MLA FORMATTING FAQS

Plagiarism

Have you seen any examples of plagiarism?
What were the consequences?

Intentional Plagiarism
Unintentional Plagiarism

See pages 206-208 in your *Reading & Writing Handbook*

Plagiarism

- We use a documentation style to avoid plagiarism.
- Plagiarism is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.
- All students are quite capable of generating their own unique thoughts and ideas. Only these "original creations" will be welcome.
- Remember that all sources, including Internet sources, must be cited appropriately when using the author's exact words or paraphrasing.

Page Layout

Header: right aligned, Your Last Name and Page Number
1" Margins on all sides of the paper
Double-spaced throughout
Times New Roman,
     Size 12 Font

See pages 212-215 in your *Reading & Writing Handbook*

CITING SOURCES:
IN-TEXT CITATIONS
AND WORKS CITED
(CHAPTER 17 IN YOUR *READING & WRITING HANDBOOK*)

Referring to Titles

- When referring to titles, do so appropriately
  - Books, magazines, newspapers, albums (anything that is independently published) get their titles *Italicized*
  - Short stories, poems, song titles (anything within a larger work) get their titles **"Placed within Quotation Marks"** in the body of the essay

- NEVER put url hyperlinks in the body of an academic essay (they will only appear in your Works Cited section)

In-text Citations

(Burke 3)

See pages 216-223 in your *Reading & Writing Handbook*

In-text Citations

- Intext Citations are required in MLA formatting – this way we know what ideas (and/or words) came from what source
- Intext Citations lead us to the Works Cited (MLA) page, where we can obtain the full information for the source, should we choose to look further into it

- In MLA style, referring to the works of others in your text is done by using what's known as parenthetical citation. Immediately following a quotation from a source or a paraphrase of a source's ideas, you place the author's name and then the relevant page number(s).
  - *Human beings have been described as "symbol-using animals" (Burke 3)*
- If a work has 2 or more authors, MLA uses "and" in between: (Burke and Jones 3)
- NOTE: there are no commas, no abbreviations or symbols, just the author's last name and the page number

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- When a source has no known author, use a shortened title of the work instead of an author name.
- When a source has no page numbers (like on a website), use paragraph numbers instead of page numbers
  - Page or paragraph numbers are mandatory when citing direct quotes
    - They are optional, but encouraged, for paraphrased information
- When referring to multiple works in a single citation, separate entries with a semicolon
  - (Burke; Jones)

Try to minimize your use of direct quotes because it interrupts the "flow" of your voice in your paper

- Instead rely on PARAPHRASES (you borrow the IDEA, but put it in your own words):
  - Reread the original passage until you understand its full meaning.
  - Set the original aside, and write your paraphrase.
  - Check your rendition with the original to make sure that your version accurately expresses all the essential information in a new form.
  - Use quotation marks to identify any unique term or phraseology you have borrowed exactly from the source.
  - Record the source (including the page) so that you can credit it easily.
- Remember, we give credit for borrowed IDEAS, not just WORDS

For more information on Paraphrasing

- See Chapter 1 in your *Reading & Writing Handbook*

Direct Quotes

- Exact words must appear in quotations.
- Direct quotes require a page or paragraph number in the in-text citation
  - (you don't want to skim through 1200 pages of *The Lord of the Rings* to find a quote and its surrounding context – be specific)
    - NOTE: if there are no page numbers, count paragraphs, or refer to a chapter

Block/Long Quotes

- For quotes more than 4 lines of verse or 3 lines of prose, we use "block" or "long" quote formatting instead of simply placing the text in quotation marks
- Start the quote on a new line, indented 1" from the left margin, maintaining double spacing.
- No quotation marks are used (unless there's a quote within the quote)
- Include the citation after the end punctuation
- NOTE: for verse (poetry) maintain the original line breaks)

The Exception...

- Is common knowledge for your target audience.
  - For example, most college students should know that George Washington was the first US President.
- If you looked it up – include the citation
- When in doubt – include the citation

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Works Cited Page

See pages 223-227 in your
Reading & Writing Handbook

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Works Cited Page

- Always start your list of sources on a new page and label it appropriately (Work(s) Cited – centered, with no fancy styling)

- All works included, must have at least 1 intext citation in the body of the paper (if it does not, it shouldn't be included)
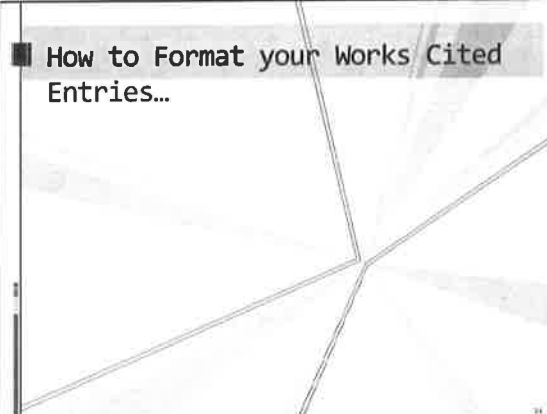
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- Alphabetize your sources! (this becomes more and more important, the more research you do – for example, for my dissertation I've already looked at over 200 sources – do you really want to play a guessing game looking for them all?)

- Double-space all entries, but do not skip lines between entries

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- Use a hanging indent for all entries (it looks the opposite of a paragraph – the first line is flush-left with the margin, all subsequent lines are indented ½" in)
  - This is what a hanging indent should look like on your Works Cite page

- If you used an electronic database to view the electronic copy of a source also in print, you must include the electronic information as well (no shortcuts!)

How to Format your Works Cited Entries...

- Step 1: What type of source am I looking at?
  - Book
  - Periodical
  - Electronic

- Narrow it down further...
  - Books
    - Is there an editor?
    - Is it a chapter or article in a collection?
  - Periodicals
    - Magazine
    - Newspaper
    - Scholarly Journal
  - Electronic
    - Website
    - Online database

- Step 2: Find the template
  - Use the Purdue OWL
  - Use your *Reading & Writing Handbook*
  - Use the *MLA Handbook*

- Step 3: Plug the information from your source into the template

Your Resources

- Use the tools available to you to complete your Works Cited page appropriately
  - Word 2007 (and newer) has a tab labeled "References" that can help
  - The library databases have a "golden ticket" that will help you with various documentation styles
  - The OWL (Online Writing Lab) at Purdue University is one of my favorite resources!
    - http://owl.english.purdue.edu/
  - Use Noodle Tools (available through Baker Library)

- Remember to always double-check the "real" formatting if you use one of the electronic helper tools, they're not perfect!
  - Word 2007 likes to use underlines instead of italics
    - Word 2007 also does not include page numbers in Intext citations)
  - Some of the databases in the library like to use ALL CAPS
  - Also remember in article titles only proper nouns and the first letter of the first word get the first letter capitalized

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For a sample MLA paper, see pages 228-231 in your *Reading & Writing Handbook*

WRITING IS *NEVER* FINISHED... JUST DUE!