



## Introduction to MLA Citation Style

Bismarck State College Library Pathfinder

<http://www.bismarckstate.edu/library/>



### What is a Citation Style?

There are numerous style guides that will help you cite sources and prepare a bibliography. Some that are frequently used are MLA, APA, and Chicago. MLA is commonly used in humanities courses, but your instructor will tell you which style you should use.

#### What is MLA?

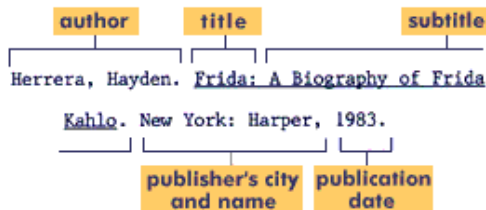
“Modern Language Association (MLA) format provides writers with a system for cross-referencing their sources--from their parenthetical references to their works cited page. This cross-referencing system allows readers to locate the publication information of source material. This is of great value for researchers who may want to locate your sources for their own research projects. The proper use of MLA style also shows the credibility of writers; such writers show accountability to their source material. Most importantly, the use of MLA style can protect writers from accusations of plagiarism--the purposeful or accidental use of source material by other writers without giving appropriate credit” (Owl).

### Why should I cite?

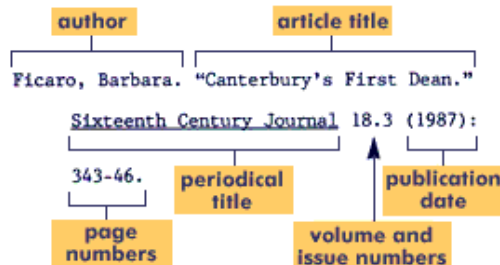
- To acknowledge the work of other writers
- To demonstrate the body of knowledge on which you have based your work
  - To enable other researchers to trace your sources

#### Example:

##### Book



##### Periodical article

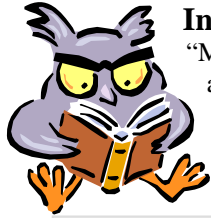


#### What is a Citation? (InfoPlease.com)

- The act of citing or quoting a reference to an authority or a precedent
- A passage cited; quotation.
- A quotation showing a particular word or phrase in context.

#### What is a Bibliography? (InfoPlease.com)

- A complete or selective list of works compiled upon some common principle, as authorship, subject, place of publication, or printer.
- Lists of source materials that are used or consulted in the preparation of a work or that are referred to in the text.



### **In-Text Citation:**

“MLA format follows the author-page method of citation. This means that the author's last name and the page number(s) from which the quotation is taken must appear in the text, and a complete reference should appear in your works-cited list. The author's name may appear either in the sentence itself or in parentheses following the quotation, but the page number(s) should always appear in the parentheses, not in the text of your sentence” (Owl).

#### **Examples:**

Wordsworth stated that Romantic poetry was marked by a "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" (263).

Romantic poetry is characterized by the "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" (Wordsworth 263).



### **ODIN: Online Dakota Information Network**

<http://odinlibrary.org/nbj.html>

The following resources were located by searching ODIN. ODIN is Bismarck State College's online library catalog. You can use it to search for books, videos, compact discs, and other library materials. You can also access periodicals (magazines, journals, newspapers) through ODIN by clicking on "Licensed Resources."

### **Selected Reference Resources – Style Manuals**

You can find these style manuals in the Library:

- MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers      Reference LB2369 .G53 2003
- The Pocket Wadsworth Handbook      Ready Reference PE1408 .K6755 2006

### **Selected Electronic Sources – Style Manuals**

Using the search engine [www.google.com](http://www.google.com) and the search term "citation," I located the following electronic sources. The search for "MLA citation" sources can be accomplished with any search engine (examples: yahoo, excite, infoseek, or dogpile), but be wary. Some sources you locate by this method may not be accurate or reliable. Make note of who owns or maintains the site. Is it a major university or library? Or is it someone you have never heard of? When in doubt, ask your instructor or a librarian.

- Citation Styles (Bedford / St. Martin's)  
<http://www.bedfordstmartins.com/online/citex.html>
- Dakota State University Online Writing Lab (OWL)  
<http://www.departments.dsu.edu/owl/>
- Owl: Online Writing Lab (Purdue University)  
<http://owl.english.purdue.edu>
- The University of Wisconsin-Madison Writing Center  
<http://www.wisc.edu/writing/>



#### **Content Source:**

Citation Styles. 2002. Bedford/St. Martin's. 12 Feb. 2002 <<http://www.bedfordstmartins.com/online/citex.html>>

Owl: Online Writing Lab. 2002. Purdue University. 11 Feb. 2002 <[http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r\\_mla.html](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_mla.html)>.