paraphrasing: Rewording

REWORDED/PARAPHRASE

A parent's shyness is not often perceived by a child, and rarely would a child describe a parent as being shy. Because parents are authority figures in the home, that shyness may not manifest, nor may the parent behave bashfully in front of the child. Moreover, shyness is often valued in a negative fashion by children, so to think of a parent in this fashion can be unsettling to the child. The child idolizes the parent at this stage of development.

Zimbardo, Philip G. *Shyness: What It Is, What to Do About It*. Perseus Books, 1977.

Quoting versus Paraphrasing: When?

- Both of these methods of using resources in your writing have many benefits – so how do you decide when to use which?

- Remember: quoting is usually high impact – it's good for *emphasis*, when you think taking the words out of the horse's mouth is the best means of persuasion.

- Quoting is like a punch: your opponent CANNOT ignore it!
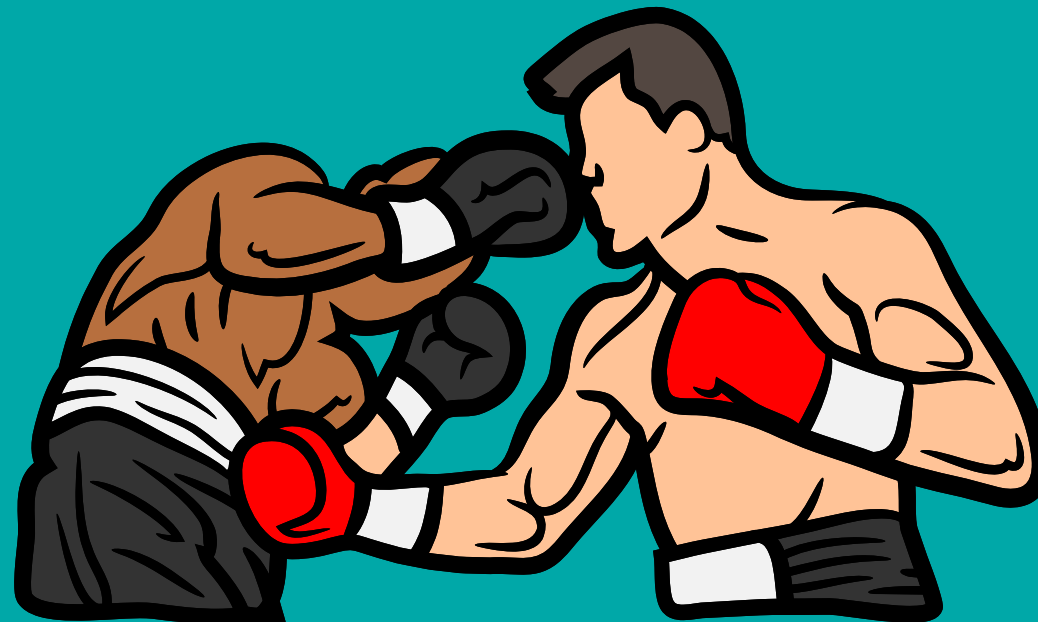
Quoting versus Paraphrasing: When?

- Paraphrasing is better for condensing a lot of information into a more manageable amount (like we saw in the summary example).

- It's also very useful when the information is very technical or the author's style is very dry and inaccessible – you can make the info more easy to consume for your audience.

- You can also combine authors' ideas that are similar into one passage through paraphrasing.

Let's say you have two authors who say similar things on a topic.

Zimbardo writes:

Children are totally insensitive to their parents' shyness.

Smith writes:

Children are usually unaware when their parents are shy.

Paraphrasing: More on Combining Ideas

These two passages of information can be blended together (mmmm....info smoothie) to keep your information concise and to prevent unnecessary repetition. So, a paraphrase of their information blended together would look like this:

Some researchers note that children are often ignorant with regard to their parents' shyness (Zimbardo 62; Smith 45).

Incorporating Info Into Your Own Writing

- It's NOT recommended that you just put quotations in your writing without some kind of preamble or introduction or explanation

- A good rule of thumb is that every sentence in your writing should contain something you wrote, no matter what

- Transitions are important, particularly between your writing and thoughts, and the quotations
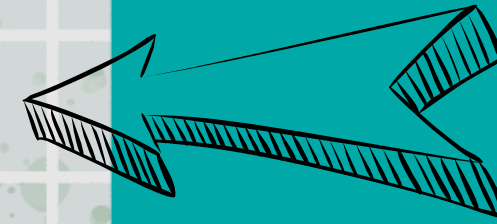
Incorporating Quotations Into Your Writing

And it's not necessary for every quotation to end the sentence – let's look at the variants on the Zimbardo quotations again.

Zimbardo notes that "children are totally insensitive to their parents' shyness" (62), though some authors disagree.

Some researchers note that "children are totally insensitive to their parents' shyness" (Zimbardo 62), but other authors disagree.

In-text Citations

Give Authors Credit

When using someone else's work in your own – whether you're quoting or paraphrasing – you'll need to give credit where credit is due, or document what isn't your work.

Use In-text Citations

This is where in-text citations come in – you've seen a few already, but we'll look at them more closely now.

In-text Citations

- These are used to cite resources within the text.

- Every in-text citation should have a corresponding citation in the Works Cited section.

- If you quote something directly from a text, then the citation will include the author or authors' names and page number.
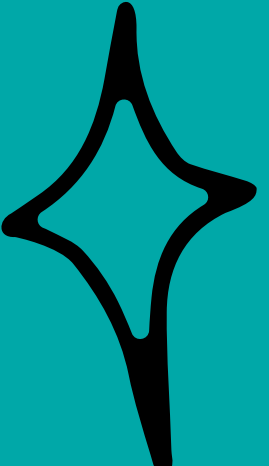
In-text Citations

Direct quotation, author named in a sentence.

According to Jones, "Students often had difficulty using APA style, especially when it was their first time" (199).

In-text Citations, Continued

Direct quotation, author <u>not</u> named in sentence.

According to some researchers, "Students often had difficulty using APA style, especially when it was their first time" (Jones 199).

Please note: the period doesn't come until AFTER the in-text citation. The sentence isn't complete until the citation is complete.

In-text Citations, Continued

- Long quotations (more than four lines) should be set apart (that is, not within the text, but in a block quotation)

- Omit quotation marks

- Indent 1 inch (2 hits to the Tab key) from margin

- Maintain double spacing

- Same rules apply for in-text citation, EXCEPT that the quotation will end with its punctuation, then followed by the citation

In-text Citations, Continued

Long direct quotation

One study found the following:

> Students often had difficulty using APA style, especially when it was their first time citing sources. This difficulty could be attributed to the fact that many students failed to purchase a style manual or to ask their teacher for help. (Jones 199)

In-text Citations, Continued

- Even if you're paraphrasing something, you'll still need to identify the original source

- In-text citations work for paraphrasing, too

- The in-text citations will include the author's name and page numbers, if available; remember, if the author is unknown, use an abbreviated version of the title

In-text Citations, Continued

Paraphrasing in-text citations

According to Jones, APA style is a difficult citation format for first-time learners (199).

APA style is a difficult citation format for first-time learners (Jones 199).

MLA uses an author-page format in in-text citations ("MLA In-Text Citations").

Works Cited

- The Works Cited page lists the resources you used in your paper – this is where you document those sources

- Remember: if you have an in-text citation, you will have a corresponding bibliographic citation in your references

- References are double-spaced, too

Works Cited, Continued

- On the Works Cited page: center the title "Works Cited" (without quotation marks) at the top of the page

- All lines following the first line of the citation will be indented a one half-inch from the margin (also known as a hanging indent)

- Italicize titles of long works, like books or journal titles

- Put quotation marks around the titles of short works, like essays or articles

Works Cited, Continued

Author names are inverted; that is, last name first, first name last

In resources with more than one author, all other authors' names are first name first, last name last

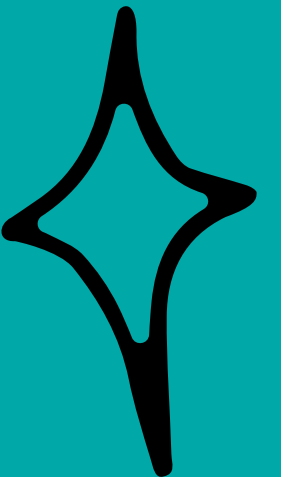If a source does not have an author, the citation will be alphabetized based on title
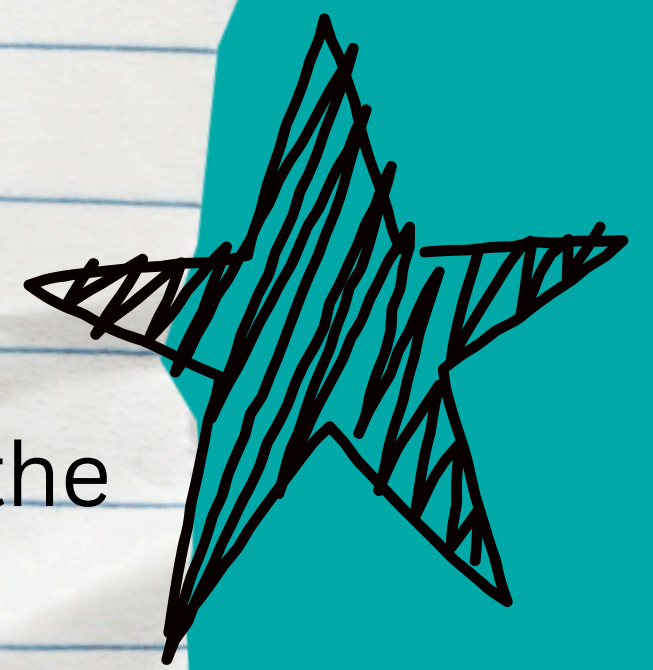
Works Cited, Continued

The core elements of any works cited entry are given below in the order in which they should appear; Not all entries will have all of these

- Author.
- Title of source.
- Title of container,
- Other contributors,
- Version,
- Number,
- Publisher,
- Publication date,
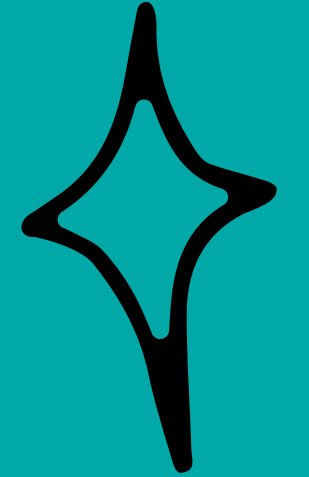- Location.

Works Cited, How to Cite Authors

- The author's name is usually displayed in a work near the title
- Begin the entry with the author's last name, followed by a comma and the rest of the author's name
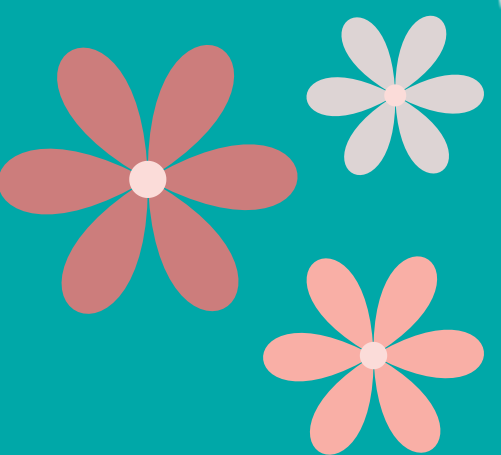- End this element with a period

Examples:

Jacobs, Alan. *The Pleasures of Reading in an Age of Distraction*. Oxford UP, 2011.

Doris, Michael, and Louise Erdich. *The Crown of Columbus*. Harper Collins Publishers, 1999.

Burdick, Anne, et. al. *Digital Humanities*. MIT Press, 2012.

Works Cited, How to CiteTitles of Sources

- After the author, the next element included in a works cited entry is the title of the source
- The title is often displayed in a work near the author
- Italicize larger works like books and collections of essays or poems

Example:

Puig, Manuel. *Kiss of the Spider Woman.* Translated by
   Thomas Colchie, Vintage Books, 1991.

- Put quotation marks around shorter works such as titles of article names, essays, stories, or poems

Example:

Goldman, Anne. "Questions of Transport: Reading Primo Levi
   Reading Dante." *The Georgia Review*, vol. 64, no. 1, 2010,
   pp. 69-88.

Works Cited, How to Cite Titles of Container

- When the source being documented forms a part of a larger whole, (like a book that is a collection of essays) the larger whole can be thought of as a container
- The title of the container is usually italicized and followed by a comma, since the information that comes next describes the container

Examples:

Journal is made up of articles

Williams, Joy. "Rogue Territory." *The New York Times Book Review*, 9 Nov. 2014, pp.1+.
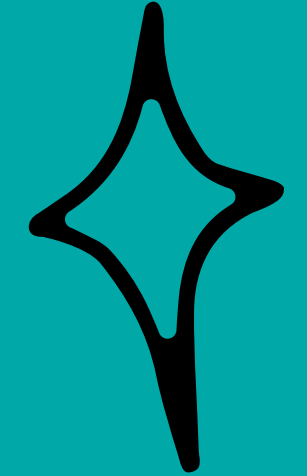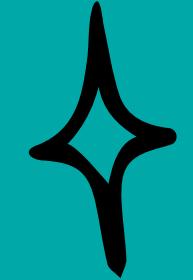
Television series is made up of episodes

"Hush." *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, created by Joss Whedon, performance by Sarah Michelle Gellar, season 4, episode 10, Mutant Enemy, 1999.

Works Cited, How to Cite Other Contributors

- Aside from an author whose name appears at the start of an entry, other people may be credited in the source as contributors, and you note this if their participation is important to your research or to the identification of the work
- Common descriptors are: adapted by, directed by, edited by, illustrated by, introduction by, narrated by, performance by, and translated by

Example:

"Hush." *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, created by Joss Whedon, performance by Sarah Michelle Gellar, season 4, episode 10, Mutant Enemy, 1999.

Works Cited, How to Cite Versions

- If a source carries a notation indicating it is a version of an edition of a work released in more than one form, you may want to identify the version in your entry

Examples:

The Bible. Authorized King James Version, Oxford UP, 1998.

Newcomb, Horace, editor. *Television: The Critical View*. 7th ed., Oxford UP, 2007.

Scott Ridley, director. *Blade Runner*. 1982. Performance by Harrison Ford, Director's Cut, Warner Bros., 1992.

Works Cited, How to Cite Number

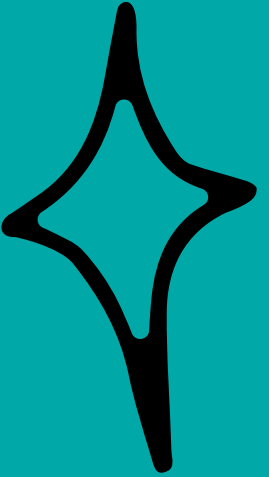- If the source you are citing is part of a numbered sequence, you may want to document that

Examples:

Multiple Volume Set
Rampersand, Arnold. *The Life of Langston Hughes*. 2nd ed., vol. 2, Oxford UP, 2002.

Journal Issues (includes volume and issue numbers)
Baron, Naomi S. "Redefining Reading: The Impact of Digital Communication Media." *PMLA*, vol. 128, no. 1, Jan. 2013, pp. 193-200.
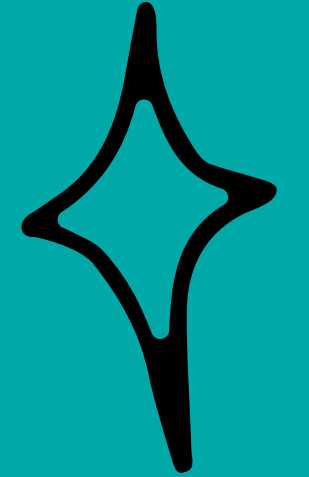
Works Cited,
How to Cite Publisher

- The publisher is the organization responsible for producing the source or making it available to the public
- If more than one publisher is listed and they seem equally responsible, list each and separate the names with a slash (/)

Example:

Jacobs, Alan. *The Pleasures of Reading in an Age of Distraction.* Oxford UP, 2011.

- Another Tip: For websites published by organizations, including museums, libraries, and universities, the publisher can be found in the "about us" or copyright information

Works Cited, How to Cite Publisher, Continued

A publishers name may be omitted for:

    a. Periodicals/Journals

    b. Works published by authors or editors

    c. A website whose title is essentially the same as the name of its publisher

    d. A website not involved in producing the works or makes it available such as Youtube

Works Cited, How to Cite: Publication Date

- Sources– especially those published online– may be associated with more than one publication date or may just have one date to document
- When a source carries more than one date, use the date most relevant to your use of the source

Examples:

For an Article on the Website of a News Organization
Deresiewicz, William. "The Death of the Artist—and the Birth of the Creative
    Entrepreneur." *The Atlantic*, 28 Dec. 2014,
    www.theatlantic.com/archive/2015/01/the-death-of-the-artist-and-the-
    birth-of-the-creative-entrepreneur/383497/.

Book
Rampersand, Arnold. *The Life of Langston Hughes*. 2nd ed., vol. 2, Oxford UP,
    2002.

Works Cited, How to Cite: Location

- How to specify the work's location depends on the medium of publication
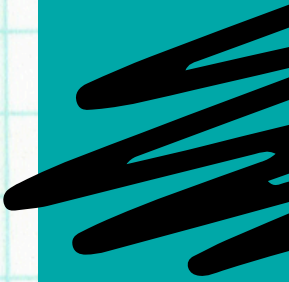
Examples:

Print sources (uses a range of page numbers)
Goldman, Anne. "Questions of Transport: Reading Primo Levi Reading Dante." *The Georgia Review*, vol. 64, no 1, 2010, pp. 69-88.

Websites (uses URL)
Deresiewicz, William. "The Death of the Artist—and the Birth of the Creative Entrepreneur." *The Atlantic*, 28 Dec. 2014, www.theatlantic.com/archive/2015/01/the-death-of-the-artist-and-the- birth-of-the-creative-entrepreneur/383497/.

Physical Objects
Bearden, Romare. *The Train*. 1975, Museum of Modern Art, New York.

MLA Resources

- The Online Writing Lab (OWL) at Purdue: MLA https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_formatting_and_style_guide/index.html

- Son of Citation Machine: Citation Generator http://citationmachine.net/

- EasyBib: Free Automatic Bibliography & Citation Maker http://www.easybib.com/

Questions?

Contact Us

Remember, if you need research help, all you have to do is ask the librarians

You can...

- Email us at reference@ulm.edu