

B-CC English Department's Guide to Writing Effectively

To keep your writing error-free, use Writers INC as a resource for questions of form, language, and style. Along with sample papers and material pertinent to many other disciplines, Writers INC contains an editing checklist, a proofreader's checklist and guide, a guide to compiling a writing portfolio, ideas for writing papers and developing a personal style, significant literary terms, and commonly misspelled words.

To avoid plagiarism and to acknowledge others' contributions, students should refer to "Writing Responsibly" in Writers INC, to the academic honesty policies in this handbook and in the IB Honor Code, and to specific guidance and instruction received in their classes. Information obtained from another source—**whether the information is quoted directly, summarized, or paraphrased--must** be credited using the MLA (Modern Language Association) style, covered in detail in Writers INC, in the MLA Handbook, and in the B-CC Media Center publications, or the APA (American Psychological Association) style. Please follow teachers' guidelines for papers in particular disciplines. Generally, papers in languages, history, arts, and other humanities subjects follow MLA Style, and papers in psychology and the natural sciences follow APA Style.

MLA Parenthetical Documentation

In the MLA format, footnotes and endnotes are not generally used. Sources are credited at the earliest possible point through parenthetical references (also known as *in-text citations*). Paraphrases, summaries, and all information gathered from research, excluding common knowledge items (*i.e.*, Abraham Lincoln was a US President), must also be credited through parenthetical documentation. Quotations must be exact. If words are left out in a quotation, ellipsis (...) must mark the omission. Any words changed within a quotation must be set off with brackets ([]).

Parenthetical documentation should contain enough information to help the reader easily locate the source as you have listed it in the Works Cited (bibliography) page. Generally, that would mean the author's last name and the page number on which the ideas or words appear. If the author's name already appears in the sentence, the page number alone in parentheses is sufficient. When you are using two works by the same author, use the titles of the works in abbreviated form in the parenthetical citation to help distinguish the sources. If the title appears in the sentence, then a page number in parentheses following the quotation or paraphrase/summary is sufficient.

There is a space between the author's last name and the page number on which the information is found, and the abbreviation for page(s) is not used. For electronic sources, commas are used to separate the author's name or the title of the page or article from the paragraph number, and the abbreviation for paragraph (*par.*) is used.

The following examples illustrate some common uses of parenthetical documentation. Please note that the examples are single spaced here only to conserve space in the handbook. **Proper MLA form requires that typed papers be double spaced throughout.**

Consult your teacher for more detailed guidelines and instruction on how to cite specific types of sources, including electronic sources. Refer to the Media Center handouts for examples most commonly encountered in academic writing.

Examples of MLA In-Text Citation

The narrator emphasizes Kabuo Miyamoto's distance from the events of the courtroom: "The accused man, with one segment of his consciousness, watched the falling snow outside the windows" (Guterson 5).

Milkman's quest, fueled by Pilate's stories and Circe's memories, disappoints him in material terms (Morrison 254-55).

The speaker in Rita Dove's poem "Lady Freedom Among Us" urges the reader to notice the statue of Freedom: "don't lower your eyes / or stare straight ahead to where / you think you ought to be going" (Moyers 111).

Examples of MLA In-Text Citation for Blocked-Off Passages

In "Amherst," Amy Clampitt's speaker revisits the setting that inspired Emily Dickinson's poetry:

The oriole, a charred and singing coal,
still burns aloud among the monuments,
its bugle call to singularity the same
unheard (she wrote) as to the crowd,
this graveyard gathering, the audience
she never had. (52)

Through precise details, the narrator in Snow Falling on Cedars allows the reader to picture a character fully:

He knew she read incessantly—Shakespeare, Henry James, Dickens, Thomas Hardy—but he did not think this could fill her days. On Wednesday evenings twice a month he attended a meeting of her book circle, five other women who enjoyed discussing Benito Cereno, Flowers of Evil, The Importance of Being Earnest, and Jane Eyre. "We're dainty old ladies," he heard Lillian exclaim once. (Guterson 341)

MLA Style for Electronic Sources Listed in Works Cited (Bibliography)

When documenting sources on the Internet, refer to the MLA guidelines for citing electronic sources and your teachers' instructions. Citations should include the following items, as available:

- author's name with last name first
- full title of document in " " and title of complete work underlined or in italics
- name of online journal or periodical, if applicable, followed by volume, issue, and number of pages or paragraphs (specific project names at university or organizational sites should also be included, *e. g.*, Perseus Project)
- date of publication or last revision
- name of institution or organization producing the site
- date of visit (not followed by a period)
- full http address (URL) enclosed in angle brackets (<>) followed by a period

Examples of MLA Works Cited Entries for Electronic Sources

Knowles, John. "A Special Time, A Special School: John Knowles Reflects on His Exeter Experience."

The Exeter Bulletin. Summer 1995. Phillips Exeter Academy.
18 July 2003 <http://library.exeter.edu/dept/separate_peace/article.html>.

"Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*." 14 Sept. 2001. Department of English, U of Pennsylvania.
18 July 2003 <<http://www.english.upenn.edu/~afilreis/50s/ellison-main.html>>.

Turn off the "auto-correct" feature in your word processing tools to avoid having the URL print as a hyperlink.

MLA Style for In-Text Citation of Electronic Sources

In the body of your paper, when you are quoting from electronic sources, include the author's last name (if it is available) or the first few words of the heading/title of the site (if no author is named). If possible,

identify the paragraph number(s) where the material cited was found. If actual paragraph numbers are embedded in the text, use them to identify paragraphs. Do not make up page numbers if they do not exist. The goal is to point the reader to the specific part of the web source in which the material was found and to the specific entry in your Works Cited page.

Examples of MLA In-Text Citation for Electronic Sources

(Knowles, par. 2)
("Ellison's *Invisible Man*," pars. 3-4)

Introduction to APA Style

For papers in psychology and the sciences, your teachers may ask you to use the APA style. The APA style is an author-year and author-year-page system. Direct quotations and paraphrases are cited by author-year-page. There is a comma between author and year (and between year and page), and the abbreviation for page(s) **is** used. In APA style, when you are quoting directly, you should always use the specific page number parenthetically if you are citing from a printed text or the paragraph number if the quoted material is from an electronic text.

Examples of APA In-Text Citation

(Manoff, 1996) *or* (Manoff, 1996, p. 35)

Skinner (1952) examines the influences of positive reinforcement in his study of operant conditioning.

Example of APA Bibliography Entry

Warner, W. W. (1976). Beautiful Swimmers: Watermen, Crabs, and the Chesapeake Bay. New York: Penguin.

Note that MLA entries in bibliographies indent all lines after the first line in each entry, whereas APA entries in bibliographies indent **only** the first line in each entry.

Sample Works Cited Page--MLA Style

Works Cited

"American Literature." Encyclopedia Americana. 2002 ed.

Brigadoon. Videocassette. Dir. Vincente Minnelli. With Gene Kelly, Van Johnson, and Cyd Charisse. MGM/UA, 1954. 109 min.

Clampitt, Amy. "Dancers Exercising." The Bedford Introduction to Literature: Reading, Thinking and Writing.

Ed. Michael Meyer. 4th ed. Boston: Bedford Books of St. Martin's Press, 1996. 947-48.

---. Westward. New York: Knopf, 1990.

Guterson, David. Snow Falling on Cedars. New York: Vintage-Random House, 1995.

Manoff, M. Literature Resources. 23 June 2003. Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

22 July 2003 <<http://nimrod.mit.edu/depts./humanities/lit/literature.html>>.

Mitchell, Diana, and A. Maria Lancianese. "Springtime Sanity Savers." English Journal 85.4 (1996): 67-71.

Morrison, Toni. Beloved. New York: Plume-NAL, 1987.

---. Song of Solomon. New York: Signet-NAL, 1977.

Moyers, Bill. The Language of Life: A Festival of Poets. Ed. James Haba. New York: Doubleday, 1995.

Nicol, Charles. "Tales Against the Night." Book World 26. Washington Post 21 July 1996:3.

Shakespeare. Computer software. Portland: Creative Multimedia, 1992. CD-ROM.