

# MLA Style

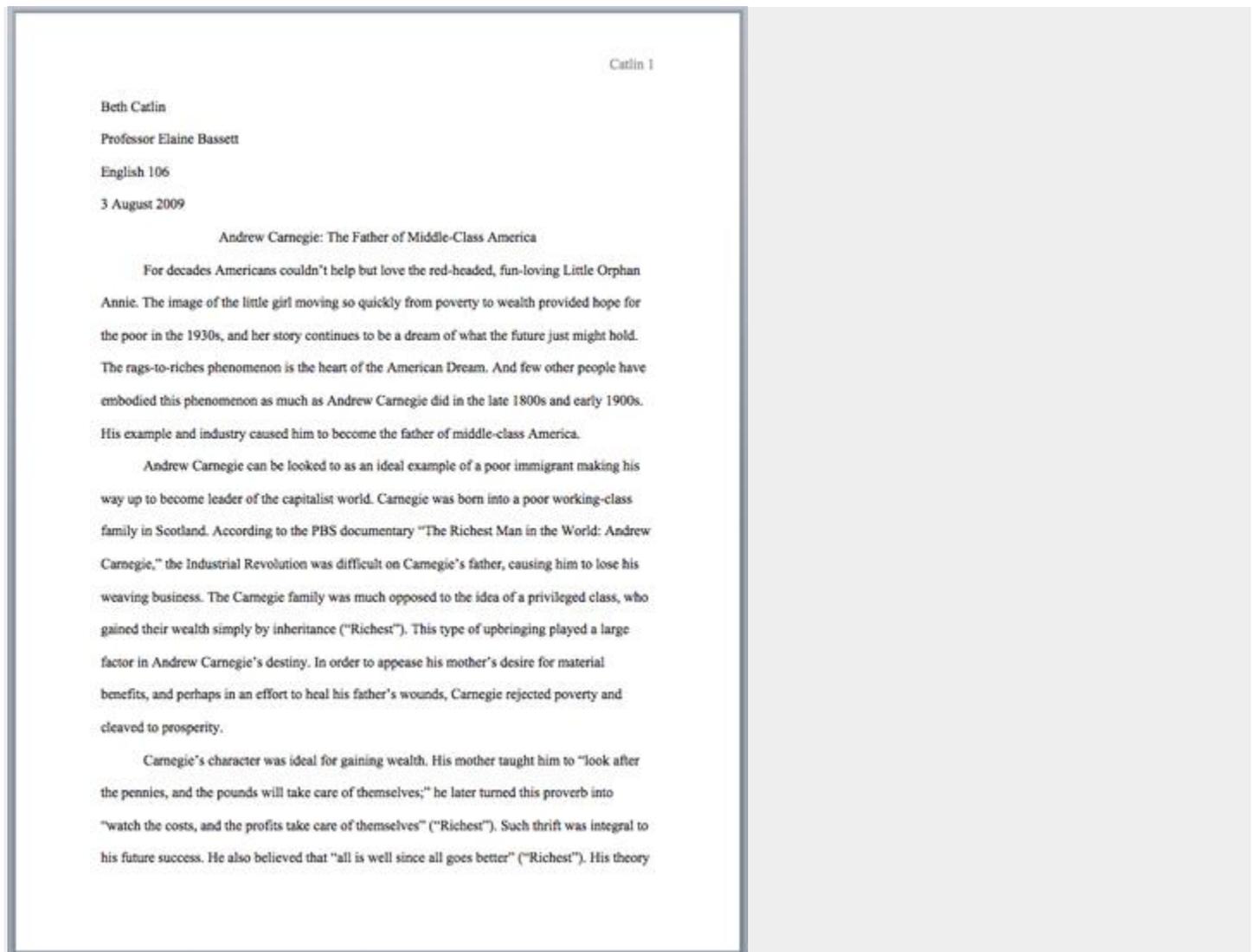
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MLA is a style for formatting when doing research. Although there are other styles, TCSS has decided to use MLA as the format for research done in ELA classes.

## Formatting the First Page of Your Paper in MLA Style

- Do not make a title page for your paper unless specifically requested.
- In the upper left-hand corner of the first page, list your name, your instructor's name, the course, and the date. Again, be sure to use double-spaced text.
- Double space again and center the title. Do not underline, italicize, or place your title in quotation marks; write the title in Title Case (standard capitalization), not in all capital letters.
- Use quotation marks and/or italics when referring to other works in your title, just as you would in your text: *The Outsiders* as a Reflection of Society; Human Nature in "The Tell-Tale Heart"
- Double space between the title and the first line of the text.
- Create a header in the upper right-hand corner that includes your last name, followed by a space with a page number; number all pages consecutively with Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3, 4, etc.), one-half inch from the top and flush with the right margin. (Note: Your instructor or other readers may ask that you omit last name/page number header on your first page. Always follow instructor guidelines.)

Here is a sample of the first page of a paper in MLA style:



# Evaluating Sources during Reading

Evaluating sources of information is an important step in any research activity. This section provides information on evaluating bibliographic citations, aspects of evaluation, reading evaluation, print vs. Internet sources, and evaluating Internet sources.

After you have asked yourself some questions about the source and determined that it's worth your time to find and read that source, you can evaluate the material in the source as you read through it.

- Read the preface--What does the author want to accomplish? Browse through the table of contents and the index. This will give you an overview of the source. Is your topic covered in enough depth to be helpful? If you don't find your topic discussed, try searching for some synonyms in the index.
- Check for a list of references or other citations that look as if they will lead you to related material that would be good sources.
- Determine the intended audience. Are you the intended audience? Consider the tone, style, level of information, and assumptions the author makes about the reader. Are they appropriate for your needs?
- Try to determine if the content of the source is fact, opinion, or propaganda. If you think the source is offering facts, are the sources for those facts clearly indicated?
- Do you think there's enough evidence offered? Is the coverage comprehensive? (As you learn more and more about your topic, you will notice that this gets easier as you become more of an expert.)
- Is the language objective or emotional?
- Are there broad generalizations that overstate or oversimplify the matter?
- Does the author use a good mix of primary and secondary sources for information?
- If the source is opinion, does the author offer sound reasons for adopting that stance? (Consider again those questions about the author. Is this person reputable?)
- Check for accuracy.
- How timely is the source? Is the source twenty years out of date? Some information becomes dated when new research is available, but other older sources of information can be quite sound fifty or a hundred years later.
- Do some cross-checking. Can you find some of the same information given elsewhere?
- How credible is the author? If the document is anonymous, what do you know about the organization?
- Are there vague or sweeping generalizations that aren't backed up with evidence?
- Are arguments very one-sided with no acknowledgement of other viewpoints?

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You will need to create a Works Cited list to show which sources you have accessed and used in your research. Depending on the source used, you will need to gather different pieces of information. For each entry on the Works Cited Page, you will use a hanging indent which means that the first line will be flush with the margin and the second (and any other lines) will be indented.

## Basic rules

- Begin your Works Cited page on a separate page at the end of your research paper/project. It should have the same one-inch margins and last name, page number header as the rest of your paper.
- Label the page Works Cited (do not italicize the words Works Cited or put them in quotation marks) and center the words Works Cited at the top of the page.
- Double space all citations, but do not skip spaces between entries.
- Indent the second and subsequent lines of citations by 0.5 inches to create a hanging indent.
- List page numbers of sources efficiently, when needed. If you refer to a journal article that appeared on pages 225 through 250, list the page numbers on your Works Cited page as 225-50. Note that MLA style uses a hyphen in a span of pages.
- For every entry, you must determine the Medium of Publication. Most entries will likely be listed as Print or Web sources, but other possibilities may include Film, CD-ROM, or DVD.
- Writers are **no longer required** to provide URLs for Web entries. However, if your instructor or publisher insists on them, include them in angle brackets after the entry and end with a period. For long URLs, break lines only at slashes.
- If you're citing an article or a publication that was originally issued in print form but that you retrieved from an online database, you should type the online database name in italics. You do not need to provide subscription information in addition to the database name.

## Capitalization and punctuation

- Capitalize each word in the titles of articles, books, etc., but do not capitalize articles (the, an), prepositions, or conjunctions unless one is the first word of the title or subtitle: *Gone with the Wind*, *The Art of War*, *There Is Nothing Left to Lose*.
- **New to MLA 2009:** Use italics (instead of underlining) for titles of larger works (books, magazines) and quotation marks for titles of shorter works (poems, articles)

## Listing author names

Entries are listed alphabetically by the author's last name (or, for entire edited collections, editor names). Author names are written last name first; middle names or middle initials follow the first name:

Burke, Kenneth

Levy, David M.

Wallace, David Foster

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## Basic Format for Bibliographic entries on your MLA Works Cited page

### Book:

The author's name or a book with a single author's name appears in last name, first name format. The basic form for a book citation is:

Last name, First name. *Title of Book*. City of Publication: Publisher, Year of Publication. Medium of Publication.

Gleick, James. *Chaos: Making a New Science*. New York: Penguin, 1987. Print.

If there is more than one author, list the first author last name, first name followed by the other author(s) name(s) listed in normal order.

Gillespie, Paula, and Neal Lerner. *The Allyn and Bacon Guide to Peer Tutoring*. Boston: Allyn, 2000. Print.

Wysocki, Anne Frances, Johndan Johnson-Eilola, Cynthia L. Selfe, and Geoffrey Sirc. *Writing New Media: Theory and Applications for Expanding the Teaching of Composition*. Logan: Utah State UP, 2004. Print.

If there are three or more authors, it is also acceptable to list the first author last name, first name followed by the Latin phrase "et al."

Wysocki, Anne Frances, et al. *Writing New Media: Theory and Applications for Expanding the Teaching of Composition*. Logan: Utah State UP, 2004. Print.

### Article in a Reference Book (e.g. Encyclopedias, Dictionaries)

For entries in encyclopedias or dictionaries, and other reference works, the basic form for this sort of citation is as follows:

Last name, First name. "Title of Essay." *Title of Reference Book*. Ed. Year. Medium of Publication.

Smith, Joseph. "Holocaust." *Encyclopedia Americana*. 3rd ed. 1997. Print.

### Basic Style for Citations of Electronic Sources (Including Online Databases)

Here are some common features you should try and find before citing electronic sources in MLA style. Not every Web page will provide all of the following information. However, collect as much of the following information as possible both for your citations and for your research notes:

- Author and/or editor names (if available)
- Article name in quotation marks (if applicable)
- Title of the Website, project, or book in italics. (Remember that some Print publications have Web publications with slightly different names. They may, for example, include the additional information or otherwise modified information, like domain names [e.g. .com or .net].)
- Any version numbers available, including revisions, posting dates, volumes, or issue numbers.
- Publisher information, including the publisher name and publishing date.
- Take note of any page numbers (if available).
- Medium of publication.
- Date you accessed the material.
- URL (if required by teacher, or for your own personal reference; MLA does not require a URL).

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## Citing an Entire Web Site

It is necessary to list your date of access because web postings are often updated, and information available on one date may no longer be available later. If a URL is required or you chose to include one, be sure to include the complete address for the site. (Note: The following examples do not include a URL because MLA no longer requires a URL to be included.)

Remember to use *n.p.* if no publisher name is available and *n.d.* if no publishing date is given.

Editor, author, or compiler name (if available). *Name of Site*. Version number. Name of institution/organization affiliated with the site (sponsor or publisher), date of resource creation (if available). Medium of publication. Date of access.

*The Purdue OWL Family of Sites*. The Writing Lab and OWL at Purdue and Purdue U, 2008. Web. 23 Apr. 2008.

Felluga, Dino. *Guide to Literary and Critical Theory*. Purdue U, 28 Nov. 2003. Web. 10 May 2006.

## A Page on a Web Site

For an individual page on a Web site, list the author or alias if known, followed by the information covered above for entire Web sites. Remember to use *n.p.* if no publisher name is available and *n.d.* if no publishing date is given.

"Athelete's Foot - Topic Overview." *WebMD*. WebMD, 25 September 2014. Web. 6 July 2015.

Lundman, Susan. "How to Make Vegetarian Chili." *eHow*. Demand Media, n.d. Web. 6 July 2015.

All information for this resource was retrieved from:

*The Purdue OWL*. Purdue U Writing Lab, 2010. Web. 22 August 2015.

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>