

Guidelines to Essay Writing

Compiled by Éva Péteri

Based on Joseph Gibaldi, *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. New York: The Modern Language Association, 1999.

DOCUMENTATION: LIST OF WORKS CITED/BIBLIOGRAPHY

Reverse the author's name for alphabetizing, adding a comma after the last name (Porter, Anne Catherine). Put a period after the complete name. State the full title of the book, including any subtitle. If the book has a subtitle, put a colon directly after the main title, unless the main title ends in a question mark, an exclamation mark or a dash. Place a period after the entire title (including any subtitle), unless it ends in another punctuation mark. Italicise the entire title, including any colon, subtitle, but do not italicise the period that follows the title. Give the city of publication, publisher's name, and year of publication. Take these facts directly from the book. The publisher's name that appears on the title page is generally the name to cite. The name may be accompanied there by the city and date. Any publication information not available on the title page can usually be found on the copyright page (i.e., the reverse of the title page) or on a page at the back of the book. Use a colon (:) between the place of publication and the publisher, a comma (,) between the publisher and the date, and a period (.) after the date.

Examples:

Berlage, Gai Ingham. *Women in Baseball: The Forgotten History*. Westport: Greenwood, 1994.
Freedman, Richard R. *What Do Unions Do?* New York: Basic, 1984.

To cite an anthology or a compilation that was edited by someone whose name appears on the title page, begin your entry with the name of the editor or compiler, followed by a comma and the abbreviation ed. or comp.

Examples:

Feldman, Paula R., ed. *British Women Poets of the Romantic Era*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1997.
Spafford, Peter, comp. and ed. *Interference: The Story of Czechoslovakia in the Words of its Writers*. Cheltenham: New Clarion, 1992.

To cite two or more books by the same author, give the name in the first entry only. Thereafter, in place of the name, type three hyphens, followed by a period and the title. Works listed under the same name are alphabetized by title.

Examples:

Frye, Northrop. *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1959.
---. *The Double Vision: Language and Meaning in Religion*. Toronto: U of TorontoP, 1991.
---, ed. *Sound and Poetry*. New York: Columbia UP, 1957.

To cite a book by two or three authors, give their names in the same order as on the title page – 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.

Examples:

Eggin, Suzanne, and Diane Slade. *Analysing Casual Conversation*. London: Cassell, 1997.
Rabkin, Eric S., Martin H. Greenberg, and Joseph D. Olander, eds. *No Place Else: Explorations in Utopian and Dystopian Fiction*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 1983.

If you are citing an essay, a short story, a poem, or another work that appears in an anthology or some sort of book collection, give the name of the author, title (in quotation marks), and (if relevant) translator of the part cited, the title of the book, the name of the editor, place of publication, publisher's name, date, and the page numbers of the cited piece.

Example:

More, Hannah. "The Black Slave Trade: A Poem." *British Women Poets of the Romantic Era*. Ed. Paula R. Feldman. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1997. 472-82.

Treat an encyclopedia article or a dictionary entry as you would a piece in a collection, but do not cite the editor.

Example:

"Noon." *The Oxford English Dictionary*. 2nd ed. 1989.

To cite an introduction, a preface, a foreword or an afterword, begin with the name of its author and then give the name of the part being cited, capitalized but neither italicized nor enclosed in quotation marks.

Examples:

Borges, Jorge Luis. Foreword. *Selected Poems, 1923-1967*. By Borges. Ed. Norman Thomas Di Giovanni. New York: Delta-Dell, 1973. xv-xvi.

Elliott, Emory. Afterword. *The Jungle*. By Upton Sinclair. New York: Signet, 1990. 342-50.

If you are using two or more volumes of a multivolume work, cite the total number of volumes in the work.

Example:

Blanco, Richard L., ed. *The American Revolution, 1775-1783: An Encyclopedia*. 2 vols. Hamden: Garland, 1993.

Use the following abbreviations for information you cannot supply:

n.p. No place of publication given

n.p. No publisher given

n.d. No date of publication given

n. pag. No pagination given

Examples:

N.p.: U of Gotham P, 1999.

New York: n.p., 1999.

New York: U of Gotham P, n.d.

New York: U of Gotham P, 1999. n. pag.

The typical entry for a complete online scholarly project or information database consists of the following items: 1. Title of the project or database (underlined)
2. Name of the editor of project or database
3. Electronic publication information, including version number, date of electronic publication or of the latest update, and name of any sponsoring institution or organization
4. Date of access and network address
If you cannot find some of this information, cite what is available.

Examples:

Project Bartleby. Ed. Steven van Leeuwen. May 1998. Columbia U. 5 May 1998
<<http://www.columbia.edu/acis/bartleby/>>.

Victorian Women Writers Project. Ed. Perry Willett. June 1998. Indiana U. 26 June 1998
<<http://www.indiana.edu/~letrs/vwp/>>.

Online book:

1. Author's name (if given). If only an editor, a compiler, or a translator is identified, cite that person's name, followed by the appropriate abbreviation.
2. Title of the work (underlined)
3. Name of the editor, compiler, or translator
4. Publication information
5. Date of access and network address

Examples:

Austen, Jane. *Pride and Prejudice*. Ed. Henry Churchyard. 1996. 10 Sept 1998
<<http://www.pemberley.com./jancinfo/pridprej.html>>.

Hawthorne, Nathaniel. *Twice-Told Tales*. Ed. George Parsons Lathrop. Boston: Houghton, 1883. 1 Mar. 1998 <<http://eldred.ne.mediaone.net/nh/ttt.html>>.

QUOTATIONS

Quotations must produce the original sources exactly. Unless indicated in brackets, changes must not be made in the spelling, capitalization, or interior punctuation of the source. You must construct a clear, grammatically correct sentence that allows you to introduce or incorporate a quotation with complete accuracy. Alternatively, you may paraphrase the original and quote only fragments, which may be easier to integrate into the text.

Examples:

"Have nothing in your houses which you do not know to be useful or believe to be beautiful."

"Have nothing in your houses which you do not know to be useful or believe to be beautiful," said William Morris.

"Have nothing in your houses," said Morris, "which you do not know to be useful or believe to be beautiful."

"The *true* Beautiful differs from the *false* as Heaven from Vauxhall!" writes Carlyle.

Shaw admitted that "Nothing can extinguish my interest in Shakespeare."

Shaw admitted that "[n]othing can extinguish [his] interest in Shakespeare."

Shaw admitted, "Nothing can extinguish my interest in Shakespear" (sic).

Shaw admitted: "Nothing can extinguish my interest in Shakespeare."

If a quotation runs to more than four lines in your paper, set it off from your text by beginning a new line, indenting one inch (2.5 cms) from the left margin without adding quotation marks.

If you quote part or all of a single line of **verse** that does not require special emphasis, put it in quotation marks within your text. You may also incorporate two or three lines in this way, using a slash with a space on each side (/) to separate them.

Example:

Reflecting on the “incident” in Baltimore, Cullen concludes, “Of all the things that happened there / That’s all that I remember” (11–12).

Verse quotations of more than three lines should begin in a new line. Unless the quotation involves unusual spacing, indent each line one inch (2.5 cms) from the left margin adding no quotation marks.

Quotation within a quotation: use double quotation marks around quotations incorporated into the text, single quotation marks around quotations within those quotations.

Example:

Lionel Trilling writes that “Bernard Shaw [. . .] was uncompromising in his dislike of *The Importance of Being Earnest*, giving it as his reason that the play did not ‘touch’ him and that it lacked ‘reality’ – it does not lead us to believe in its humanity, Shaw said, and therefore ‘we are thrown back on the daintiness and force of its wit.’”

PARENTHETICAL DOCUMENTATION

Keep parenthetical references as brief as clarity and accuracy permit. Give only the information needed to identify a source. If, for example, you include an author’s name in a sentence, you need not repeat the name in the parenthetical page citation that follows. Full information on sources will be specified under the list of works or bibliography.

Examples:

It may be true, as Robertson maintains, that “in the appreciation of medieval art the attitude of the observer is of primary importance [. . .]” (136).

It may be true that “in the appreciation of medieval art the attitude of the observer is of primary importance [. . .]” (Robertson 136).

If you quote two or more works by the same author in your work:

It may be true that “in the appreciation of medieval art the attitude of the observer is of primary importance [. . .]” (Robertson *Medieval Art* 136).

ENDNOTES, FOOTNOTES

Can be used with a list of works cited or bibliography in a similar way as parenthetical documentation. However, if you use notes for documentation, you may not need a list of works cited or a bibliography. The first note referring to a source includes the publication information found in a bibliographic entry – the author’s name, the title, and the publication facts – as well as the page reference identifying the portion of the source you refer to at that point in the text.

Note form: A documentation note has four main divisions: the author’s name in normal order, followed by a comma; the title; the publication data in parentheses; and a page reference.

Example:

¹ Deborah Tannen, *You Just Don't Understand: Women and Men in Conversation*. (New York: Morrow, 1990) 52.

After fully documenting a work, use a shortened form in subsequent notes. As in parenthetical references, include enough information to identify the work. The author's last name alone, followed by the relevant page numbers, is usually adequate. If you cite two or more works by the same author include a shortened form of the title following the author's last name in each reference after the first.

Examples:

² Tannen 56.

³ Tannen, *You Just* 56.

For further details on documentation (and on writing a research paper in general) see: Joseph Gibaldi, *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. New York: The Modern Language Association, 1999.