

# MLA Documentation Style

The MLA style, developed by the Modern Language Association, is a system of formatting and documenting papers in the arts and humanities. Students often use MLA style for papers in language and literature.

Using research, either in the form of quoting or paraphrasing an author, strengthens the validity of an argument. When we, members of an academic community, use research, we show evidence of having **academic integrity**. Academic integrity is the notion that we gain knowledge from the ideas of others; we must then be responsible for crediting other scholars for the ideas that we learn from them. It is absolutely necessary to be honest about the information we learn from others and to cite the sources of those authors who teach us.

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## In-Text Citations:

Each time you use a source—whether the words or ideas—clearly indicate the author’s last name and the page number of the information you are citing.

### Include the Author’s Name in a Signal Phrase:

Roy Blount Jr., a Korean War veteran, recalls that he enlisted after being moved by the heroism and idealism of Wayne’s character in *Sands of Iwo Jima* (36).

**Note:** The parenthetical citation is placed before the period.

### Include the Author’s Name Parenthetically:

According to another contemporary, Wayne’s face radiated power and assurance in a world beset “by venality and doubt and paralyzing ambiguities” (Didion 41).

**Note:** The parenthetical citation is placed **before** the period but **after** the quotation mark.

Humanity's exposure to lighthearted glorifications of war propagates future conflicts (Vonnegut 74, 200).

**Note:** If you cite multiple distinct pages, separate the page numbers with a comma.

### **Two or more works by the same author:**

Identify the cited work by its name either in the parenthetical citation or in the text.

*Slaughterhouse-Five* underscores this point by sardonic allusions to films about “American bombers in the Second World War and the gallant men who flew them” (Vonnegut 74).

The sardonic allusions to films about “American bombers in the Second World War and the gallant men who flew them” connect the misguided war fervor with media depictions of the glory of war (Vonnegut, *Slaughterhouse-Five* 74).

### **Entire Work:**

If citing an entire work, do so in the text, not in a parenthetical citation.

*Sands of Iwo Jima*, a film that centers on the relationship of a brooding, maverick sergeant and a new recruit, has come to symbolize America's unwavering commitment to emerge victorious.

### **Websites/ Electronic Sources:**

Use the same guidelines as for print sources. If you cannot find an author, identify work by its title. If you cannot find a page number, then cite the source as an entire work.

### **Poetry:**

Use line numbers instead of page numbers.

Williams seems to be especially conscious of the contextual power of art, as he asserts, “so much depends/upon/a red wheel/barrow” (1-4).

## Plays:

Use divisions, such as act and scene number; do not use page numbers.

Although Othello, as an esteemed Venetian general, is articulate, he proclaims himself to be “rude in speech” (Shakespeare 1.3.81).

**Note:** As demonstrated in the above parenthetical citation, the numbers indicate act, scene, and line number, when available.

## Works Cited:

Each work used in your paper must be listed in alphabetical order, on a final, separate page. On a new page, center the title Works Cited.

- The first line should start at the left margin and subsequent lines should be indented five spaces (hanging indent).
- Works should be listed in alphabetical order by the last names of the authors/editors.
- All entries on the Works Cited page should be double-spaced, like the rest of the paper.
- Titles of large works should be **either** underlined **or** italicized (not both), and titles of short works should be in quotation marks.

### A Book with One Author:

Vonnegut, Kurt, Jr. Slaughterhouse-Five. New York: Dell Publishing, Random House, Inc. 1969.

### Two or More Works by Same Author:

List author's name only in first entry. In subsequent entries, replace the author's name with three hyphens followed by a period. The works are alphabetized by title.

Vonnegut, Kurt, Jr. "Kurt Vonnegut on Dresden." Interview with Lee Roloff. Bloom's Guides: Comprehensive Research & Literature Guides: Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five*. New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 2007.p. 83-87. 29 September 1996.

---. *Slaughterhouse-Five*. New York: Dell Publishing, Random House, Inc. 1969.

### **A Book with Two or More Authors:**

Name first two or three authors in the order in which they appear on the work with the last name first for the first author only.

McCrisken, Trevor, and Andrew Pepper. *American History and Contemporary Hollywood Film*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2005.

For a work with more than three authors, use et. al after indicating the first author's name.

Geller, Anne Ellen, et.al. *The Everyday Writing Center: A Community of Practice*. Logan: Utah State UP, 2007.

**Note:** It is acceptable to abbreviate "University Press" with "UP," as in the above citation.

### **Book by Editor/ Editors:**

Include the abbreviation "ed." for a single editor or "eds." for multiple editors, after the name(s).

Moss, Joyce and George Wilson, eds. "*Slaughterhouse-Five*, by Kurt Vonnegut, Jr." *Literature and Its Times: Profiles of 300 Notable Literary Works and the Historical Events that Influenced Them*. Detroit: Gale Research, 1997.

### **An Article in an Edited Book:**

Schatt, Stanley. "Stanley Schatt on Vonnegut's View of War and Death." *Bloom's Guides: Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five**. Ed. Harold Bloom. New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 2007. 59-62.

### **Published Interview:**

Vonnegut, Kurt, Jr. "Kurt Vonnegut on Dresden." Interview with Lee Roloff. *Bloom's Guides: Comprehensive Research & Literature Guides: Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse Five**. New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 2007.p. 83-87.

## Website:

Teresa Robertson. "Essential vs. Accidental Properties." *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. 2008. Stanford University. 4 May 2009. <<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/essential-accidental>>

**Note:** When documenting a website in a citation, type the entire address to your right-hand margin and break the line at a slash or hyphen, as above.

## Journal Article:

Peckham, Irvin. "Online Placement in First-Year Writing." College Composition and Communication 60.3 (2009): 517-540.

**Note:** The numbers 60.3 in the above citation indicate volume 60, issue 3 of the cited publication.

## Film:

Sands of Iwo Jima. Dir. Allan Dwan. Perf. John Wayne, John Agar, Adele Mara, and Forest Tucker. Republic Pictures, 1949.

## For Other Cases:

See the MLA Manual or visit the Writing Center for further guidance.

## Sample Paragraph and List of References:

While John Wayne's movies glorify war and death, Kurt Vonnegut underscores the horror and futility of war and the meaninglessness of death. In keeping with his promise to Mary O'Hare, the scene of the bombing of Dresden is "crouched in indirection, layered with multiple perspectives" (Harris). Vonnegut decides not to use realistic descriptions of the ghastly misery of WWII partly because he does not want to contribute to "the spectacle of war" (Jarvis 101). He avoids the traditional vivid descriptions and the arousing climaxes and opts for a postmodern representation of the horrors of war. Like the anticlimactic Dresden raid, the senseless execution

of the upstanding martyr of the novel is followed by the understatement, “[s]o it goes” (Vonnegut 214). Scholar Stanley Schatt argues that instead of advocating a fatalistic, apathetic approach to death, Vonnegut responds to death with phrases like “so it goes” as a defense mechanism (62). Vonnegut responds to death with an overwhelming sense of loss and sensitivity that is so powerful that it can only be expressed through understatement. Vonnegut does not trivialize death as the John Wayne movies do; Vonnegut argues that human life has dignity and value.

#### Works Cited

- Harris, Charles B. “Time, Uncertainty, and Kurt Vonnegut Jr.: A Reading of *Slaughterhouse Five*”. *Centennial Review*. Summer 1976: 228-243.
- Jarvis, Christina. “The Vietnamization of World War II in *Slaughterhouse-Five* and *Gravity’s Rainbow*.” War, Literature, and the Arts: An International Journal of the Humanities.15.1-2 (2003): 95-117.
- Schatt, Stanley. “Stanley Schatt on Vonnegut’s View of War and Death.” *Bloom’s Guides: Kurt Vonnegut’s Slaughterhouse-Five*. Ed. Harold Bloom. New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 2007. 59-62.
- Vonnegut, Kurt, Jr. Slaughterhouse Five. New York: Dell Publishing, Random House, Inc. 1969.