Our MLA Style handout includes MLA basics, as well as the most common student concerns we see in the Writing Center. For further help, we recommend the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers (8th edition), A Writer’s Reference (8th edition), or the Purdue OWL: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/.

General Formatting
Here are some formatting basics:
- Double-space your entire paper, including the Works Cited page.
- Use 12-point, Times New Roman font.
- Use 1 inch margins on all sides.
- Indent paragraphs ½ inch from left margin (use the tab key default).
- Do not use a title page.

Your teacher may have other preferences, of course, so always follow your teacher’s requirements. When in doubt, ask!

MLA: The First Page
When you open your Word document, use the following settings:
- Include a heading with your name, your professor’s name, the course, and the due date of your paper. The heading simply goes at the top of your paper, so do NOT insert a header.

- Include a center aligned title. Do not underline your title or use all caps (YOUR TITLE SHOULD NOT SCREAM AT YOUR TEACHER 😊).

- Align the document to the left. The right side should look jagged.

- Include page numbers in your HEADER in the top right corner. To do this, select insert, page number, top of page, and plain number 3.

- Once you have page numbers in your header, put the cursor to the left of the number and type your last name. Hit the space bar once. Click the red X to close the header.

Here is an example of the first page of an essay written in MLA format:
Andrew Carnegie: The Father of Middle-Class America

For decades Americans couldn’t help but love the red-headed, fun-loving Little Orphan Annie. The image of the little girl moving so quickly from poverty to wealth provided hope for the poor in the 1930s, and her story continues to be a dream of what the future just might hold. The rags-to-riches phenomenon is the heart of the American Dream. And few other people have embodied this phenomenon as much as Andrew Carnegie did in the late 1800s and early 1900s. His example and industry caused him to become the father of middle-class America.

Andrew Carnegie can be looked to as an ideal example of a poor immigrant making his way up to become leader of the capitalist world. Carnegie was born into a poor working-class family in Scotland. According to the PBS documentary “The Richest Man in the World: Andrew Carnegie,” the Industrial Revolution was difficult on Carnegie’s father, causing him to lose his weaving business. The Carnegie family was much opposed to the idea of a privileged class, who gained their wealth simply by inheritance (“Richest”). This type of upbringing played a large factor in Andrew Carnegie’s destiny. In order to appease his mother’s desire for material benefits, and perhaps in an effort to heal his father’s wounds, Carnegie rejected poverty and cleaved to prosperity.

Carnegie’s character was ideal for gaining wealth. His mother taught him to “look after the pennies, and the pounds will take care of themselves;” he later turned this proverb into “watch the costs, and the profits take care of themselves” (“Richest”). Such thrift was integral to his future success. He also believed that “all is well since all goes better” (“Richest”). His theory
Using Sources
For MLA style, you need to know the difference between in-text citations and the Works Cited page. In-text citations refer to the source information you include in the body of your paper. The Works Cited page is the last page of your paper, wherein you include a list of all the sources you cited in the paper. Typically, the source information you include in the body of your paper is MUCH shorter than what will appear on your Works Cited.

In-Text Citations
Here are the basics for in-text citations.

Use of Author’s Name and Page Number
In general, in-text citations use the author’s name and page numbers. Here is an example:

According to Raymond, “Visiting the writing center is awesome” (236).

Sources without Authors
Sometimes a printed source may not have an author. For a printed source without an author, refer to the title. You should still also list the page number. Here are two examples:

Visiting the Writing Center is awesome (“The South Campus Writing Center” 125).

According to the article “The South Campus Writing Center,” visiting the Writing Center is awesome (125).

Websites may also not have authors. Similarly, if that is the case, refer to the title of the webpage.

According to “Writing Center Tutors,” “Going to the Writing Center can help students improve their writing.”

Sources without Page Numbers
Many electronic sources do not use page numbers, such as webpages or YouTube videos. For sources without page numbers, refer to the author (if there is one) or the title. Note also that you do not include the URL in the body of your paper.

The Writing Center team “meets every week for training” (“Writing Center Training Guidelines”).

Noemi Tovar, in her video “Working in the Writing Center,” states, “Working in the Writing Center is amazing.”
**Placement of Period**
The period goes outside the parentheses rather than inside the quotation marks.

Incorrect: According to Raymond, “Visiting the writing center is awesome.” (236)  
Correct: According to Raymond, “Visiting the writing center is awesome” (236).

The only exception to placement of the period is when you use a block quotation. More on that later!

**Using Signal Phrases**
It is important to smoothly integrate your source information. Your teacher might refer to this as quotation integration. *You will almost never use a quotation that completely stands on its own without some of your own language to introduce it!*

To integrate a quotation smoothly, use a signal phrase. A signal phrase is a group of words that lets the reader know information from a source is coming. Here are some common signal phrases:

According to Shakespeare,
The author states,
He claims,
Toni Morrison contends,
The authors conclude that,
Aristotle assumes,
The author shows,

If you want some variety, especially if you tend to use the same signal phrases over and over, try some of the following verb substitutions. The meanings are provided:

- Synonym for “claims”: *postulates*
- Synonym for “states”: *asserts*
- Synonym for “assumes”: *posits*
- Synonym for “shows”: *presents*

**Signal Phrase Examples with Authors**
Here are examples using the author’s name in the signal phrase.

*For one author:*
According to Raymond, “Visiting the writing center is awesome” (236).
For two authors:
According to Raymond and Mack, “Visiting the writing center is awesome” (236).

For three authors:
According to Raymond, Mack, and Cevallos, “Visiting the writing center is awesome” (236).

For more than three authors:
Use the author’s last name that comes first on the title page followed by et al. The phrase “et al.” is a Latin phrase that means “and others.”

According to Raymond et al., “Visiting the writing center is awesome” (236).

Signal Phrase Examples without Authors
If you do not refer to the author in the signal phrase, put the author’s name and page number in parentheses at the end of the quotation.

The Writing Center tutor states, “Visiting the writing center is awesome” (Landin 236).

The Writing Center tutors state, “Visiting the writing center is awesome” (Cevallos et al. 236).

Paraphrases
To paraphrase means to put source information into your own words. When you paraphrase, you remove the quotation marks because you are not using what the author says word-for-word. However, you must still include the author’s name because the author’s IDEAS are not your own. Here is an example:

Mack conveys that she learned a lot about tutoring in the South Writing Center (245).

Note also that you still include the page number where you learned the information, just like a direct quotation.

Indirect Sources
An indirect source is a source within a source. Examples include an author referring to a person she has interviewed, or an author who refers to another author’s written work in her article. Here is an example.

Coyia Cleveland states, “I work in the Writing Center on Fridays” (qtd. in Raymond 234).

In this case, the insights of Coyia Cleveland appear in an article written by Gabrielle Raymond.
Here is another instance:

Gabby Raymond states that she “loves working in the South Writing Center” (qtd. in Landin 256).

In this case, Gabby Raymond’s insights appear in an article written by Jared Landin.

It is important to note that when citing an indirect source, you use the phrase “qtd. in” inside the parentheses. The phrase is an abbreviation for “quoted in.”

**Block Quotations**

For MLA quotations totaling four full lines of text, use a block quotation. Here is how to format a block quotation, along with an example:

- Indent the quotation 1 inch from the left margin.
- Remove the quotation marks.
- Put the period at the end of the sentence, NOT after the parentheses (this is the exception to the rule above about placement of the period).

When describing her early experiences in the Writing Center, one tutor states,

> The South Campus Writing Center opened in the spring of 2012. At the time, only three people worked in the center. During that first semester, it was difficult to cover shifts due to low-staffing. Each tutor took turns working evenings and Saturdays. This proved difficult to do over time. Schedules were always changing, and the tutors wanted set scheduling. (Raymond 235)

**Citing Poetry**

When quoting poetry, mention the poet’s name and the line numbers. Also, put a forward slash / to show line breaks.

Here is part of the Emily Dickinson poem “Because I Could Not Stop for Death”:

> Because I could not stop for Death -
> He kindly stopped for me -
> The Carriage held but just Ourselves -
> And Immortality.

Here is how you would cite these lines in your paper:
Dickinson writes, “Because I could not stop for Death - / He kindly stopped for me - / The Carriage held but just Ourselves - / And Immortality” (1-4).

If the part of the poem you would like to quote is under four full lines when typed in your paper, then use slash marks for the line breaks.

To quote more than four full lines, keep the poem as close to the original as possible.

Here is a section from Walt Whitman’s “Song of Myself”:

Stop this day and night with me and you shall possess the origin of all poems,
You shall possess the good of the earth and sun, (there are millions of suns left,)
You shall no longer take things at second or third hand, nor look through the eyes dead, nor feed on the spectres in books,
You shall not look through my eyes either, nor take things from me,
You shall listen to all sides and filter them from your self.

Here is how you would cite this in your paper:

The speaker states,

Stop this day and night with me and you shall possess the origin of all poems,
You shall possess the good of the earth and sun, (there are millions of suns left,)
You shall no longer take things at second or third hand, nor look through the eyes dead, nor feed on the spectres in books,
You shall not look through my eyes either, nor take things from me,
You shall listen to all sides and filter them from your self. (Whitman 89-94).

Indent the quotation 1 inch from the left margin (like a block quotation) and do not use quotation marks. Don’t forget to include the line numbers, also.

Citing a Play
When quoting a play, refer to the author, act, scene, and line. Put periods between act, scene and line.

Hamlet asks, “To be, or not to be? That is the question” (Shakespeare 3.1.57).

To quote dialogue in a play, indent 1 inch from the left margin and put characters’ names in all caps with a period. Again, because of the indentation, no quotation marks are necessary. You should still, however, include act, scene, and line(s).
Here is an example from Shakespeare’s play *The Merchant of Venice*:

Shylock: She is damned for it.
Solanio: That’s certain, if the devil may be her judge.
Shylock: My own flesh and blood to rebel!
Solanio: Out upon it, old carrion! Rebels it at these years?

To refer to this dialogue in your paper, it should look like this:

Shylock and Solanio discuss their situation:

SHYLOCK: She is damned for it.
SOLANIO: That’s certain, if the devil may be her judge.
SHYLOCK: My own flesh and blood to rebel!
SOLANIO: Out upon it, old carrion! Rebels it at these years?

(Shakespeare 3.1.29-32)

The “3” refers to the act, the “1” refers to the scene, and the “29-32” are the line numbers.

**Works Cited Page**

Your Works Cited page is a separate page that lists the sources cited in your paper. The Works Cited is the final page of your paper. Here are some other basics:

- Center Works Cited at the top of your page.
- Use double-spacing, just like the rest of your paper.
- Alphabetize sources by the last name of the author. If there is no author, alphabetize by the first word of the title. Do not alphabetize by “The” if it is the first word in the title. Instead, alphabetize by the next word in the title.
- Align the first line of each entry all the way to the left margin.
- Use a hanging indent (.5”) for the second and subsequent lines of each entry.

Here are how two sources would look on your Works Cited page.

**Works Cited**


Notice that the second line of the second source ("Writing Center Tutors") uses the hanging indent. Each new source will start on a new line extended to the left margin.

To create a hanging indent, if you have never done so before, complete the following steps.

First, put your cursor on the second line of your entry.


Next, look at the top of your screen and find the “paragraph” box.

Click on the little arrow in the bottom right corner of the paragraph box. When you do, a menu should open that looks like this:

Click on the arrow under “special.”

Then, click on “hanging” and under “by,” use the arrows to display "0.05"
After you click on “ok” to save your changes, the second line of your entry will show the hanging indent. Here is how it should look:


Remember, in MLA style, to simply use the tab setting to bump over subsequent lines is incorrect. The tab setting will automatically create more white space than double-spacing requires, and will throw off the formatting of your whole Works Cited page! Instead, learn the hanging indent for correct MLA.

**Common Sources**
Here are sample entries for some of the most common types of sources.

**Print Book**
For books, include:
- the author's last name, first name: Raymond, Gabrielle
- the title in italics: *How to Write a Research Paper*
- location and publishing company: Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s
- copyright: 2012

*Note that new 8th edition MLA uses commas between publisher, publication date, and pagination. Also, the medium is no longer necessary, so do not put “Print” at the end.*

Incorrect (old way, MLA 7th edition):

Correct (new way, MLA 8th edition):

**E-Book**
An e-book is identical to a print book, with one exception. With an e-book, also add the e-reader used. In this case, it is called Nook.

A selection from an anthology

If you are in an English course, you may be writing about a selection, such as a poem or short story, in a larger anthology (your textbook). For these, include:

- the author of the poem/play/short story (last name, first name): Raymond, Gabby.
- the name of the poem/play/short story in quotation marks: “Ode to the South Campus Writing Center”
- the title of the anthology in italics: Poetry about Writing Centers
- the editor (if there is one) with the abbreviation Ed. which means “edited by”: Ed. Alexa Cevallos.
- the location and name of publishing company: Fort Worth: Blah, Blah, Blah Publishing, Inc.
- the copyright: 2012
- the page numbers of the poem with pp. for pages: pp. 51-52

Here is how it should look on your Works Cited:

Raymond, Gabby. “Ode to the South Campus Writing Center.” Poetry about Writing Centers.


Entire Website

For websites, note there are changes with the MLA 8th edition. Now you should include:

- the name of the website in italics: Writing Center Website
- the name of institution/organization affiliated with the website: South Campus Writing Center
- the URL: www.southwritingcenterisawesome.html.
- date of creation if available: 2012
- date of access: 12 Apr. 2016

Incorrect (the old way, MLA 7th edition):

Correct (the new way, MLA 8th edition):

Webpage

Much of the time you use only a webpage from a website. In that case, include:

- the name of the webpage in quotation marks: “Writing Center Tutors.”
Here is how it should look on your Works Cited page for MLA 8th edition:


**Article in a Scholarly Journal**

For an article in a scholarly journal, there are also changes for the MLA 8th edition. Please include:

- author’s name (last name/first name) followed by a period: Landin, Jared.
- the name of the article in quotation marks followed by a period: “Beyond Tutoring: Being an Instructional Associate”
- the title of the journal in italics followed by a comma: *Writing Centers: A Journal*, vol. 7, no. 1, 2012,
- page numbers with the abbreviation pp. and a period following: pp. 7-24.
- Note, again, the medium is no longer required.

Incorrect (old way, MLA 7th edition):


Correct (new way, MLA 8th edition):


**Article from a Database**

Using the TCC Library databases ensures you are using scholarly sources. For an article from a database, note the MLA 8th edition updates, which include:

- the author (last name / first name) followed by a period: Mack, Angela.
the title of the article in quotation marks, followed by a period: “Working in a Writing Center.”
the title of the journal in italics, followed by a comma: Writing Center Quarterly,
the volume number (vol.) and issue number (no.) with a comma in between and following: period in between: vol. 36, no. 2,
date of publication, followed by a comma: 2012,
age numbers with pp. abbreviated, and followed by a period: pp. 56-65.
the name of the database italicized, followed by a comma: Academic Search Complete,
the DOI (which just stands for digital object identifier), followed by a period: doi:10.1017/S0018246X0600. If a doi is not provided, use the URL.
the date of access: Accessed 26 May 2012.

Incorrect (old way, MLA 7th edition):


Correct (new way, MLA 8th edition):


A Tweet

Cite a Tweet by referring to the twitter handle (the author of the tweet), the date and time, as well as the URL. Here is an example:

@GlobalCitizens8. "The Trouble with Trump." Twitter, 16 Nov. 2016, 10:00 p.m.,
twitter.com/GlobalCitizens8/status/176768368766737262.

An Email

To cite an email, refer to the author of the email, the subject, the name of the receiver, and the date.

Parker, Chloe. "Re: Online Tutoring." Received by Gabby Raymond, 1 Nov. 2016.
A Personal Interview

If you conduct a personal interview, here is how it would look on your Works Cited page. Refer to the name of the person being interviewed along with the term personal interview. You should also give the date the interview was conducted.

Macon, Janeeka. Personal interview. 19 May 2014.

A Television Program on Netflix, Hulu, or Google Play

If referring to a specific episode of a show on Netflix, Hulu or Google Play, here is an example:


Refer to the title of the episode, the program, the season, episode number, the broadcast network, the date, the video subscription service in italics, and the URL to the specific episode.

A Film

A film entry typically includes the title of the film, the director and lead performers, the distributor, and the release date.

Night of the Living Dead. Directed by George A. Romero, performances by Duane Jones and Judith O’Dea, Twentieth Century Fox, 1968.

A Podcast

Citing a podcast is similar to the above. Here is an example:


Refer to the episode title, the podcast itself, when it was posted, and the URL to the specific episode.
An Advertisement

For an advertisement, you need the product or company being advertised, publication information from the source where the advertisement appears, and the word 'advertisement' to show type of source.


A Visual (graph, table, chart, or other graphic)

For a visual, cite it like a short work within a larger work. In the case below, the chart about Ebola cases is on the CDC website.


The following is an example of a Works Cited page using some of the sources from above. The gray boxes show the type of source.
Works Cited

@GlobalCitizens8. "The Trouble with Trump." Twitter, 16 Nov. 2016, 10:00 p.m.,
  twitter.com/GlobalCitizens8/status/176768368766737262.


  2012.

  May 2016.

Macon, Janeeka. Personal interview. 19 May 2014.

Nandin, Jared. “Beyond Tutoring: Being an Instructional Associate.” Writing Centers: A

Night of the Living Dead. Directed by George A. Romero, performances by Duane Jones and
  Judith O’Dea, Twentieth Century Fox, 1968.

“Number of Ebola Cases by Year since 1950.” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 6

Parker, Chloe. "Re: Online Tutoring." Received by Gabby Raymond, 1 Nov. 2016.

Raymond, Gabby. “Ode to the South Campus Writing Center.” Poetry about Writing Centers.

Tovar, Noemi. “Writing Centers are Cool.” *YouTube,* uploaded by Gabby Raymond, 3 July 2012, www.youtube.com/watch?v=mkdzy76WW3F.