MLA Style Guide
Graham Park Middle School

MLA 8
Style Guidelines for Documenting Sources and Report Writing

Graham Park Middle School
November 2016
Introduction

The purpose of this handbook is to provide guidance on how to write reports in MLA style. This handbook contains information about the basics of the MLA Style, 8th Edition, and how to correctly cite sources. Only the most important elements of the style are covered; links to additional MLA Style, 8th Edition resources and examples can be found on the GPMS Library Web Page and may need to be consulted to complete assignments in MLA Style, 8th Edition format.

It is expected that all middle school students will use the MLA style when documenting sources used in written assignments.

This handbook was created and adopted November 2016. It conforms to MLA Style, 8th Edition.

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1. MLA Style Guide Basics

What is MLA Style?
The Modern Language Association (MLA) developed a style guide for academic writing. Specifically, it deals with ways to document a writer’s sources of information and the format of the paper or report.

MLA provides guidelines for citing sources both in the text and on a “Works Cited” page.

How do I use this MLA Style Guide?
Students and teachers can use this MLA style guide as a reference when writing pieces that require information to be cited.

Why is it Important that I Cite Sources?
It is the writer’s responsibility to give proper credit to the sources that they used to acquire information. If proper credit is not given to a source, it is plagiarism.

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2. Plagiarism: What is plagiarism? How do I avoid it?

What is plagiarism?
Plagiarism is the term used when proper credit is not given to the sources of information used to create an essay/report/paper.

If a writer uses someone else’s ideas without telling the reader from whom the ideas originated, the writer is being dishonest.

Plagiarism is stealing and can result in the grade of a “0” and lead to disciplinary action.

How can I avoid it?
Cite your sources – give credit where credit is due.

What needs to be cited?
• Any ideas or facts that are not common knowledge need to be cited; including words or ideas presented in any format
• Information gained through interviewing or talking with another person
• When copying exact words or a unique phrase
• When printing copies of any diagrams, illustrations, charts, pictures, or other visual materials

Common knowledge is a fact or idea that most educated people just happen to know. It may be unclear where they learned about it. Although they were not born with this knowledge, it’s just something that “most people know.” For example, most people know that the planets rotate around the sun and that it takes our Earth 365 days to go completely around it. This is common knowledge. However, most people do not know how many days it takes Neptune to complete the same journey. If this fact is found in a book, it must be cited. Give that source credit.

Deciding what to cite and what not to cite can be confusing. To make it simple, remember: if learning about it for the first time from a source, cite it!
3. Example of a “Works Cited” Page


### EXAMPLE Citation Format and Punctuation

Author1. Title of source2. Title of container3, Other contributors4, Version5, Number6, Publisher7, Publication date8, Location9. Title of container3, Other contributors4, Version5, Number6, Publisher7, Publication date8, Location9. Title of container3, Other contributors, Version5, Number6, Publisher7, Publication date8, Location9.

The numbers (1, 2, 3, ... 9) represent the nine pieces of information that are needed for a citation, if available. If the Title of the source is a book, italicize the title. If the Title of the source is an article, put quotation marks around the article title. If there is more than one container, i.e., an article in a journal (journal is a container) in a database (database is a container) on a school Web page (school Web page is the final container) – repeat steps 3-9 for each container.
4. Parenthetical Citation

What is a parenthetical or “in-text” citation?
Parenthetical citation is when a writer directly puts into the text a note from where he or she got the information. Parenthetical or “in-text” citation allows the reader to know from what source each idea/fact came.

This is how a parenthetical citation looks in the text of a paper:

“The American physician, Virginia Apgar, is best known for developing the Apgar Newborn Scoring System” (Allman 22).

In the above example, the author’s name and the page number on which this fact was found are set off from the text within parenthesis. The punctuation of this parenthetical citation is also important. The reader would understand from this citation that on page 22 of Allman’s book, this fact is mentioned. Furthermore, since the words are contained within quotes, the above example illustrates that this is a direct quote from that page.

Here is an example of the same idea presented as an indirect quote:

Virginia Apgar was a physician and is most well known for her development of the Apgar Newborn Scoring System (Allman 22).

If there is no author, use the title that begins the citation, either the article or website title. Be sure it also takes the same formatting, i.e. articles are in quotes and website titles are italicized. You can shorten the name of the source but be sure that your reader can easily identify it in your Works Cited (abbreviate the title starting with the same word in which it is alphabetized).

See the difference between direct and indirect quotes in the glossary section.

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Tommy Spangle  
Mrs. Sphere  
Earth Science 6  
11 November 2016

Virginia Apgar and the Agar Score

Inventors and their inventions are the reason for the comfort and ease we live in today. Studying these unique individuals can provide insight into what type of character traits it is important to have to be an inventor.

According to Allman (22) “The American physician, Virginia Apgar, is best known for developing the Apgar Newborn Scoring System”. Ms. Apgar was born in New York in the year 1909. It may have been her oldest brother’s early death from tuberculosis or the chronic illnesses of her younger brother, but from an early age she was inspired to become a physician (“Changing the Face of Medicine” 2015).
6. Glossary

Citation—is the identification of a specific idea or quote taken from a source.

Direct Quote—is a quote in which the author uses words from a source exactly as they were written. The words are taken verbatim. A direct quote is indicated by putting the words in quotation marks (" "). A direct quote must be cited.

Indirect Quote or Paraphrasing—is a quote in which an author paraphrases, or puts into his/her own words, an idea or fact from a source. An indirect quote must be cited.

MLA — is the Modern Language Association that formats scholarly rules for writing papers so that students give credit to their sources and their audience can understand how to find those sources.

Parenthetical Citation—is when credit is give to a source directly within the text of the paper. The source information is presented inside parenthesis.

Works Cited—is the name that MLA gives to a bibliography. It is the last page of an essay or report. It lists all of the sources the student has used in the essay/report/paper.