

CITING SOURCES (MLA STYLE)

Introduction: Everybody wants to get credit for his or her own ideas and work. Therefore, you should understand how to indicate in a paper the **source of ideas or words not your own**. You may use information from sources either **in the original words or in your own words** as in a paraphrase or summary. Credit must be given in two places: **within the text of your paper, and on the last page, which will be titled "Works Cited."** Failure to do so is called plagiarism. Therefore, take notes carefully and always give credit as explained below.

1. Within The Text - Parenthetical Citations: Author's last name, followed by a space, and then the page number - all enclosed in parentheses before the period. Example: (Angelou 32)

A. Using Sources in Original Words

1. Quote the writer's exact words when they are so well stated that a restatement would diminish their impact. Short quotations are enclosed by quotation marks. To introduce the quotation, use a verb like **says, observes, points out, or reports**, followed by either a **colon or a comma**.

As the writer says in "My Name is Margaret," "a white woman's kitchen became my finishing school" (Angelou 32).

2. Long quotations (more than four lines) are blocked and indented five spaces on either side and single-spaced, with a colon following the sentence introducing the quotation. Do not use quotation marks.

Many of the international students from Eastern Asia are finding it harder to pay for their tuition as their native currency drops in value. . . . The value of East Asian currency has dropped significantly because of an economic crash (Chan 1).

3. When you **quote a sentence**, do not put it in the middle of your own sentence, but at the end. Remember always to explain the relevance of the quotation in your own words.

B. Using Sources in Your Own Words

1. Paraphrasing: Carefully use the information from your source but restate it in your own words, about the same length as the original passage. If you use only your own words, you do not use quotation marks. However, if you use any key words or phrases from the passage you are paraphrasing, **you must enclose those key words or phrases in quotation marks**.

2. Summarizing: Restate the important ideas, delete details, and condense the original material. Do not copy any of the author's words. Give credit as stated above.

C. Using Lead-ins

1. When you use exact words from a source, use a verb to introduce the words, like those mentioned above in **A.1**, followed by either a colon or a comma.

2. When you use a paraphrase or a summary of a source in your paper, you can introduce that paraphrase or summary with an expression similar to the following:

King points out that ...

According to Chan,...

Phillip Chan agrees that ...

Do not use a comma after "that."

The **last page** of your paper should be titled **Works Cited**. In alphabetical order of the authors' last names, type the references of sources you used. Double space. Type the first line at the margin and indent five spaces for subsequent lines in each source. Punctuate exactly as shown below. **Do not number entries**. See Chapter 37, pp. 676-724, *The Scott, Foresman Handbook for Writers*, for detailed information on MLA documentation, or

Sample Entries: **Published Materials**

Book: Geismar, Maxwell. *Mark Twain: Man and Legend*. Indianapolis: Macmillan and Company, 1943.

Article in a book:

Angelou, Maya, "My Name is Margaret." *The Riverside Reader*, Sixth Edition. Eds. Joseph F. Trimmer

and Maxine Hairston. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1999. 31-37.

Article in a magazine:

Landau, Jon. "In Praise of Elvis Presley." *Rolling Stone* Dec. 1990: 14.

Article in a newspaper:

Cooke, Robert. "A Circus in Old Carthage: Curses and Chariots." *-Atlanta Constitution* 4 June 1985: A4.

Electronic Media

CD-Rom: To cite a CD-ROM or similar electronic database, provide basic information about the source itself - author, title, and publication information. Identify the publication medium (CD-ROM; diskette; magnetic tape) and the name of the vendor if available.

Bevington, David. "Castles in the Air: The Morality Plays." *The Theater of Medieval Europe:*

New Research in Early Drama. Ed. Simon Eckhard. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1993. *MLA*

Bibliography. CD-Rom. SilverPlatter. Feb. 1995.

World Wide Web Citation for particular page within a site: "Hubble Catches Up to a Blue Straggler Star."
Space

Telescope Science Institute. 29 Oct. 1997. NASA. 28 Nov. 1997

<http://op.2site.stsci.edu/Wpubinfo/PR/97/35/>.

Citation for entire site:

Space Telescope Science Institute Home Page. 20 Nov. 1997. NASA. 28 Nov. 1997 <<http://www.stsci.edu/>>.

The difference between a **bibliography** and a list of **works cited** is that a bibliography is a listing of each book you have consulted whether or not you have referred to it in your paper. A works cited list is a list of only those books you have actually used and given credit to in your paper.

(Information for this lesson taken from Hodges, John C. *Harbrace College Handbook*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., Inc., 1997; and Hairston, Maxine, et al. *Scott, Foresman Handbook for Writers*, 5th ed., Longman, 1999. Compiled by N. Pardi and J. Bodner)